



TAKE POST - THE ARTILLERY CLUB'S NEWSLETTER 3/2020



INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of Newsletter 2/2020 on 05 June, the Covid-19 pandemic continues to have an adverse bearing on the Artillery Club's activities.

Stay Protected, Stay Well and Stay Connected.

Accordingly, the main purpose of this Newsletter is to provide the Club's membership with an update on our activities for the remainder of 2020 and for 2021.

As you are aware, following an assessment of the evolving Covid-19 situation, prevailing Government advice, the Club's responsibilities for its members including serving personnel, and in partnership with the appropriate actors involved in the Field Trips, without hesitation, 12 March, the Club's Committee decided to cancel the Field Trip to the Ordnance School and the National Stud, and the Field Trip to Fort Shannon, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, and deferred the events to 2021.

Likewise, for the same reasons, on 22 May, the Club's Committee deferred until 2021, the Decades' Reunion and the Foreign Field Trip to London.

Since the last Newsletter, the Club's Committee also deferred the 2020 Golf Outing and, recently cancelled the 2020 Annual General Meeting, because of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Committee apologies for any inconvenience caused to those members who intended to participate in the cancelled events.

The modified Diary of Events for 2020 was posted on the Club's website on 24 November, and is attached as Annex A.

Newsletter 3/2020 includes: Governance, News from the Artillery Corps, and Looking into the Past. Photographs are credited to the Defence Forces Press Office, 2 Artillery Regiment, Rev Fr Robert McCabe, and the Club Membership.

Looking into the Past recalls the Niamba Ambush, with an extract from an article written by Colonel George Kerton (Retd), and published on ARCO's website on 08 November, marking the 60th Anniversary of the ambush.

The School Commandant and Regimental Commanders are requested to post this Newsletter on IKON, circulate it to all PDF and AR Artillery officers under their command, and are encouraged to provide information for future Newsletters.

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

GOVERNANCE

2020 Reflection

Mindful of the Club's objectives as prescribed in the Rules, and the prevailing coronavirus environment, the short to medium term focus is to provide appropriate material and social support to our retired comrades, and the families of those serving personnel who require assistance in these challenging times.

2020 Committee

Since the 2019 AGM, the Committee convened on two occasions: 16 January and 19 February. The Committee's meetings scheduled for 23 April, 25 June and 24 September were cancelled on account of Covid-19.

Communicating by means of collective emails, and on the basis of Government advice on Covid-19, the Committee, availing of "silence procedure", continue to make decisions such as the cancellation of the 2020 AGM, and election of new members.

2020 Annual General Meeting

As advised above the Club's Committee, on account of the Covid-19 restrictions, regrettably the Club's Committee has cancelled the 2020 Annual General Meeting, scheduled for 04 December, and the associated Annual Saint Barbara's Day Lunch in the Defence Forces Headquarters Officer's Mess.

2020 Audit of Accounts

The Club's financial records for period ended 31 October 2020 will be provided to the Auditor.

2021 Committee

Whereas the Club's Rules do not prescribe for the extension of the 12-month tour of duty for the Club's Officers, Committee Members and Auditor, under the exceptional Covid-19 situation, all such personnel have graciously agreed to remain in their appointments until the 2021 Annual General Meeting. Congratulations and thanks.

Communications

In addition to posting information on the Club's Web site, the circulation of Newsletters, Activity Information, Calling Notices and Death Notices is primarily by means of email.

Newsletter 1/2015 was distributed by email to 122 individuals. The Club's Email Contact List for this Newsletter is 333 individuals in the wider Artillery Community, far exceeding the Membership strength of 183. Currently, 15 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.

As of 31 October, the membership is 183, compared with 96 in October 2014.

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

Membership Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the current year were due on 01 November, 2020. The preferred option of paying Membership Subscription (€10) is by Standing Order. The Committee is grateful of those members who are continue to pay their subscriptions by Standing Order.

Web Site

The Club's Website is accessible through www.artilleryclub.ie. The Website provides a library of relative information on the Artillery Corps and the Artillery Club. The Website remains the primary communications instrument for the Artillery Club. Since the circulation of Newsletter 2/2020, the following postings were made on the Club's Website:

- **Posts – Homepage (10):** Covid-19 Roadmap, UN Security Council, ARCO Sitrep, An Cosantoir Digital Format, ONE Resource Hub and Website, Golf Outing, Film: *Ireland in the Service of the Future* (32 Inf Bn, 33 Inf Bn ONUC), Newsletter 3/2020 and Modified Calendar of Events.
- **Events (1):** Modified 2020 Calendar.
- **Publications – Information Section:**
 - **Artillery Equipment (1):** Civil War 18-pounder QF Gun

Currently, the Picture Gallery contains 29 albums reflecting the Artillery Corps, and 42 Albums covering the activities of the Artillery Club.

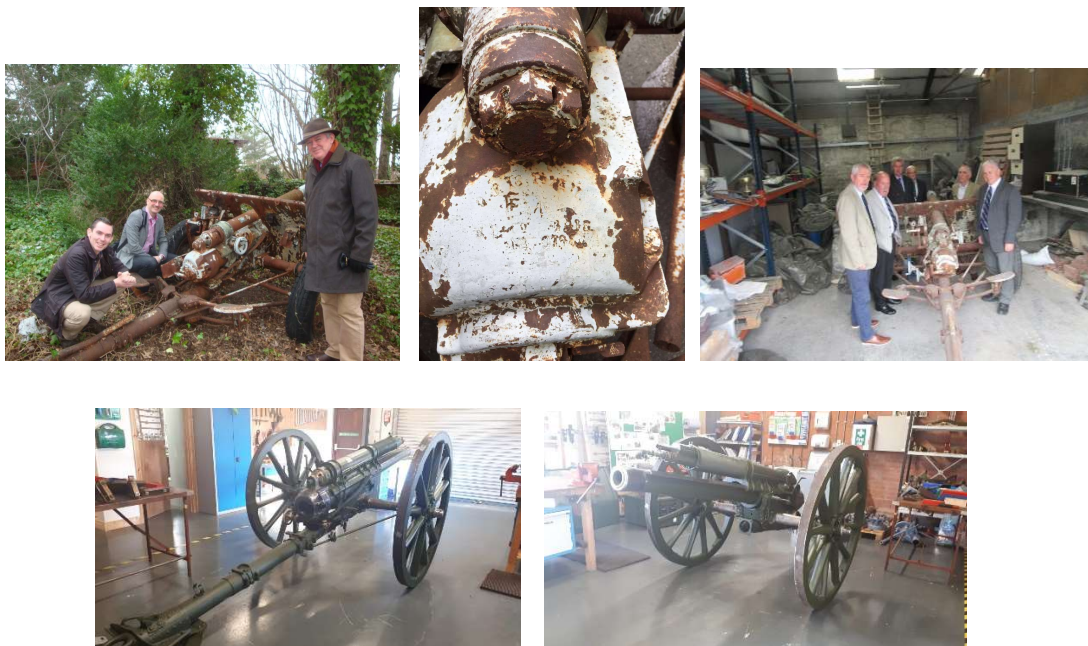
Only a small portion of the restructured Website requires text population including *Artillery Corps Disposition and History*, and *Corps Units' Disposition and History*.

Members are invited to provide material, including photographs and videos, for inclusion in the Website. In the interim, observations on the Website are always welcomed.

Artillery Wing Curragh Military Museum

The Artillery Club's Working Group continues to actively engage with the Museum Curator Lt Col Des Healy. The Working Group is in the process of collecting a comprehensive range of Artillery artifacts from a benefactor in Cork. The Museum's Twitter account is highly recommended, and can be accessed: @CurraghMuseum.

Civil War 18-pounder QF Field Gun



Spot the Difference

The Club retains an over-watch posture regarding the conversation of the Civil War 18-pounder QF Field Gun returned from the USA in 2016. Recently, copies of the original wheels were purchased and reattached to the gun. Currently, the conservation of the original "Boynton Steel Shield" is underway. The work is being carried out by the Ordnance Corps in the Curragh, with Sergeant Robert Delaney in the lead. Sergeant Delaney's article on the Civil War Field Gun published in the Autumn 2020 edition of *Archaeology Ireland* can be viewed on the Club's website.

Committee's Short Term Priorities

The Club's short-term priorities are: COVID-19 support for our retired colleagues, and monitoring Government advice in the context of 2021 activities.

ACTIVITIES

Diary of Events – 2020 – Operation Pause

The Club's activities are of an Artillery nature, hopefully appealing to a large number of members. Members are encouraged to offer recommendations for Club activities. As already mentioned in the Introduction, on account of COVID-19, most of the 2020 activities have been cancelled, the majority of which are deferred to 2021. Planning files have been retained for a more favourable opportunity. Regretfully, the 2020 Annual General Meeting and the Saint Barbara's Lunch, scheduled for 04 December are cancelled.

Units' Annual Mass and Wreath Laying – 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), was cancelled on account of Covid-19. Nevertheless, Brigadier-General Brian Cleary, GOC 1 Brigade laid a wreath in McKee Barracks on November. The names of Gunner Officers who died in the previous year were recalled at Mass on November in the Arbour Hill Church, Commandant Richard Armstrong was the Liaison Officer.

Remembrance Ceremonies – October & November



On 16 October, the Defence Forces hosted a wreath laying ceremony in Arbour House commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the deaths of CS Felix Grant DSM and Col J. MacCarthy DSM while serving with ONUC.

The 60th Anniversary of the Niemba Ambush was commemorated in Cathal Brugha Barracks, on 07 November, during which Brigadier-General Tony Cudmore, GOC 2 Brigade laid a wreath on behalf of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

On 18 November, the Chief of Staff, Vice-Admiral Mark Mellett DSM laid a wreath at the National Memorial, commemorating all Defence Forces Personnel who died in service both at home and overseas.

ARTILLERY CORPS

Promotions. The Committee joins all members of the Artillery Club in congratulating the following Gunner Officer who have been promoted to the rank of Colonel, and wish him continued success in his respective military career:

- Colonel John McCrann: Military Advisor at Ireland's Permanent Mission to the United Nations (New York).

Appointments. The Committee also joins all members of the Artillery Club in congratulating the following Gunner Officers on recent appointments:

- Brigadier-General Brian Cleary: GOC 1 Brigade, Collins Barracks, Cork,
- Colonel Pat White, recently returned from Sector West UNIFIL: EO 2 Brigade,
- Lieutenant-Colonel Dermot Hannifin (P): Director Combat Support, Reserve Forces and ISTAR,
- Lt Col Denis Hanley: OC 2 Artillery Regt,
- Lieutenant-Colonel Ray Kane, Deputy Military Advisor (designate), Perm Rep UNNY,
- Lieutenant-Colonel Peadar Ó Catháin: Public Affairs Officer, EUMS, Brussels, and
- Lieutenant-Colonel Damien Power: School Commandant, The Artillery School.

Regimental Sergeant-Major – 2 Artillery Regiment

Likewise, the Committee joins all members of the Artillery Club in conveying to RSM Tony McGrath best wishes on his retirement from the Defence Forces and from the Artillery Corps, and congratulates his successor, RSM Andrew Marlowe who has taken over the appointment of Regimental Sergeant-Major 2 Artillery Regiment.

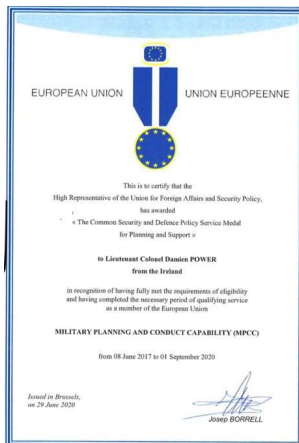
National Day of Commemoration

Unfortunately, on account of Covid-19 restrictions, Members of the Club were unable to attend the Annual Remembrance Service and Wreath Laying Ceremony in the National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, on Saturday, 11 July, and the National Day of Commemoration in Collins Barracks Dublin, on Sunday, 12 July, 2020.



Nevertheless, both ceremonies took place, albeit with a somewhat reduced ceremonial elements and attendance. The Minute Gun for the ceremony on the National Day of Commemoration was fired by Gunners of the 2 Artillery Regiment. BC: Captain Cillian Browne, CPO: Lieutenant Ciaran Hogarty, OP Offr: Lieutenant Aifric Gallagher and DC: Sergeant O' Donohoe.

EU Common Security and Defence Support Medal



On 29 June, Lt Col Damien Power was awarded the medal for service with the EU's Military Planning and Conduct Capability in Brussels, from 08 June 2017 through 01 September, 2020.

2 Artillery Regiment



As part of the Regiment's recent Gunners Course, students fired the L118 and L119 versions of the 105mm Lt Gun and the 120mm Mortar in Glen Imaal, with a slower muzzle velocity. See links below to view the gun projectile in slo-mo and an illumination shoot..

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1320811799915175941>

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1320471369218478080>

2 Artillery Regiment conducted a 21 Gun Salute on October, in Áras an Uachtaráin, during the State Visit of H.E. Sergio Mattarella, President of the Republic of Italy, see link below

<https://twitter.com/i/status/1320471369218478080>

Passing Out Parade



On 02 September, 2 Artillery Regiment conducted a Recruit Passing Out Parade in Custume Barracks, Athlone. Lieutenant Brian Clarke.

117 Infantry Battalion UNIFIL



On 03 September, personnel of the 1 Artillery Regiment and 2 Artillery Regiment conducted a mortar shoot in Glen Imaal as part of the pre-deployment training for UNIFIL. The 117 Infantry Battalion deployed to South Lebanon in November under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Fred O'Donavan.

LOOKING INTO THE PAST

Extract from article written by Colonel George Kerton (Retd) and published on ARCO's website marking the 60th Anniversary of the Niemba Ambush, on 08 November 2020.

On 8 November 1960, an eleven-man patrol from Number 2 Platoon, A Company, 33 Infantry Battalion, ONUC, departed their base at Niemba, under the command of Lieutenant Kevin Gleeson.



Having dismounted at a crossing point on the Luweyeye River, twenty kilometres from Niemba, the patrol was attacked without warning by a large number of Baluba tribesmen.

Nine of the patrol died, eight at the ambush scene, and another was subsequently killed a few days later. The nine fatalities were the first operational casualties suffered by the Defence Forces since the Civil War in 1922 – 1923.

These nine deaths remain the highest toll from a single action, suffered by the Defence Forces in the cause of world peace. Twenty-six members of the Defence Forces died while serving with ONUC.

The nine who were killed, serving the cause of peace under the Blue Flag, in what became known as the Niemba Ambush were:

- Lieutenant Kevin Gleeson, 2 Fd Engr Coy, aged 30 from Terenure,
- Sergeant Hugh Gaynor 2 Mot Sqn, aged 29 from Leixlip,
- Corporal Liam Dougan 5 Inf Bn, aged 24 from Cabra,
- Corporal Peter Kelly 5 Inf Bn, aged 25 from Templeogue,
- Trooper Anthony Browne MMG 2 Mot Sqn, aged 20 from Rialto,
- Private Matthew Farrell 2 Hosp Coy, aged 22 from Swords,
- Trooper Thomas Fennell 2 Mot Sqn, aged 18 from Donnycarney,
- Private Gerard Killeen CTD (E), aged 27 from Rathmines, and
- Private Michael McGuinn 2 Fd Engr Coy, aged 21 from Carlow.

Two members of the patrol, Private Joseph Fitzpatrick (then 21) and Private Thomas Kenny (then 24) survived the ambush. On the night of 10 November, Private Patrick Davis 2 Fd Engr Coy died, following an accidental shooting, during an alert at the Niemba post.



On 19 November 1960, those who died in Niemba were accorded a State funeral, and were buried with full military honours in the Army Plot in Glasnevin Cemetery. According to media reports, the funeral attracted over a half a million people, and was one of the largest crowds seen in Dublin since the funerals of Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Collins.



In October 1961, 1 Infantry Group redeployed from Kamina Base to Nyunzu, in north eastern Katanga, some 48 kilometres from Niemba. The Group Commander, Lieutenant-Colonel John C. O'Donovan decided to erect a memorial at the site of the Niemba ambush. A cross was cast in cement by Sergeant William McLoughlin from the Engineer Section, and the inscription was carved by Private Patrick Appleby. On 5 November 1961, the cross was erected close to the Niemba ambush site, and Mass was celebrated by the unit chaplain Father Phelim McCabe CF.



Trooper Anthony Browne survived the initial attack but was subsequently killed. Trooper Browne was posthumously awarded An Bonn Míleata Calmachta with Distinction (Military

Medal for Gallantry). He was the first recipient of the Military Medal for Gallantry, the Defence Forces highest military award. Trooper Browne's citation reads:

He endeavoured to create an opportunity to allow an injured comrade to escape by firing his Gustaf, thereby drawing attention to his own position, which he must have been aware would endanger his life. He had a reasonable opportunity to escape because he was not wounded but chose to remain with an injured comrade.

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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

Once a Gunner – Always a Gunner

THE ARTILLERY CLUB

27 November 2020



ARTILLERY CLUB's DIARY of Events – 2020

| Date | Event | Coordinator | Remarks |
|---------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|
| 16 January | Committee Meeting: McKee Barracks | Secretary | Minutes Circulated |
| 19 February | Field Trip: Irish Wars 1919 - 1923, Collins Barracks, Dublin | Comdt Lar Joye | 25 Attendees. Photos on website |
| 19 February | Committee Meeting: | Secretary | Minutes Circulated |
| 23 April | Field Trip: Ordnance School and National Stud | Col Tom Carter (Retd) Col S. McDermott (Retd) | Deferred to 2021 on 11 March |
| 23 April | Committee Meeting: Officers' Mess, McKee Barracks | Secretary | Cancelled 11 March |
| 09 May | Defence Forces Veterans' Day: Collins Bks, Dublin | Secretary | Cancelled 18 March |
| 28/29 May | Field Trip: Fort Shannon, Foynes Flying Boat Museum, Bunnratty, Árd na Crusha and St John's Castle | Capt Pete Murray (Retd) | Deferred to 2021 on 11 March |
| TBA | Arty Shoot – Glen Imaal | Col S. McDermott (Retd) | |
| 25 June | Committee Meeting: McKee Barracks | Secretary | Cancelled on 22 May 20 |
| 11 July | Commemoration - Islandbridge | President | |
| 12 July | National Day of Commemoration | President | |
| 20 August | Annual Golf Competition & Dinner: Birr | Comdt O'Flanagan (Retd) Comdt M. Flood (Retd) | Deferred to 2021 on 10 Aug 20 |
| 09 September | Arty Decades' Reunion - Anniversary of PDF, FCA and AR Commissioning 1950-2020, Visit to Cadet School and Lunch in Military College | Col M. Smyth (Retd) | Deferred to 2021 on 22 May |
| 24 September | Committee Meeting: McKee Barracks | Secretary | |
| 04 – 08 Oct | Foreign Field Trip: Artillery Installations, London | Comdt M. Flood (Retd) | Deferred to 2021 on 22 May |
| TBA Nov | Annual Mass & Wreath Laying &: McKee Barracks | Secretary | Deferred to 2021 |
| 04 December | AGM and St Barbara's Day Lunch: McKee Barracks | Secretary | Cancelled |