



SITREP FROM ARCO

Camaraderie Through Service

INTRODUCTION

Having celebrated its Diamond Jubilee in 2019, the Association of Retired Commissioned Officers (ARCO) takes this opportunity of saluting the initiative, foresight and determination of our founding members.

Operating on a voluntary basis, with 26 years of steadfast service to the Defence Community, we are a vibrant, evolving and flourishing Representative Association, recognised by both the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces.

We provide a strong collective and authoritative voice, representing and supporting Army, Naval Service and Air Corps officers, who retire and transition to civilian life, and eligible spouses or civil partners.

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, both at home and overseas, serving Ireland, its Government and its citizens.

Our membership is identified as a valuable asset in enhancing the credibility, influence and integrity of the Association.

We commend the significant Defence Forces support provided to the Government and Civil Authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, we salute the valuable material and social support provided by ONE, IUNVA, and the ARCO membership to vulnerable Veterans, and to the families of some serving personnel who find themselves in need at this difficult time.

POSTURE

Readers of An Cosantóir will be interested to note that our aim and objectives have been substantially revised. Likewise, building on our ethos, values and accomplishments, and with a willingness to change, ARCO is committed to a more diverse and inclusive organisation and intends to remain representative, relevant, and viable, in order to safeguard our future.

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, and eligible spouses or civil partners.

Retired personnel will recall that ARCO's pension strategy focuses on: the restoration of FEMPI pension reductions; pension parity, the value of Veterans' 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 finally repealing abatement anomalies.

As is generally known throughout the Defence Community, ARCO remains fully engaged with ONE, IUNVA, RACO and PDFORRA. Of significance 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.

Harnessing our diverse skills, vast range of expertise and experiences, derived from service in the Defence Forces, we hope to be engaged in supporting the Defence Forces Mentoring and Coaching Programmes, involving the current generation of officers who are the future generation of ARCO's membership.

In parallel, we are examining the provision of networking opportunities and social occasions for our members and the wider Defence Community. Such events will enhance the valuable links among both serving and retired officers, providing ample opportunities to share talents and interests for their common benefit. Accordingly, ARCO intends to organise events based on relevant defence, security, leadership and management themes. Unfortunately, on account of



Capt Paul Amoroso (Retd), as IED Threat Mitigation Advisor with UNSOS in Somalia



Commissioning Ceremony, Lt Turlough Gallagher, 27 Inf Bn, recipient of An Claidheamh Gasciochta.

the Covid-19 pandemic, our inaugural networking seminar was deferred to quarter 4 of 2020.

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.

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, 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.

SUBMISSIONS TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

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.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our recently activated Social Media Platforms can be accessed as follows: LinkedIn via Association of Retired Commissioned Officers, and Twitter and Facebook via @Arcoireland. Providing a marketing tool for the Association, they also facilitate cost effective, innovative and efficient communications support for our membership.

These platforms convey our key messages, encourage debate and conversation, and assist us in connecting with members, potential members, the wider Defence Community, and the Veterans' Community.

Our Social Media Platforms, restructured Website, <https://iarco.info/>, Text-a-Message Service and Newsletter, are core elements of ARCO's Information Strategy.

FUTURE

Finally, in these challenging times, ARCO's focus for the short to medium term, is to protect our legacy, ethos and values, to implement its aim and revised objectives as adopted at the 2019 AGM, to expand our membership base, and to prepare a framework for the elaboration of a Veterans' Policy, whilst advancing the Association's relevance with its evolving membership cohort.

Executive Committee

18 May 2020



25th Anniversary Reception, Senator Michael McDowell SC, Lord Mayor Councillor Paul McAuliffe, and Brig Gen Paul Pakenham (Retd)