



Óglaigh
na hÉireann
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



THE ARTILLERY CORPS 1923 TO 2023



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STRENGTHEN
THE NATION

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INTRODUCTION



*Quick Action
105mm shoot*

INTRODUCTION

CHIEF OF STAFF FOREWORD

I am delighted as Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, to be associated with the centenary celebrations of the Artillery Corps. The Irish Free State first saw the deployment of artillery in June 1922 with the siege of the Four Courts and later formalised this with the establishment of an Artillery Corps on the 23rd of March 1923 at Islandbridge Barracks (now Clancy Bks) Dublin, with a strength of 11 Officers and 62 Enlisted Personnel. This was further expanded on the 10th July 1923 with the establishment of the 1st Field Artillery Battery in 1924 with a strength of 116 Officers, NCO's and Gunners equipped with four 18 pounder guns.

From the beginning, the Artillery Corps provided Fire Support to the National Army's operations and continues to do so today, organised along conventional lines with habitual direct support batteries for the manoeuvre elements. It later expanded its responsibilities to include an air defence capability providing point defence for vital installations and security for visiting dignitaries including American Presidents and the Queen of the UK. To this day, the Artillery Corps continues to fulfil an ever expanding and important role in the Defence Forces. Then, as now, its performance was distinguished by loyalty, pride and professionalism. From its origins, and over the last one hundred years, the Artillery Corps has continuously represented all that is best in military service.

The Corps has provided Indirect Fire Support to numerous Peace Support Operations since its inception most notable in action during the Congo of 1961/63 and more recently in UNIFIL with the provision of illumination & battle damage assessments on numerous occasions in the designated area of operations. Artillery expertise has also been provided to UN operations, in particular in the production of battle damage assessments in support of various inquiries and reports for the UNIFIL and UNTSO missions, and more recently the Corps has provided of UAV advisors to the Force Commander in MONUSCO, Congo and STA expertise in the UNDOF mission Golan.

The Artillery Corps has consistently embraced modern tactics, techniques, procedures (TTP's) and technologies more recently in the areas of Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA), Fire Control and Simulation. Its capabilities now extend to the deployment of unmanned aerial systems, ground surveillance radar and thermal imaging systems to support the production of clearer operational picture. These TTP's are honed through the use of modern simulation systems refining skills prior to deployments. These capabilities have been integrated into several EU Battlegroups and ongoing Peace Support Operations. More recently, the Corps successfully completed a NATO Operational Capability Concept (OCC) Assessment achieving a much-coveted interoperable status, further demonstrating the professionalism central to the Corps ethic.

To this day, the Artillery Corps continues to fulfil an important role in the Defence Forces. Then, as now, its performance remains distinguished by loyalty, pride and professionalism. From its origins, and over the last 100 years, the Artillery Corps has continuously represented all that is best in military service. In the future, whatever complex challenges lie ahead, at home or abroad, I am confident that the Artillery Corps will continue to forge ahead, exhibiting in the process its characteristic traits of initiative, resilience and loyalty. Your predecessors have bequeathed to you, the present standard bearers, a legacy of loyalty, professionalism and distinguished service. You can be justifiably proud of the traditions you have inherited, and I am honoured to join with you to celebrate this historic centenary commemoration.



Seán Clancy
Lieutenant General
Chief of Staff

THE ARTILLERY CORPS 1923 TO 2023



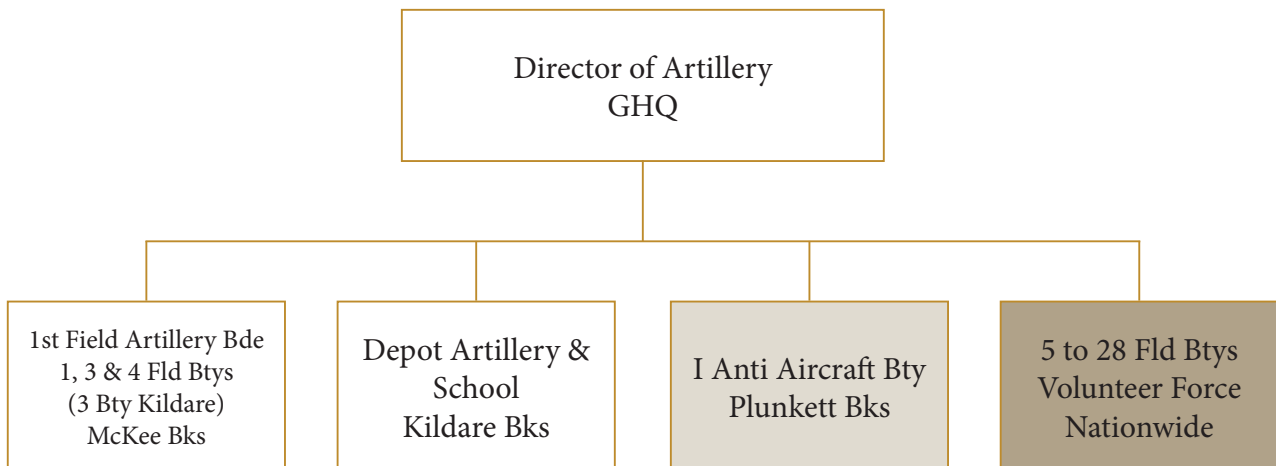
Laying Onto a Bearing

ORGANISATION OF THE ARTILLERY CORPS 1923-2023

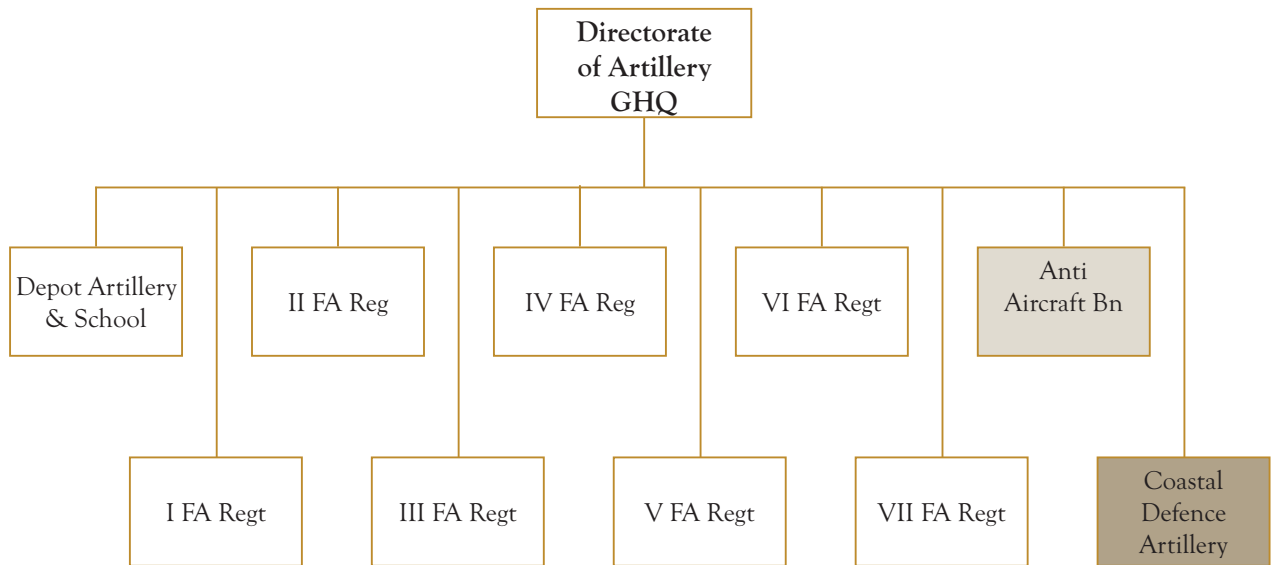
Organisation of the Artillery Corps 1923 - Present
1923 (DFR No. 3), Total = 1 Battery



1934 (DFR 49/34), Total = 28 Btys (inc 1 AA Bty)

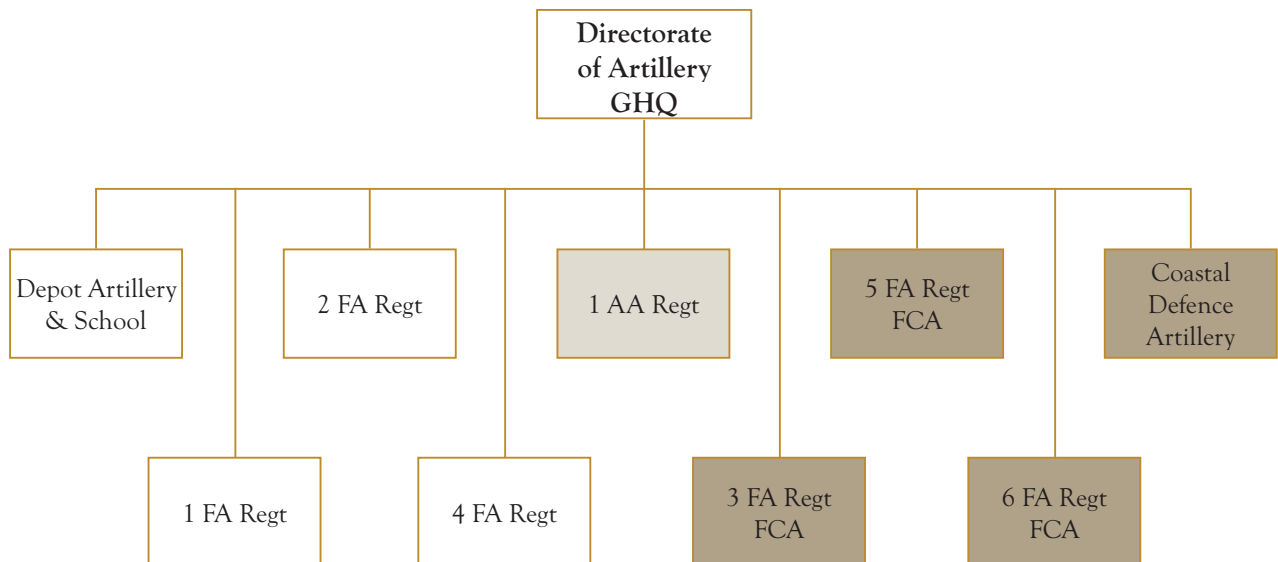


1943

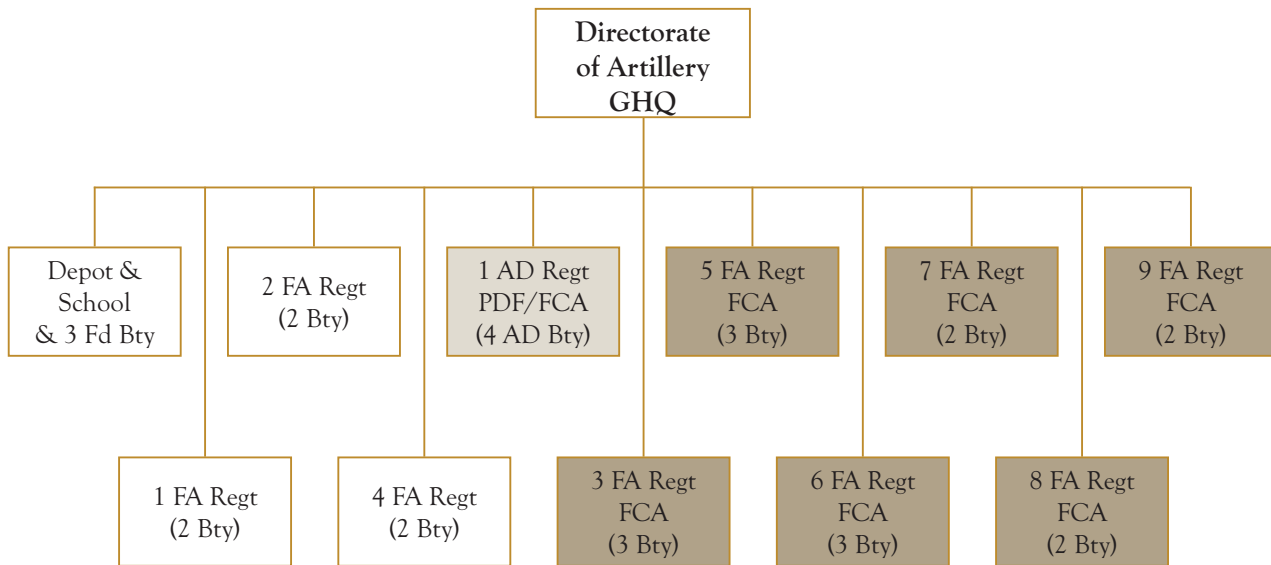


NB: Between 1948 and 1959, a number of independent FCA Batteries were in existence. These included the 41st and 42nd Btys in Dublin, the 44th and 45th Btys in Cork and the 46th Bty in Mullingar.

1959

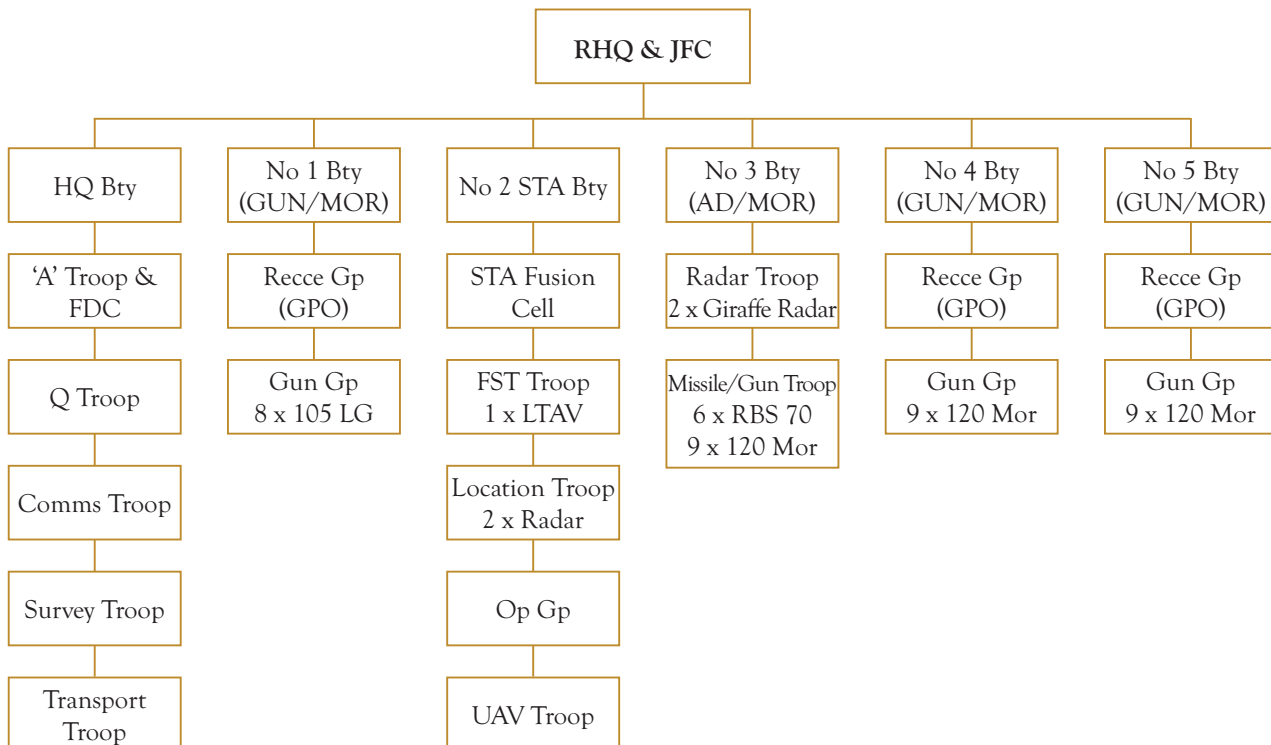


1979 Total = 26 Btys (incl 4 AD Btys)



2012

The Defence Forces embarked on reorganisation in November 2012 which led to the creation of two Brigade Artillery Regiments. These were no longer Field Artillery Regiments as they also had Air Defence elements. With the introduction of the Single Force Concept, the Reserve Artillery regiments merged into these two Regiments. The current organisation of 1st & 2nd Brigade Arty Regt is as shown below.



History of 1 Bde Arty Regt 2012-2023

Inception

2012 saw major changes in the Defence Forces as a whole. These changes were most strongly felt in Collins Barracks, as the 4 Infantry Battalion, which had served the state since its foundation, was disbanded. 1 Bde Arty Regt took over as the lead unit in Barracks. The unit became noticeably busier in this period as the unit became solely responsible for the administration of the barracks. A large number of personnel who were formerly of the 4 Inf Bn, joined the new 1 Bde Arty Regt and personnel across all ranks needed to be re-trained as gunners, detachment commanders and as young officers. All new personnel who transferred to the unit had to undergo the necessary Artillery Corps career courses, so that they could operate effectively as a member of the Corps, including the ability to deploy overseas in that role. The Gunner's Course is the basic training for all personnel within the Artillery Corps. 1 Bde Arty Regt strives to run at least one Gunner's Course every year in order to train all personnel as soon as possible.



High angle shoot, Gunner's Course, 2020

One of the first events that 1 Bde Arty Regt was involved in was the 75th anniversary of the handover of the Treaty Fort, Fort Mitchell, Spike Island. On 11 July 2013, the new 1 BAR conducted a 21 gun salute with the 12 pounder guns on Spike Island and a Guard of Honour, led by Lt T. Cunningham, for An Taoiseach, Mr E. Kenny T.D. The Parade Commander, Lt Col T. Daly, presided over an excellent display of ceremonial gunnery from the DCs and Gunners of 1 Bde Arty Regiment under the control of Lt P. Farrell.

The Regiment had only moved to Collins Barracks, on 28 September 1998, when Murphy Barracks, Ballincollig closed its gates for the final time, as part of another national re-organisation of the Defence Forces. This was an extremely sad day for many members of the unit, who had spent the majority of their career in the Defence Forces stationed in Ballincollig. The closure of the barracks occurred alongside six army barracks being closed that year, many with an artillery or artillery support tradition. These included Clancy Barracks, Dublin (The site of the foundation of the Corps) and Magee Barracks, Kildare (Home of Depot Artillery and the Air Defence Regiment for many years). The dignified departure from Murphy Barracks was a tribute to all those and their families who had served there. The final parade, which was comprised of both PDF and FCA elements, drew a large crowd, and was applauded by the local community, as they marched out of the barracks for the last time, led by Commanding Officer Lt Col C. Lalor and RSM B. Barry, followed by trucks with guns in tow.

From 29 Sep 1998, 1 Bde Arty Regt was stationed in Collins Barracks Cork. 4 Inf Bn was the lead unit in the barracks when 1 Bde Arty Regt arrived. 1 Bde Arty Regt was stationed in what is now the duty block and had to quickly adapt to life in their new surroundings. The next number of years saw a number of changes to units of the Artillery Corps, in terms of both structure and equipment, as the process of merging Field Artillery and Air Defence Artillery into Brigade Artillery Regiments matured.



The Last 25 pounder shoot, Glen of Imaal

Through the late 1990's and early 2000's, the 25 Pounders Field Guns and 120mm Brandt AM 50 Mortars were phased out and the RUAG 120mm Mortars were introduced, to join the existing L118 105mm Light Guns already in service. This period saw an intensive phase of upskilling and reskilling within the unit. Upon the retirement of RSM Barry, RSM O'Driscoll took over the Sgt Major's office. It was during this period that the final live shoot of the 25 Pounders took place. This shoot drew a large attendance, as personnel bade a fond farewell to the guns on which they had cut their teeth. The 25 Pounders continue to be fired in Ceremonial Roles to this day, such as at the 21 gun salute for the Tall Ships in 2008 in Dunmore East, which was conducted by 1 Bde Arty Regt personnel.

2005 saw further major changes for our Reserve personnel, as the FCA became the Reserve Defence Force. The 8th Field Artillery Regiment FCA, became the 31st Field Artillery Regt, as the units began the process of amalgamation. The amalgamation was finalised after the 2012 Re-Organisation. The 31st Regt was disbanded, and the personnel were posted to 4 and 5 Battery of 1 Bde Arty Regt, under the single force concept.

Overseas

1 Bde Arty personnel serve overseas on a continuous basis. Personnel have most recently served in the STA element of the Infantry Group in UNDOF (Syria), in the Mortar Platoon of the Recce Coy-Irish Bn in UNIFIL (Lebanon), in the Training Teams of EUTM (Mali) and UAV element of MONUC (DR of Congo). In UNIFIL and UNDOF, troops of 1 Bde Arty Regt perform patrols, observation, security and local engagement tasks in addition to their artillery specific tasks in their respective mission areas, whilst maintaining their operational and individual skills.

Members of 1 Bde Arty Regt have also previously deployed to Africa, completing numerous tours of duty in Liberia, Chad and Eritrea. Irish troops deployed to Camp Ciara in Chad as part of the EUFOR Mission in 2008 and the UN follow on mission MINURCAT until 2010. Members of 1 Bde Arty Regt deployed with the Mortar Platoon, Recce Coy. These Mortar Platoon were tasked with camp security as the camp's main defensive firepower with their 120mm mortars and also deployed on long patrols in an arduous environment of arid savannah - semi desert. These multi-day patrols were both physically and mentally strenuous, as they covered long distances, in temperatures of up to 45 degrees Celsius. Some 1 Bde Arty personnel can be seen in the RTE 2 documentary, Baz's Extreme World, of the mission, including Platoon Sgt G. O'Rourke, Cpls E. Murphy and M Hennessy. Conditions in the previous UNMIL mission in Liberia were different, as troops had to deal with the consequences of the more tropical conditions, in particular the rainy season, when roads and forest tracks turned into muddy quagmires. Troops of 1 Bde Arty Regt deployed as part of the QRF in UNMIL operating around the Liberian capital of Monrovia.

1 Bde Arty Regt have been the lead unit on an overseas mission on one occasion, which was on the 50 Inf Gp, deploying to UNDOF from September 2015 to April 2016. Led by Lt Col D. McKeivitt and Sgt Maj Dineen, the deployment was a major success, with the unit performing all its operational duties successfully and all troops returning home safely. The operational environment was tense throughout, as parties engaged in the Syrian Civil War were active not too far from the gates of the Camp Faouar on the Golan Heights. The unit conducted a variety of patrols, security and observation tasks to a high standard throughout the tour.

Training, Operations and Responsibilities

In order to exercise the skills of the personnel in their artillery role, the Regiment regularly fires in the Defence Forces range in the Glen of Imaal, Co Wicklow. However this training area has its limitations and the artillery in particular are constrained by the physical dimensions of the range. In order to address some of these constraints the Regiment has planned and fired from the coast to targets at sea off the Co. Cork shoreline. These shoots have been joint in nature, as they involve numerous assets across all three elements of the Defence Forces. The Naval Service have secured the sea area for the shoot, with the deployment of a picket ship (LE Eithne PV 31 for the initial shoot) and 1 Bde Arty Regt Fire Support Teams (FSTs) embarked on Naval Service vessels and on Air Corps AW139 Helicopters. The 105mm Light Guns were fired on supercharge, as the guns were free of the previously mentioned range limitations of the Glen of Imaal. This new experience was a challenge for all the gunners on these shoots. To date, two such shoots have been organised and have been a major success for 1 Bde Arty Regt.

1 Bde Arty Regt took part in the Defence Forces major contribution to the national effort in the battle against Covid-19 Pandemic. On 17 March 2020, the National Health Emergency was declared. OC 1 Bde Arty Regt, Lt Col N. Maher, initiated force protection measures within barracks in order that the regiment could continue to provide support to the national effort. Duty pods were created to minimise potential transmission of Covid-19 between personnel. Standby platoons were formed to be ready for any taskings as required. A Tactical Operations Centre (TOC) was established to coordinate the response to requests from the DFHQ & HSE for support in the south of the country. By the end of March 2020, these taskings were coming quick and fast. Minibuses were fitted with protective Perspex screens in order to allow our personnel to transport patients, who did not have their own means of travel, for screening or treatment. The next major tasking, starting 05 April 2020, was the transfer of PPE, which was arriving from China into Dublin Airport, across the country. Upwards of 100 tonnes of PPE were moved on a daily basis, for each three day period in Dublin. Over the course of nine three day deployments, personnel from 1 Bde Arty Regt and other Collins Barracks units always willingly volunteered for this vital task. After this, 1 Bde Arty Regt personnel deployed to nursing homes to assist in duties there, to back fill staff shortages due to Covid-19. The Regiment's Military First Responders (MFRs) were trained in how to administer the Covid-19 Vaccine in the DFTC. From this point onward, these 1 Bde Arty Regt MFRs and supporting personnel were tasked to operate in the Vaccination Centers. Given the circumstances, 1 Bde Arty Regt personnel were delighted to make a contribution to the national effort to contain the pandemic in a variety of roles, which demonstrated our professionalism, skills, flexibility and teamwork. It was rewarding to see the Defence Forces initiative in response to Covid-19 receiving public praise.

1 Bde Arty Regt maintains a number of installations such as Bere Island and Fort Templebreedy. Bere Island continues to be used quite regularly by all units in the Defence Forces for troops in training or in preparation for brigade and all-army shooting competitions. From 2021, 1 Bde Arty Regt began to conduct numerous training exercises in Fort Templebreedy. Artillery Field Gunners Courses conducted dry deployment exercises there and BS C. Hoare developed Exercise Bastion. This exercise is now run twice a year to upskill members of the Regiment. Throughout this exercise troops are exercised on the FLIR RTAS, Foxtrack Ground Surveillance Radar and regimental signals. The exercise gained public attention when troops were pictured by local media conducting a seaborne landing in Fountainstown, before tactically inserting into the Fort. Number 2 STA Bty, under BS Hoare is continually progressing the STA SOPs within the Regiment. A simulator room for FST and UAV training has been established, allowing qualified personnel to conduct virtual training to maintain skills, trial new methods and prepare for operations and exercises. Through the use of Exercise Bastion, the conduct of FST Technical Assistants (aka Acks) and FST Commander Courses, the STA element is gaining in experience and developing its expertise. The FLIR RTAS has given FST elements a clear thermal targeting system over long distances. The M-UAV which entered service in the early 2000s provides accurate, visual and timely information to the commander.

SECTION 1 · Artillery Corps

As lead unit in the Bde HQ Barracks, 1 Bde Arty Regt is the custodian of the history of the Collins Barracks Garrison and our predecessor units. The garrison of Collins Barracks Cork has served the state since its inception. The importance of this was seen with the unveiling of the Hall of Heroes in the museum on 20 September 2019. The Hall of Heroes displays the citations of all the personnel who have been awarded Military Medals for Gallantry, Distinguished Service Medals, Jadotville Medals and, very importantly, Military Stars for those of the Garrison who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

At the unveiling of the Hall of Heroes, the sister of Pte Stephen Griffin, who was mortally wounded in At Tiri, South Lebanon in April 1980 and was posthumously awarded the Military Star, remarked at how proud she was to see her brother commemorated on a plaque in the barrack museum. The brother of Capt Adrian Ainsworth, who was awarded the Military Medal for Gallantry in the same action, spoke of the pride of seeing his brother represented. The opening of the Hall of Heroes was marked by a parade of both serving members of 1 Bde Arty Regt and veterans of Collins Barracks on the parade square in Collins Barracks. Museum curator Sgt D McGarry, 1 Bde Arty Regt, is keen to pass on the history of the Garrison and the men in the Hall of Heroes. The museum continues to gather and share the history of the barracks to Defence Forces members and civilian visitors..



Mortar Platoon, Recce Coy, 119 INF BN, UNIFIL. Pl Commander Capt D. Clifford

1 Bde Arty Regt has, since its creation, been successful in a number of Defence Forces competitions. A team from 1 Bde Arty Regt won an inter-services Gaelic Football Competition in Ballincollig in 2017. The team was put together by Sgt M. Hennessey. Sport has played a major part in the regiment over recent years. The Cunningham Cup team has been organised and run by Sgt S. Desmond and more recently Lt R. Sheehan and Gnr D. Murray. Shooting competitions have also been a happy hunting ground for the unit. Between 2010 and 2019 was a very successful period for 1 Bde Arty Regt. Sgt P. Walsh won multiple All Army Pistol competitions, with Captain D. Barry winning the individual All Army in 2019 and Capt P. Farrell, who captained the team in 2017. Gnrs P. Byrne and R. O'Donoghue have also won on the Rifle Individual and Gnr J. Duggan has won on the GPMG Individual Competitions. Gnr Byrne has three All Army Individual titles with his last coming in 2017.

There have been a number of personnel from 1 Bde Arty Regt representing the Defence Forces in sport. Gnrs I. Lordan and R. McCarthy travelled to Oman to represent the Defence Forces Soccer Team at the CISM World Military Games in 2018. Lt L. McEvoy, 2/Lt A. McGuigan and coach Sgt S. Desmond represented the Defence Forces Women's Soccer Team at the CISM Military Games in Washington in 2022. Sgt S. Shanahan has represented the Defence Forces in Gaelic Football, Gnrs D. Mangan in Hurling and J. Long in Boxing, to name but a few. Sport continues to play a major role in 1 Bde Arty Regt and hopefully this will continue. Outside of the Defence Forces, Gnr D. Manning has fought numerous MMA fights at national and international level.

Decade of Centenaries

From 2013 to 2023, the nation commenced the decade of centenaries to commemorate key events from the nation's revolutionary period 1913-1923. Personnel from 1 Bde Arty Regt participated in the Centenary March Past at the GPO on Easter Sunday 27 March 2016. 1 Bde Arty Regt played a major role in both local and national ceremonies throughout the decade of centenaries such as the state funeral of Thomas Kent in 2015, 99 years after he was executed by Crown Forces. 2022 was a particularly busy year of ceremonial for 1 Bde Arty Regt. On 17 April 2022, the Easter Sunday Tri-service Guard of Honour outside the GPO in Dublin was led by Parade Commander Lt Col A. Keohane, OC 1 Bde Arty Regt, and the Parade Sgt Major was RSM M. Ronayne, RSM 1 Bde Arty Regt, and OIC Guard of Honour Capt D. Sheahan, A/Battery Commander No 2 Bty 1 Bde Arty Regt. The Guard of Honour was carried out on O'Connell Street Dublin for President Michael D. Higgins.

1 Bde Arty Regt again took a lead role in the commemoration of the Centenary of the Handover of Victoria Barracks (now Collins Barracks) from the Crown Forces. On 18 May 2022, led by Lt Col A. Keohane and RSM M. Roynane, the Regiment and other units of Collins Barracks Cork marched through the old main gate of the Barracks in front of a large crowd. An Taoiseach Micheál Martin, GOC 1 Bde Brig Gen B. Cleary and Lt Col Keohane spoke on the occasion, emphasising the positive role the garrison plays in the local community.

However, perhaps the most important ceremonial event carried out by 1 Bde Arty Regt was the Centenary commemoration of the death of General Michael Collins in Béal na Bláth on 22 August 2022. Lt E. Murphy led the Guard of Honour and Lt P. Grennan led the Honour Guard. With nearly 10,000 people in attendance, the Regiment was praised for the standard of drill throughout the ceremony.

At the beginning of 2023, there are numerous positive indications for the Regiment to look forward to. The Commission on the Defence Forces has been adopted by the government and is being implemented. The commission plans to deliver a series of new structures and equipment which will be of benefit to the Corps as a whole. The centenary of the Artillery Corps will be celebrated on 01 June 2023 in Collins Barracks.

History of 2 Bde Arty Regt 2012-2023

Inception

The current 2 Bde Arty Regt may, on its face, be one of the youngest units in the Defence Forces having been formed in the wake of the re-organisation of the Defence Forces in late 2012, but it draws upon the rich heritage of the units amalgamated in its construction. This re-organisation saw the consolidation of the Artillery Corps into two line units, one for each of the newly consolidated brigades of the Army. Each unit, distinct from the Field Artillery Regiments which preceded them, and distinct from the Air Defence (AD) Regiment which it subsumed, provides both field artillery and the air defence capabilities to battery level. Developing these capabilities in a new unit was a significant challenge and would see the Regiment create its own unique and distinct character, influenced but not defined by the personnel and traditions that came predominantly from 2 Fd Arty Regt, 4 Fd Arty Regt and 1 AD Regt, along with personnel from 4 Cav Sqn, who had moved to Custume Bks following the closure of Connolly Bks in Longford.

The first challenge for this new unit was its new location in Custume Bks, Athlone. 2 BAR's artillery predecessor units had been located in McKee Bks - Dublin, Columb Bks - Mullingar and Plunkett Bks - Curragh. This brought to the fore one of the prime elements in all Artillery operations: Logistics. The collected holdings of each unit were transported to Custume Bks, where the Logs staff carefully checked them against the CS.41 created to support the new Brigade Artillery Regiment. Field Artillery Officers and NCOs were forced to reckon with a bewildering variety of Air Defence equipment and vice versa. Appropriate storage measures needed to be found to ensure that sensitive equipment was stored correctly, in our new home alongside 6 Inf Bn, the other major unit in Custume Bks. Through the diligence of the logs staff, the arms and equipment of this new unit were gathered, accounted for and assigned Gun Parks/ Stores until it seemed that artillery had always been there.

At the same time, the cultural transformation of disparate units drawn under one banner was driven by the Regt OC, Lt Col R. Yorke and RSM N. O'Callaghan. It was seen as vital that a new identity be created to ensure unit cohesion and a sense of collective belonging. This was achieved by a rigorous programme of training and exercises. This effort delivered both that the capabilities required of the new Regt in its support of state security and the inculcation of the Artillery spirit.



120mm Projectile in Flight

The new Regt quickly faced the additional challenge in 2013 of delivering an integrated unit, aligned with the Single Force Concept. Reserve Defence Force (RDF) gunners would be integrated with Permanent Defence Force (PDF) gunners in the new Brigade Artillery Regiments.

Organisation

The Regt in its current configuration consists of three PDF batteries and two RDF batteries. These are 1 Gun Bty, 2 STA Bty and 3 AD Bty (PDF), and 4 & 5 Bty (RDF). The Gun Bty's primary focus is the provision of Indirect Fire Support via both the L118 105mm Light Gun and the RUAG 120mm Heavy Mortar. The Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) Bty provides STA support using the ISTAR sensors of the Regt, such as the Orbiter MUAV, the Foxtrack GSR and the Recon TAS as part of the FST and Fire Control suites. The AD Bty provides a tactical Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) operating the Giraffe Primary Radar, with RBS 70 missiles and 12.7mm HMGs for local defence of positions. In addition, 3 AD Bty maintains a capability as a heavy mortar battery.

The RDF batteries are integrated within the Regt following the adoption of the Single Force Concept and train alongside their PDF counterparts, regularly supporting unit live fire training. The RDF personnel of 2 Bde Arty Regt are an invaluable component of our organisation, without which we would be at a significant disadvantage. 4 and 5 Bty are drawn predominantly from the 54 Regt, based in Mullingar and Galway, 31 Regt, based in Tipperary, and 62 Regt, based in Dublin, with elements also drawn from 54 MPC, previously based in Athlone and Galway, and 56 Inf Bn, based in Tullamore. The re-organisation of the Defence Forces in 2012, and the subsequent adoption of the Single Force Concept, amalgamated these unit identities under the 2 BAR flag alongside their PDF counterparts for the first time.



Giraffe Radar Tracking Targets in the Curragh

Training, Operations and Responsibilities

The new structure outlined for the Bde Arty Regt necessitated a new approach to training. The respective roles of each Bty in supporting the others had to be established, clarified and exercised to ensure operational effectiveness. Regular exercises ensured that the capabilities of the new unit were developed and that a sense of cohesion among soldiers united under this new banner was inculcated. Live fire exercises, with integrated RDF personnel, created an enhanced training experience for all participants, filling out batteries and bridging any gaps which previously might have separated regulars and reserve

elements. 2 Bde Arty Regt continues to lean on its RDF personnel for support in training activities and promotes a strong sense of belonging for reserve personnel.

Alongside the training load imposed by the new structure, the Regt was required to contribute a significant level of On-Island operational support to the new 2 Bde. As the smallest major unit within the Bde, it would take its place in the rotation for deployments to Prison Security Platoons and other Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP i.e An Garda Síochána) functions. The unit has sustained this considerable operational output in support of our national security in large part due to the huge commitment and devotion to duty of its Gunners.

In a conventional operations context, the unit continues to deliver the contingent capability of providing fire support to each of the Bde's four infantry battalions as required and a range of sensors and ISTAR instruments for information gathering. It demonstrates its capability in this regard by participating in Unit and Bde exercises and contributing elements to Defence Force Training Centre Courses, Exercises and Operational Capability Concept (OCC) evaluations.

The unit quickly began to pass on its values and traditions to new entrants to the Defence Forces, with the first soldiers in the newly established unit trained in 2013 in Custume Bks. Officers and NCOs relished the challenge of inculcating a rapidly developing sense of unit identity to new recruits, whilst respecting our predecessors units and drawing inspiration from the history of these units and what they achieved. In 2021, 2 Bde Arty Regt broke from the tradition within the Defence Forces of identifying recruit platoons by a number and welcomed the Sgt Paddy Mulcahy DSM Recruit Platoon to Custume Bks, under the command of Lt I. Galloway and Pl Sgt G. Fay. This Platoon naming remembered the contribution of Sgt Mulcahy, who was killed in action at Elizabethville, Congo, in December 1961 while serving with A Coy, 36 Inf Bn and posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. His DSM citation reads:

“For distinguished service with the United Nations Force in the Republic of the Congo, in displaying leadership and devotion to duty to a high degree. Although painfully wounded during hostilities in December 1961, he refused to leave his platoon and subsequently, whilst looking after his men, he received the wound from which he died.”

Overseas

2 Bde Arty Regt has continuously supplied officers and troops across the spectrum of Defence Forces overseas operations, in the tradition of those Artillery units which preceded it. From its beginnings in 2012 it provided troops to the Heavy Mortar Platoon, Recce Coy, Irish Inf Bn in UNIFIL. This heavy mortar capability has been the cornerstone of Irish fire support overseas, going back to the earliest deployment of Artillery to the Congo in November 1962, and continuing to provide troops to this invaluable asset has been the primary overseas contribution of the Regt.

In 2013, the Irish government agreed to send an Infantry Group to UNDOF, in Syria, following the withdrawal of the Austrian contingent and the escalation of hostilities in what was fast becoming an open Civil War. This deployment would consist of an armoured Force Reserve Company for the UNDOF mission, to respond to any and all threats or requests from UN Military Observers deployed with UNTSO for reassurance or assistance. Supporting the FRC was an Artillery Surveillance and Target Acquisition (STA) detachment which offered a mobile, armoured observation capability and provided a wealth of detailed reports on the conflict as it transpired between the Syrian Arab Armed Forces (SAAF) and the Anti-Government Armed Elements (AGAEs) and also to the ongoing unresolved conflict, halted by the 1974 Disengagement of Forces, between Syria and Israel, which UNDOF was there to supervise.

The soldiers of the Regt have also participated in a variety of other small missions at all levels since its formation, from KFOR (Kosovo) and EUFOR BiH (Bosnia) in Europe, to EUTM Mali, MONUSCO (DR of Congo) and MINURSO (W Sahara) in Africa. The wealth of experience across the spectrum of international deployments, from operations, training and a variety of HQ staff functions is a consistent feature of the unit, which traces its overseas heritage back to the initial deployments with that first Heavy Mortar Troop to ONUC (Congo) in 1962.

Culture and the Future

In looking at the history of a relatively new unit, formed from the elements of four main disbanded units, it is important to look at that history as a lens through which to envision the future. Each of the Defence Forces units which came before us represented a segment in time and a specific set of needs determined by the state for its effective defence. 2 Bde Arty Regt represents the latest evolution in that path, combining the attributes and, among its senior leadership, the personnel of those units amalgamated in 2012.



Charity Gun Pull Through Mullingar

The majority of the personnel in the unit now have joined the Defence Forces since the 2012 re-organisation, and having been trained in that new joint culture, they look to the future, and the future of the Artillery Corps is bright. Recent developments, such as upgrades to the missiles for the RBS 70 system are likely to be supplemented by the purchase of enhanced primary radar capabilities. This should strengthen the Corps's ability to enable the manoeuvre and supporting elements' operations under a protected GBAD umbrella. Surveillance and Target Acquisition capabilities continue to evolve with the adoption of improved target acquisition systems and the continued evolution of the MUAV programme. At the centre of the corps remains the requirement to deliver fire in support of combined arms operations and the L118 105mm Light Gun Upgrade programme is likely to see improvements to that system increasing its relevance into the future. The contemporary conflict landscape acts as a reminder that fire support above all else is a key enabler of manoeuvre, both in the sky and on land, and whether that landscape be Ukraine or Simba Hill, artillery remains the king of battle.

History of the Artillery School

History

After the establishment of the Artillery Corps, a center of excellence and instruction was required in order to maintain standards, to develop tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) and to oversee training throughout the Artillery Corps. The Depot Artillery was established in 1931 and based in Magee Barracks Kildare. The Depot provided the Defence Forces with both its instruction in Artillery matters through the Artillery School & its training support Field Artillery Battery and also the Capability Development & Sustainment functions through the Directorate of Artillery and Artillery Technical Staff & Stores element. These capabilities were small and severely tested by the large expansion of the Army in the run up to and during the Emergency period (1939-1945) and again with the Defence Forces' expansion into international Peace Keeping/Support Operations from 1960 onwards and the need for Vital Point / VIP security, in particular GBAD, from the 1970s onwards.

These roles posed significant challenges. Some of these included how to conduct Artillery live fire training whilst being limited almost exclusively to the Glen of Imaal or Gormanston AD Ranges, how to introduce Artillery practices into an Army that was almost exclusively infantry and Counter Insurgency, but in particular the challenges around resourcing of Artillery units (in particular logistically).

As the Army changed over time, through multiple re-organisations, Depot Artillery was disbanded in 1998, when Magee Barracks in Kildare closed. The Artillery School survived and moved to the Curragh, initially as part of the Combat Support College. The Artillery School found its new home in Connolly Barracks in the Curragh Camp, where Magee House now houses the majority of the Artillery School's facilities and offices.

Training, Operations, and Responsibilities

The Artillery School today is part of the Military College, in the Defence Force Training Centre (DFTC) and is the centre of excellence for Artillery training in the Defence Forces. The Artillery Corps' knowledge has expanded significantly over time through our experience of deployments of Artillery both at home and in overseas missions, and through continuous liaison with other military Artillery institutions and attendance on foreign courses, including a close relationship with the Royal School of Artillery in Larkhill in the United Kingdom. The Artillery School is responsible for the supervision of all Live Fire Artillery training, and conducts the majority of the corps' career courses and technical courses. The Artillery School also organises and conducts Artillery exercises. As well as these more obvious roles for a military school, the Artillery School also plays a vital role as the centre for Research and Development into best practices and equipment in Artillery affairs internationally, in order to maintain the highest knowledge possible of developments in Artillery, and to advise the Director of Combat Support and ISTAR accordingly.



Instruction on the Foxtrack Ground Surveillance Radar

Preparing for the Future

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine and the use of Artillery based systems on current peace support operations around the globe demonstrate that Artillery remains a key component of combined arms warfare and military operations for a modern armed force. Even prior to the Ukraine conflict, the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces published in early 2022 specifically highlighted the requirement for the Army to increase its fire power and increase the size of its Artillery Regiments. Ongoing research, which is also done in conjunction with members of the two Brigade Artillery Regiments, includes but is not limited to: mechanised Artillery options for the future, armoured mortar platforms for the future, counter UAS/UAV sensors and effectors, future UAV options, future air defence missile launcher options, Artillery variant Light Tactical Vehicles (LTVs), counter battery radar options, air defence radar options, upgrades to the L118 and L119 105mm Guns, and future force structures for the Artillery Corps. This work is ongoing to ensure that no matter what structure the future Army embraces, the Artillery Corps will be ready to play a vital role and be a key component of the Army of the future.

Strategic Vision

The vision of the Artillery School is to constantly strive to achieve excellence in the professional effectiveness of Artillery Corps personnel by providing them with the skills and knowledge to maximise performance and facilitate operability. This is achieved by creating an environment and ethos that is conducive to study, learning, and personal development. Artillery School staff set the tone and foster such a climate for all students. The Artillery School continuously strives to improve its knowledge base through the experience gained by its instructors in overseas missions and through co-operation with foreign Artillery institutions.

Today the Artillery School is part of the Military College, and is under the stewardship of School Commandant Lt Col N. Maher, Chief Instructor Comdt J. Troy, and Acting Regimental Sergeant Major M. Dinnegan. The Artillery School has a total establishment of 22 staff members.



Mortar Live Fire

Guns of the Artillery Corps



L118 Light Gun



RUAG 120MM MORTAR



RBS 70 MISSILE

Artillery and Fire Support in the Defence Forces of the future.

Capt Brian Clarke

Originally Published in Defence Forces Review 2022

Introduction

The roles that artillery plays can often be overlooked or misunderstood. With an increased requirement for peacekeepers to be able to defend themselves and others, and with war once again waging in Europe, these roles are crucial to successful military operations, and are an essential capability for a modern armed forces. The future disposition of the Defence Forces is being considered by the government following the publication of the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces in 2022. What the Defence Forces may be asked to do in the future is also being considered. At this pivotal point in time for the Irish Defence Forces, it is of great importance to examine and understand the role that artillery plays today, the changes that defence in Ireland is facing, and the key capabilities that a well-resourced and staffed Artillery Corps could bring in the future.

The Role of Artillery in Peace Support Operations and Modern Conflict

In simple terms, the provision of fire support on the ground against land and air based threats is the role of the artillery element of the Army. In Ireland's case these roles breakdown further to providing fire support to land components, light field battery support to Irish peacekeepers, and tactical level air defence to land components. There are a plethora of specific skillsets and capabilities required within these roles. Modern artillery units provide capabilities such as surveillance, target acquisition, use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for reconnaissance, counter battery strikes, enhanced observation, and advanced warning of attack. These skills and capabilities are required for any modern artillery unit to provide their overall core function of fire support. They are also invaluable to commanders in a modern operating environment where information, deterrence, and advanced warning of threats can be decisive in mission success. This remains true for every level of operation from low intensity peacekeeping to conventional war fighting.

Peace Support Operations

Artillery has played a key role in peace support operations. The Irish Artillery Corps first deployed overseas in a fire support role in 1960 as part of Ireland's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo, (ONUC). In 1962 and 1963 the Irish Heavy Mortar Troop of the 38th Infantry Battalion, drawn primarily from the now disbanded 4th Field Artillery Regiment, provided significant amounts of fire in support of friendly forces engaging in battalion and brigade level attacks Irish troops received similar fire support from other contingents during combat, specifically having Indian Army heavy mortars fire on targets for them during the battle to take the town of Elizabethville. Since these early days of Irish peacekeeping, the Artillery Corps has been in an almost constant state of providing a fire support capability to Irish units in places such as Lebanon, Chad, and Liberia. Despite it not being required to provide such a lethal level of support since Ireland's involvement in ONUC, such a capability remains essential. The Artillery Corps has also provided surveillance and observation skills on deployments. The Artillery Corps operates UAVs for target acquisition, surveillance, and information gathering. Artillery UAVs were used in surveillance of armed groups as an early warning system when the Defence Forces were deployed as part of EUFOR Chad in a robust protection of civilians role. The Artillery Corps also provided a mortar battery for force protection on the same mission. Artillery UAVs have even been used in support of the civil authorities at home in Ireland.



Prototype 155mm Howitzer mounted on an APC

Artillery has played a vital role in peace support operations for other militaries also. In 2006 the French Army deployed self-propelled 155mm artillery guns and artillery radar to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), where Irish troops also serve, providing a significant deterrent to aggression against peacekeepers. The French Artillery Corps' COBRA radar is still deployed with UNIFIL and provides a vital service in the tracking and early warning of munitions being fired in the UNIFIL AO. The British Royal Artillery deployed self-propelled 155mm artillery guns to Bosnia in 1996, and their towed L118 105mm light howitzers were used in action to protect the civilian population of Sarajevo city in 1995. These same weapon systems are in use by the Irish Artillery Corps today. The United States Army also deployed 155mm artillery on peace support operations in Bosnia. They provided a significant deterrent to attack and an illumination capability allowing friendly forces to identify snipers and other potential aggressors at night. Artillery has played a significant role on more contemporary peace support operations also. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has within its structure a combined arms brigade containing infantry, special forces, artillery, and other assets established to directly target aggressors. The Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) was forced to use artillery guns, mortars, and attack helicopters in combat in support of MONUSCO after employment of mortars and rockets by armed elements on numerous occasions. It also uses UAVs in support of its operations. Despite being generally seen as an item of war, artillery and all of the required skillsets and capabilities that come with it, are evidently highly valuable to peace support operations.

Modern Conflict

Artillery remains a central component of any NATO standard combined arms force. The long range and mobile artillery gun is considered essential in support to battalion level operations. A combined arms approach to warfighting is the “simultaneous application of several arms to achieve an effect on the enemy [...]”. This approach is central to the doctrine of NATO member states as “[...] no single arm of the land force can operate entirely independently of other arms [...]”. In modern conflict artillery has played a prominent role. The British Army relied heavily on their L118 105mm light howitzers during their Afghanistan campaign, where their relative lightness and ability to be airlifted allowed the Royal Artillery to provide close fire support from Forward Operating Base. Most significant troop contributing countries to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan provided their own artillery capability. More recently, in Ukraine, the centrality of artillery to modern conflict is plainly visible. Russian doctrine favours the liberal use of artillery, while western and NATO doctrine focuses more on precision fires and manoeuvre warfare. After having spent over twenty years fighting insurgencies using many of the same artillery systems in service decades before the Afghanistan and Iraq wars began, the West may have somewhat neglected the development of its artillery, while Russia focused on artillery and indirect fire capabilities. In Ukraine the conflict has been described as an “artillery war” by the Ukrainian Deputy Head of Military Intelligence, with the Ukrainians claiming to be firing between five and six thousands artillery shells per day in the summer of 2022. Ukraine has been given artillery systems from many western countries in order to bolster its chances against the onslaught of the artillery focused Russian Army. As well as equipment, western nations such as the UK and New Zealand have provided artillery specific training to the Ukrainian Army. It has been argued that Ukraine’s best use of artillery would be in countering the artillery threat posed by Russia, as it is central to Russian doctrine. Ukraine has used its own counter battery radar in conjunction with its UAVs to direct the fire of its newly acquired western artillery systems, as well as their older ex-soviet equipment. They have focused on targeting Russian artillery ammo depots and other targets essential to Russia’s indirect fire capabilities. It is clear that artillery retains its status as being a central component of conflict today.

Changes in Irish Defence

The Irish Defence Forces is facing a period of significant change. Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD, has outlined his wishes for the Defence Forces to partake in more specialised, robust, and challenging peace support operations, particularly across the Sahel and in difficult roles such as the protection of civilians. The White Paper on Defence 2015 states that the Defence Forces will maintain a land component with “all-arms conventional military capabilities”. The White Paper also states that NATO is the standard setter for modern armed forces, and that if Ireland is to continue being an acceptable partner for peacekeeping operations then it is “[...] necessary for the Defence Forces to be trained and equipped to NATO standards”. The Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces made clear that the Army should have significantly improved mobility, firepower, and force protection, and that sufficient firepower should be provided to enhance the Army’s combat effectiveness. The Commission has also recommended that the Army have an artillery regiment (or regiments) of five hundred personnel each, which would be a significant increase in size on the current artillery unit structure. The Commission has also outlined its vision of the Defence Forces in the future as being “[...] a partner of choice for robust multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief” operations. During the Commission’s public consultation phase the Department of Foreign Affairs made its own submission where it called for the Defence Forces to partake in more specialised peacekeeping and in closer cooperation with NATO and the EU on peace support operations in the future. In response the government has committed to a relatively significant increase in defence spending, and have signalled their intent to act upon a large amount of the Commission’s recommendations. The Commission has specified in its vision for the Defence Forces that it will “[...] serve in higher intensity peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations” overseas. It is evident that Defence Forces overseas operations may very well lay in more challenging and robust deployments to Africa and other more troubled regions throughout the world in the relatively near future. It is also clearly a goal of government for the Defence Forces to strive towards NATO standards. This goal has only been reinforced by the recommendations of the Commission. Central to a NATO standard ‘conventional all arms’ land component capable of engaging in such deployments in a safe manner, is a credible Artillery Corps.

The Reality of Robust Peacekeeping Operations

The seriousness of Ireland again partaking in more robust peace support operations on a larger scale cannot be understated. In order for a military to contribute to such operations, it must at a minimum be able to defend itself and counter threats. There are some ongoing peace support operations that can be considered robust in this context. Almost all of them are in Africa, and most of them are in the Sahel. Irish Army Ranger Wing soldiers are more than familiar with the robust nature of deployment to this region. In 2020 they survived a significant IED attack on one of their patrols when deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). British peacekeepers deployed to MINUSMA killed two fighters in combat when they were attacked while on patrol in 2021. In the nine years that MINUSMA has been operating since 2013, it has lost 275 peacekeepers, over three times the fatal casualties the Irish Defence Forces has sustained while deployed on UN operations since 1960. Unfortunately many of the Irish soldiers who lost their lives in the service of peace were killed by indirect fire. Indirect fire such as mortars and artillery remains a significant threat to peacekeepers and a major contributor to peacekeeper casualties in Mali today. The European Union Training Mission (EUTM) Mali has even trained the Malian Army in the use of artillery to combat the threat from opposing forces. Established in 2010, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has lost 230 peacekeepers and artillery and mortars are also a significant threat to peacekeepers there. The United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (MINUSFA) has lost 49 peacekeepers since 2011. The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) has also lost 103 peacekeepers since 2011 where mortar attacks on UN posts and patrols are a cause of fatal casualties. This sample of missions reveals that indirect fire remains a major threat to peacekeepers today.



French Caesar 155mm truck mounted Howitzers

The Place of Artillery in the Defence Forces of the Future

The Defence Forces of the future would benefit greatly from an Artillery Corps capable of providing a full spectrum of deployable artillery capabilities, including: mobile fire support, deployable artillery radar, tactical level air defence, counter battery capabilities, UAV capabilities, and surveillance and target acquisition capabilities. Operation of self-propelled guns would significantly enhance the mobility and firepower of the Army, and would allow for significantly greater 'stand-off' range in protection of Irish peacekeepers than the lower level mortar fire support usually deployed with Irish units offers. More mobile and agile self-propelled 105mm howitzers mounted on smaller vehicle such as HUMVEEs and APCs have been developed in the US. In the UK a mounted 155mm howitzer for the newly developed 'Boxer' APC has been developed. The French military use the CAESAR truck mounted 155mm howitzer. Several European Union member states are currently developing a mobile artillery platform through the PESCO framework. Self-propelled artillery is no longer confined to large and expensive tracked vehicles like the older British AS90. The enhanced range provided by mobile artillery guns is superior to lesser capable self-propelled mortars, which can also provide some level of enhanced fire support. Heavy mortar turrets for APCs such as the Finnish manufactured Patria NEMO system provide enhanced mobility and firepower for ground forces. Older fashioned open top mortar carrying APCs such as the Italian Centauro AMC are still widely used and available. Even towed artillery still has a place in modern militaries. The US Army has recently upgraded their version of the L119 105mm light howitzer that is also used by the Irish Artillery Corps. Lighter guns such as these still provide a vital capability in expeditionary military operations.

Tactical level air defence would also be an essential capability. Modern tactical level air defence systems are of use against both conventional low flying manned hostile aircraft, and UAVs which could be used for surveillance or targeting of peacekeepers by threat actors. Non-sophisticated UAVs are readily available and are easily used in attacks as IEDs or IED carriers. In conjunction with air defence radars and missiles, lower level counter UAV systems such as the 'Nightfighter X' now in use by air defence troops in the UK can be used in a force protection role. Modern artillery systems are almost useless without their sensors, and a strong radar capability is also essential. The Commission on the Defence Forces has noted that the current air defence and radar systems used by the Artillery Corps are almost obsolete. This is most likely due to the age of the systems, and the fact that they cannot provide a counter battery capability. Enhanced counter battery and air defence capable radar is essential for the Artillery Corps of any capable armed forces. The British Royal Artillery use the Arthur MAMBA Mobile Artillery Monitoring System mounted on similar vehicles to those currently used for the Irish Artillery Corps' SAAB Giraffe radar system. The Royal Regiment of Australian Artillery use the smaller and more deployable AN/TPQ-48 Lightweight Counter Mortar Radar (LCMR). The Royal Regiment of New Zealand Artillery also use the same system in conjunction with their L119 105mm light towed howitzers. Such systems allow a commander to have advanced warning of indirect fire directed towards their own troops, or civilians they're supposed to protect. These systems also provide accurate data to allow for such threats to be targeted in self-defence if needs be. More modern systems exist, such as the SAAB Giraffe 4A, which can fulfil the role of both counter battery radar and air defence radar together. Both capabilities are no longer exclusive to each other in terms of equipment. All of these capabilities are what is expected of a modern Artillery Corps internationally.



Patria NEMO 120mm APC mounted Mortar

Integration into Overseas Units

The Artillery Corps of the future could significantly improve the safety of Irish peacekeepers, and those they are charged to protect, by providing these capabilities on future robust peace support operations. The Irish military generally deploys overseas units in the form of Infantry Battalions or Infantry Groups. Despite their naming convention, these units are almost always combined arms forces with elements from every corps of the Army, not just the Infantry Corps. This model will likely continue. As part of a future enhanced Artillery Corps' contribution to such units it could provide a package of mobile fire support, advanced warning and threat detection, UAV observation, and air defence capabilities if needs be. Such a package would provide significant abilities for Irish peacekeepers to protect themselves on long range patrols and in camp, and to protect vulnerable civilians. It would also provide a potent deterrence to potential threat actors. These capabilities could even enhance the force protection and abilities of a whole peacekeeping force in a similar fashion to the enhanced capabilities offered to UNIFIL by the presence of the French artillery's COBRA radar.

Conclusion

The role to be played by artillery in modern conflict and peace support operations is central, and can be decisive. The intent of government to involve the Defence Forces in a more meaningful and challenging contribution to peace support operations in the future, while also building on the Defence Forces' current capabilities towards NATO standards, is clear. Ireland currently enjoys a relative freedom of choice in what peace support operations it takes part in. The capabilities examined in this paper are the standards expected of the artillery elements of modern NATO standard armed forces. These standards are what may be expected of the Defence Forces in the future if Ireland is to retain its privileged position in terms of choice of missions. If Ireland were to aspire to these standards for its Artillery Corps, such enhancements could not only benefit the Defence Forces in terms of enhanced protection for its troops and others, but also in its standing as a partner of choice for multinational operations.



STA Detachment Provides Overwatch and Security for Engineer Operations in UNDOF

The Operational Capability Concept Evaluation 2022.

Operational Capabilities Concept

The Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) is a NATO evaluation aimed at testing the levels of interoperability with NATO doctrine of partner nations or potential contributors to work with NATO forces. Over a two year period of preparation, members of 1 Bde Arty Regt learned about NATO STANAGS (Standard Agreements), ensuring that personnel understood them and could operate under their direction. This resulted in the review and update of individual battle books and tac aides for various combat scenarios for the purpose of the exercise. The Operational Capability Concept Evaluation and Feedback Programme (OCC E&F) is a practical, multipurpose military tool that serves as a vehicle for a closer operational relationship between NATO and potential contributors/partners of NATO. The programme is one of a number of partnership programmes the Irish Defence Forces is involved in under the Partnership for Peace initiative that Ireland became a member of in 1999.

Ireland joined the OCC programme in 2016. The programme has been already seen to accelerate Ukraine's military operational ability and is cited as one of the reasons for their sophistication and relative success against Russian forces in recent months. A similar OCC Evaluation was conducted with 1 ACS, the Armoured Cavalry Squadron, in 2017, in which the unit was tasked to conduct an exercise under which it was assessed. The Ranger Wing completed the SOF Evaluation in 2021. In essence the programme, led by Joint Force Commander (JFC) Brunssum since 2012, assesses a military's capability for interoperability, between its units and within individual units. The first part of evaluation, self-evaluation or SEL, which took place in June 2022, tested 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment's ability to operate under NATO doctrine.



OCC Evaluator Flash

The Evaluation.

For the purpose of the exercise, the battery deployed on the ground was designated as P Battery. The self-evaluation took place with the objective of running through the whole OCC process with the aim of fault finding ahead of the main assessment in November. The SEL allowed 1 Bde Arty Regt personnel to adapt TTP's ahead of the full NATO assessment in November. Doctrine, tactics, reporting procedures, communication methods and logistics among others were the main effort. The command element in the Fire Planning Cell (FPC) were tested in terms of their ability to make decisions and enforce them. The SEL allowed the Regt to develop numerous learning outcomes ahead of the NATO evaluation (NEL) in November 22.

1 Brigade Artillery Regiment (1 Bde Arty Regt), was deemed to be Interoperable by NATO assessors after the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC) exercise which took place in November 2022. For the NEL, there were over 20 NATO assessors from various countries led by Chief Instructor Lt Col Sam Mason of the US Navy, with an additional number of NATO personnel who were on their evaluator course. Over 100 troops from 1 Bde Arty Regt, supplemented by members of 2 Bde Arty Regt and other CSS augmentees, deployed to Kilworth for the exercise. The Regiment was assessed in a number of scenarios including CIED and CBRN threats, deployment and actions of an artillery battery, as well as the unit's UAV and FST assets' ability to provide an intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) element to the fire planning cell. All of these events were planned as part of the Main Events List or Main Incidents List (MEL/MIL). The MEL/MIL was used as per serials as part of a normal exercise. The MEL/MIL taskings were launched at specific times to give a logical flow to the exercise. As more events on the lists were conducted the threat level grew, and the personnel of P Bty were forced to adapt to this.

8 Week Training Block.

1 Bde Arty Regt began an intensive 8 week training block from 19 Sep 22. This 8 week training block focused on a number of key aspects that would occur during the evaluation. Throughout the 8 weeks, all ranks were retrained and reassessed in gun drill, fire support techniques, C-IED drills, landing point commander training, heli drills, CIS training, medical training and CBRN training. Each subject in this phase of training was tested through practical exercises and written assessments. A robust physical fitness routine was brought into the unit ahead of the exercise. The unit took part in PT 5 times a week, split between circuit training, battle PTs and unit block runs.

The day before the exercise commenced, P Bty gathered in the gym in Collins Barracks Cork on 07 NOV 22. This was the unit's first encounter with the evaluators as they conducted an in depth kit and admin assessment. All personnel were checked for Army I.D, dog tags, soldier's book and all personal kit and mission essential equipment as per the ORBATT. Once the kit inspection was completed, P Bty was ready to deploy the following day. For the exercise, there were 89 tasks to complete with 376 sub-elements included in the assessment. These elements were presented in the form of questions by the assessors directed to all ranks as part of the exercise. All ranks were tested on their knowledge of the AO, their equipment and their roles as well as the roles of others. 1 Bde Arty Regt prepared a Tac Aide booklet for all personnel in P Bty who were allowed to use this booklet to assist them with answering the assessors' questions. Throughout the training block, all members of P Bty were asked these questions to ensure they had a clear understanding of all elements of the exercise. While the kit inspection was ongoing, Comdt Baston and Capt O'Donoghue's pre-assessment administration was examined by the assessors. The assessors looked at all planning considerations made by 1 Bde Arty Regt ahead of the exercise, looking at areas such as the logistics of the battery operating in Kilworth, transport plans, re-supply plans etc.



Comdt Kevin Baston, receives INTREP in FPC, OCC 2022

The long convoy of P Bty departed Collins Barracks Cork on 08 Nov 22. The HQ element deployed to the Fire Planning Cell in Kilworth Camp, the Command Post and gun detachments deployed to the FOB area in Kilworth and the Fire Support Teams (FST) and UAV detachment deployed to OPs throughout the area. The exercise scenario had an Artillery Battery (Bty) from 1 Bde Arty Regt, known as P Bty, deploy on a fictional UN mandated mission to Kilworth or 'South Dasnu' as it was known for the exercise. Dasnu was a country affected by corruption and ethnic tension; a bitter civil war had recently ended but IDP camps were still coming under attack from a separatist militia known as the Dasnu Union Front (DUF). It was P Bty's mission to deploy to South Dasnu and to act as a deterrent against attacks on civilians in IDP camps by the DUF. The Battery was commanded by Comdt Kevin Baston in the FPC with Capt O'Higgins, Sgt Fenlon and Sgt Forsyth. Battery Captain Paul O'Donoghue deployed in the battery echelon, with BS Christy Hoare. Command Post Officer Lt Joe Everett, Bty Sgt Stephen Kiely and 6 detachment commanders laid out their respective guns.

The first day was a busy day for all involved, as the guns came into action and the OPs were set up and a defensive fire plan and target list were developed by the FSTs. A mobile FST and UAV team were deployed on patrol, where they discovered an emplaced IED. By carrying out their VP drills correctly they were able to report it through the correct channels. That night, OPFOR were observed readying themselves to carry out an attack on the IDP camp. This was reported by the FST, who were able to call in an illumination mission to deter OPFOR from operating in the area.

The second day of the exercise was the busiest. One of the FSTs got eyes on an enemy mortar position being established. An infantry platoon, supplied by 1 Cn Cois, were tasked with assaulting the enemy position. As the attack moved forward, they came under fire. The FST working with the manoeuvre arm commander (MAC), conducted their FST drills on the move, calling in fire (which was simulated with demolitions supplied by 1 Bde Fd Engr Coy) and managed to clear the area. As the battle progressed, a second FST moved through the MAC to establish a new OP.

En route to the OP, the IED, Medical and Casevac serial began. As the FST moved to the spot height in Glenatlucky, a gate had to be opened by a dismount, which triggered a victim operated IED. The medical training was put to test here as the casualty was treated for a severe lower limb injury and internal chest injuries. The casualty was trained to conduct self-



An Orbiter 2B MUAV is launched

aid and applied a tourniquet to the wound, before he was casevaced from the area by the rest of the Fire Support Team. The casualty was then transported to a pre-designated landing site, which was secured by the QRT element, and extracted by an AW139 helicopter. As everyone regrouped, more OPFOR activity was observed. Fast air was called in by a FST located in the AO on the OPFOR position where 2 PC9's from the Air Corps conducted an air strike and neutralised the target, followed by a battle damage assessment conducted by the UAV element.

On the third day of the exercise the battery prepared to deploy to a new gun position. A recce was conducted by the Gun Positioning Officer (GPO), but while en route to the new location, a neighbouring unit requested a fire mission from P Bty, resulting in P Bty conducting their quick action drills. The CPO and detachment commanders took control and got the guns into action, completing their fire mission within minutes. However just as the guns were taken out of action, "GAS, GAS, GAS" was called as a CBRN threat was encountered. A simulated fire at a chemical plant was the cause. The troops got into Dress Cat 4 Romeo and proceeded to a decontamination area established by 12bn troops. The troops were put through the decontamination line as per the CBRN training conducted.

Conclusion.

This brought the end of the NEL and OCC for 1 Bde Arty Regt. Chief evaluator, Lt Col Mason of the US Navy thanked all personnel on behalf of their hardwork throughout the exercise and in the build up to it, certifying 1 Bde Artillery Regiment as interoperable. OCC process allowed all ranks to operate together in a tactical environment and has improved cohesion within the unit as personnel got to work together in teams and detachments for a sustained period of time.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ARTILLERY CLUB

The Artillery Club, on the centenary of the formal establishment of the Artillery Corps on 23 March, 1923, salutes our gunners of all ranks who have served Ireland with distinction, both at home and overseas since. We also acknowledge our predecessors sacrifice in the service of Ireland.

Marking the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Artillery Club, the “History of the Artillery Club 1973 – 2023” endeavours to provide an insight into our activities arising from our stated mission and associated objectives. This history was compiled by Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd), supported by members of the Club’s Committee.

I wish to take this opportunity of commending the service of our Past Presidents, our Honorary Members, and our former and serving Officers and Committee Members including elected Auditors. Likewise, the Club acknowledges the encouragement and assistance provided by the Director of Combat Support, the Artillery School, 1 Brigade Artillery Regiment and 2 Brigade Artillery Regiment.

The Club will continue to support the preservation of our Corps legacy and distinctive traditions, promote professional excellence, and provide a focal point for remembrance and camaraderie, in order to encourage and foster our unique Artillery Esprit de Corps.

Finally, we will strive to enhance our network of relationships throughout Ireland, enabling serving and former officers of the Artillery Corps to maintain a lasting bond with colleagues, whilst retaining contact with their parent Regiments, the Artillery School, and by extension the Corps.

Semper et ubique fidelis



Colonel Patrick White
President
The Artillery Club

Link to Club history:

<http://artilleryclub.ie/history-of-the-artillery-club-1973-2023/>

HISTORY OF THE CORPS



1 BAR Coastal Shoot

AT THE BEGINNING

Lt General P.A Mulcahy.(1897 –1987)

Originally Published in An Cosantoir, November 1973.

I wish to express my pleasure on being invited to contribute to the commemorative Artillery issue of An Cosantoir, but hasten to add that I hope speaking of events which took place 50 years ago, I will be forgiven any lapses of memory which might give offence.

Before dealing with the actual formation of the Corps, I think it is necessary to set the scene prior to that event, so that the reader will have some idea of the many difficulties that had to be overcome.

Prior to the 11th July 1921, this country was occupied and in a state of war: there were Flying Columns throughout the country. I was in North Tipperary with one of those Columns. The Truce came and we were given various assignments, e.g. I was one of a number of officers who took over the various Barracks from the British, Bin for example. That in itself would be an interesting story, but has nothing to do with Artillery.

I had no instructions to do this, but I thought that it would be very useful if the body of men which I had were trained in Signals, or I suppose a better word, communications, something I was particularly interested in. We were there several months; then the Civil War came on and, of course, we all took our part in that.

One day I was instructed to report to GHQ which was in Portobello Barracks at the time, where I was interviewed by the then Chief-of-Staff, Lt Gen Sean McMahon. He informed me that they were about to form an Artillery

Corps and that I was being put in charge! I remember saying: "But, Sir, I know nothing about artillery." "Neither do any of us", he said, "but still you are going to be in charge of it." He continued: "I will nominate two officers and you can pick the remainder yourself and when that is completed, submit an organisation."

I went back to Portlaoise to start selecting. We had a lot of officers at the time and many were unwilling to sign up as regulars and stay in the army, but fortunately there were a few whom I had selected who were willing to stay, namely Paddy Maher (later Col), Tim Finlay (later Comdt - Jumping Team) and Ned O'Leary (later Comdt). So with these three, I set out for Dublin and was instructed to set up my Headquarters in Islandbridge Barracks, now Clancy Barracks, which at the time was mainly stores and a little ordnance, but it was a very disorganised place and not at all suited to our purpose, as we later found. Nevertheless, we went, got ourselves offices and 'dug in'.

"Guns"

I was soon informed that "Guns", they weren't even referred to as Artillery, were distributed throughout the Commands - there was one or perhaps two field guns in each Command, and these, with their crews, had been ordered to report to Islandbridge Barracks.

When they arrived Col Maher and I examined all the officers, most of them we returned to their units as they did not want to be Regular Gunner Officers and I agreed with some that they would be better employed elsewhere! Ultimately we finished up with very few officers but with sixty to seventy stout-hearted prospective gunners - the formation of a 'small' battery. I was a Major I/C, Ned O'Leary a Comdt and Adjutant Col Maher was a Captain and Assistant Adjutant and for the time being Comdt D. Mackey was Quartermaster, but ultimately he resigned and we got Capt R.J. Callanan, now Maj Gen (Retd) who remained with us for a long time.

Islandbridge, as I said before, was most unsuitable, consisting mainly of stores; there was no space for training, we had horses and most of our training was horse-riding which we had to learn properly. Most of us could ride - we could farm horses - but now we had to ride properly; there was no space for this in Islandbridge.

New Quarters

McKee Barracks was then occupied by the Garda Síochána who were being moved to their present quarters. Knowing that I was dissatisfied with our accommodation, I was informed by Headquarters that McKee Barracks was available to me. I went up there, met Gen O'Duffy, Garda Commissioner, and the transfer was arranged, It was a wonderful change which provided us with great training facilities. We stayed for nearly two years until I was ordered in March 1925 to occupy what was an old Artillery Barracks in Kildare. The Gardai were there also, but they were being moved and we were to take over. We Moved lock, stock and barrel down to Magee Barracks. One little thing which I remember now with a smile. There was an Infantry Platoon on guard in Magee Barracks and we kept them for about a year and a half or two years until somebody "caught on". We had to supply our own guards from then on. We thought that was a great imposition to ask Gunners to do. However, we did. That brings us down to Kildare.



Funeral of an artillery officer, 1925, Military Archives

Kildare

One thing that Col Maher and I were most interested in was to get somebody to train us. We weren't trained Gunners. So we got a Training Officer, a Capt Harry Froud St. Ledger Caulfield - he was employed for about three months. Then we got Capt Gary Brennan. Brennan was a fine type, a gentleman, and he gently taught us a certain amount of gunnery. But we were eager and soon surpassed his limited knowledge. Not his fault. He gave us what he knew. However, in 1926 a military mission was sent to America and included Major Charlie Trodden (decd) who was with us at the time. He did an American Gunnery Course and was later invaluable to us. I took the opportunity of suggesting that we send someone across to the English Gunnery School and I was told to go myself, for a month, on a Battery Commanders Course. There I met officers all about my own age and all of whom had seen service in Ireland. I was wondering how they'd react to me. I needn't have worried, I found their only interest in Ireland was they were terribly sorry to miss cheap hunting, fishing and shooting and hadn't the slightest interest in politics. They ran a very excellent course; suited me fine and I learned enough

to come back and suggest other ideas. The principal suggestion was that we avail of the facilities of the Long Gunnery Staff Course, which was a year's job. The first two officers to undergo this course were Lt Denis Coady (later Lt Col decd) and Dan Farrell (later Comdt Retd). That was the opening, but from that on we tried to send one every year; we didn't get away with that, but we sent one periodically and they got wonderful training, brought back very good methods and very good technical instruction.

The School and The Glen of Imaal

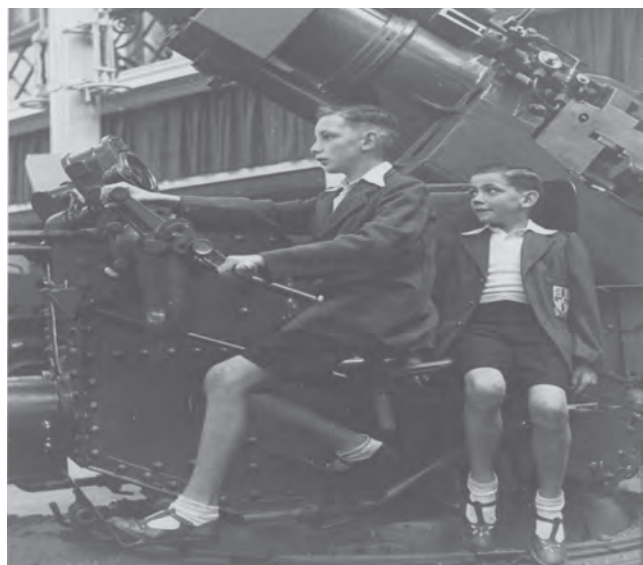
The School carried on in Kildare and we opened up the Glen of Imaal Range. The Glen of Imaal had been a British Camp but during the early days our Army formed a "Salvage Corps" known to us all as the "Wreckers", but we didn't realise what wreckers could do until we went to Glen Imaal and found a lovely camp levelled, even water pipes broken, houses torn asunder. Luckily we had an Engineer Officer, a Belgian, Col Naus, I think he was a Capt Naus, but we always called him Colonel Naus because he told us he had been a Colonel in the Belgian Army, and who were we to say he wasn't. But whatever he may have been he was an excellent engineer; we gave him men and he put Coolmoney Camp back in excellent condition for us. It improved over the years and we enjoyed wonderful facilities - we had stables for horses, gun parks for guns, we had huts for men - at first we had only canvas, but we had Coolmoney House as the Officers Mess.

We went to the Glen regularly but it took us a long time to get ammunition. We had guns and we had knowledge but we couldn't start shooting practices until the ammunition arrived - eventually it did. I remember the morning the first shoot was carried out. The first round was fired at 10 o'clock on 1st September 1925, and was fired by myself to ceremoniously open it up. From there we continued to develop; anti-tank shooting became important. I remember I brought back a description of an anti-tank range from Larkhill and helped by the O/C Engineers, Comdt Jack Kineen (later Col), we built a range. It consisted of a Ball pulled by two horses and we used to have great fun with that; you'd have to see it to believe it could be possible, but that was the first Anti-Tank Range. Improvements came every year to both the range and the guns. The guns then were 18 Pounders, Marks 1 and 11.

The AA

One day we were told there were two 3 inch 20 cwt mobile and two 3 inch 20 cwt semi mobile anti-aircraft guns in Islandbridge (they had been there for a long time and nobody took notice of them). I remember getting a phone call on a Friday. It was from GHQ and that in itself was an event at the time.

The message was that I was to form an anti-aircraft battery immediately. I laughed at this when I heard it and hung up. I went next door to Comdt Paddy Maher, as he was then, and he too was amused at this order, as it was, we were short fifty men on our establishment. On Saturday morning I got another phone call to know was the battery formed yet. I said: "It certainly isn't. I haven't the men." Anyway I was informed I had better get it done immediately; I took no action. Monday morning I was rung again, a different voice this time, a friend, and he said: "Paddy, have you formed that battery yet?" I said; "I haven't and I have no intention of doing it." "Well I'm telling you, you'd better get it done today", said the friend, "and I'll be ringing you this afternoon and you'd better be able to tell me that the battery has been formed," and he hung up.



3.7 Inch Anti Aircraft gun on display in the RDS 1945, Military Archives

I discussed the matter with Comdt Paddy Maher and we decided to appoint Lt Maurice McCarthy who had done an anti-aircraft course and Lt Jimmy Dolan as his 2 I/C. We sent them to Islandbridge Barracks; we had no idea how they were going to get the guns down or where they would bring them to but I said: "Ye start bringing them down and we will find a place for them". We couldn't house them in Kildare; we had no buildings big enough, so we got permission to take over stables in Plunkett Barracks, Curragh Camp. When the guns came we directed them to Plunkett Barracks, we attached a few men under command of Lt Maurice McCarthy and so the battery was formed. Later my friend rang in the afternoon and I said: "Yes the battery has been formed; they have an Officer Commanding, Lt Maurice McCarthy, and they are stationed in Plunkett Barracks, Curragh Camp.". "Good", he said. The following day the mystery was solved. There was a Dail question down for an answer on Tuesday by the Minister for Defence and the question was: "It is a fact that there are guns - anti-aircraft guns - rusting in Islandbridge Barracks and there is no unit in the army to look after them", and the Minister was able to stand up and say that "the answer to both questions is in the negative." From there on the AA never looked back.

Change of Appointment

The Corps at this time was a very happy and efficient one. As a matter of fact, for its size and the number of officers in it, I don't think there was another unit in the army to compare with it. The officers had been through a great many courses as had the NCOs and Men. Now I'm talking about my own baby and every mother thinks her own is marvellous but I do think they were damn good and I hated leaving them and I did in 1935 to command the Air Corps. They were well disciplined - no doubt about that no doubt whatsoever. As a matter of fact I was often criticised by my senior friends in various parts of the army, of being too much of a disciplinarian - too much of a "spurs and Whips" but we had the kind of discipline that was not in many of the units of the army at that time and the fellows lapped it up and liked it and it made them better soldiers and much happier soldiers than some troops in other units who weren't so disciplined.

Mechanisation

We loved our horses and we hated parting with them. I never appreciated what a difference their going could make until I came back to the Corps in 1942 to take over from Col Paddy Maher, who had retired to run Shannon Airport. It was during this time as Director that full mechanisation came. I got a real surprise when we were arranging to go to the Glen for a practice shoot. I had Maj Gen Hally in, he was probably a Comdt or a Major then, to make arrangements for the move. I said: "I suppose we'll move on Friday as usual, rest Saturday and Sunday, shoot Monday." "Oh no, Sir we leave at 9 o'clock Monday morning and we shoot at 11!" In my time the horses and men had to be rested. That really showed the huge change that had taken place during my sojourn with the Air Corps.

The Corps Sports

This was a two-day event and a wonderful time for everybody. The horses added to the occasion by providing such events as jumping; tent pegging and rivalry between batteries and sections was ever present. Sometimes we used to inveigle Supply and Transport to pit their horses against us. One occasion I remember, I tied with the S&T man, so there was a jump off. I was riding a lovely grey mare with a long tail, a grand jumper. In the jump off, as I was going into the "in-and-out" (quite a new thing then but quite common in Ballsbridge and other places now) I knew she was wrong; I simply threw the reins at her and said: "You go on, you know more about this jump than I do" and she got through perfectly. I won the competition, and when handing over the mare to the groom, Oliver Hagens, I hadn't noticed that he was rather happy. I patted the mare and I said: "She's a great mare Hagens." "She is, sir", says he. "She won in spite of you". But they were wonderful sports. We had a musical ride which was introduced and trained by Sgt Major "Peggy" O'Neill. It took six months to train for this but it was marvellous to watch; we considered the Royal Tournament in the halfpenny place compared with ours! We built up a tradition of football and hurling that will be hard to surpass but in the final analysis I think we were better footballers.

The Blue Hussars

I must not let the opportunity pass without mentioning the Blue Hussars. They were established to provide an escort for the Papal Nuncio coming to the Congress of 1932. We were a “natural” for the job, as we had sufficient horses and riders. Col Dan Collins was in charge and he had with him Maj Gen Pat Hally and Lt Col Bill Donnelly among others and they were all fitted out in this wonderful Blue Regalia, the Busby adding another two feet of grandeur and stature. While everyone in the Escort could ride there was much rehearsal for the ceremony. I remember on one rehearsal, they had to pull up in the grounds of a hotel in Dun Laoghaire where they were to wait for some people to come. Lt Col Bill Donnelly was one of the group. They naturally attracted a lot of attention and Bill in particular. There was a group of priests looking on and suddenly one of them exclaimed: “By God, ‘tis Bill Donnelly”, everything became natural then. The atmosphere of awe and splendour was lost for it was only Bill Donnelly from Bin!

One other incident I remember which arose from a rehearsal of the Blue Hussars for the Congress in 1932. We used to practice about 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning and were coming back from Dun Laoghaire and had arrived at Merrion Square. It was a slippery morning and I should have had more sense. I was riding a horse known as “Big Tom”. I reined “Big Tom” and he fell. Fortunately he knew me as I knew him. When he fell he felt my leg under him. He momentarily lifted himself to enable me to get my leg out. Horse sensitivity was often very touching. If I may digress for a moment. I can recall many a tough character crying when his charge was being disposed of by the Remount Officer. The horses themselves knew their time had come, we had difficulty getting them out of Barracks, some of them we literally had to force out. We didn’t like it but we had to. The Blue Hussars were eventually mechanised too - a cavalry motor cycle escort took over.

Guns and Howitzers

Before I left the Corps I was most anxious that we should have some Howitzers. The Secretary of the Department and I discussed the matter and it was decided that I should explain to the Minister why we needed Howitzers. We had a Minister at the time whom I knew fairly well and I knew he wouldn’t be the slightest bit interested in the technical aspects, so at the interview the Secretary said: “Tell the Minister the principal difference between an 18 Pdr and a 4.5 Howitzer.” “Well sir; to make it clear, I think you know that it was 18 Pdrs that were used against the Four Courts. It was useless using 18 Pdrs against the great walls of the Four Courts. Now if you had Howitzers with their high trajectory you would have taken the Four Courts in twenty minutes”. “Ah be God”, says he, “we must get some of them.”



4.5inch howitzers in Phoenix Park, Military Archives

18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168

Brigadier General Pakenham(Retd)

Introduction

The Artillery Club supports the preservation of the Defence Forces Artillery Corps unique legacy and distinctive traditions, promotes professional excellence, provides a focal point for remembrance and camaraderie, in order to encourage and foster the Artillery Corps admirable Esprit de Corps.

One of the Artillery Club's prescribed objectives is to support military and regimental museums, in the acquisition, preservation, maintenance and display of Artillery weapons, equipment, material and artefacts.

In this regard, the Club remains proactive in its support to the Artillery School and Artillery Regiments for outdoor Weapon Displays throughout the Defence Forces, and for weapon displays and galleries of an Artillery nature in the National Museum, the Curragh Military Museum, and museums in Collins Barracks Cork, and the former Columb Barracks Mullingar (relocated to Custume Barracks Athlone).

Pursuant to its objectives, the Artillery Club wishes to formally convey its appreciation to the Defence Forces for the authentication, acquisition, recovery, storage, conservation and restoration of the Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, with its distinctive type of recoil system, currently on loan from the Defence Forces, and on display in the Soldiers



Sergeant Robert (Bobby) Delaney with the 18pdr Field Gun 9168

and Chiefs Exhibition, National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks Dublin. In this context, and on the occasion of the launch of the '18pdr Field Gun 9168 - Lost and Found' Exhibition, the Artillery Club commends the National Museum of Ireland for its award-winning Soldiers and Chiefs exhibition which traces Ireland's military history from 1550 into the 21st Century covering Irish soldiers at home, Irish soldiers abroad, and Irish soldiers in the 21st Century. The Exhibition consists of appropriate artefacts from the National Museum's Arms and Armour, Costume, and Historical collections, with selected items from the Defence Forces holdings of twentieth century equipment and memorabilia.

Lost and Found Exhibition – National Museum of Ireland

On 09 February 2023, an exhibition titled '18pdr Field Gun 9168 - Lost and Found' was launched in the National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

The launch was opened by the Director of the National Museum of Ireland Lynn Scarff, Lieutenant-General Seán Clancy Chief of Staff addressed the attendees, and Dr Catriona Crow formally launched the exhibition.

Attendees included Brigadier-General Tony Cudmore GOC 2 Brigade, Colonel Mathew Byrne Director of the Ordnance Corps, Colonel Patrick Whyte President of the Artillery Club, Sergeant Robert (Bobby) Delaney with his family and his comrades of Ordnance Base Workshops, Brenda Malone Curator Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, Brigadier-General Paul Fry (Retd) Chair of the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust, and members of the Artillery Club. Kindly donated by Glenn and Penny Gates, Virginia, USA, and on loan to the National Museum from the Defence Forces, the 18-pounder Mark II

QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, with its distinctive type of recoil system, is now on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition.

This particular Field Gun played a significant role in the Irish Civil War of 1922 – 1923, when it was acquired by the new Irish State from the departing British forces. It was likely one of the four Field Guns deployed against the anti-Treaty IRA forces occupying the Four Courts in June 1923. This Field Gun was discovered in the United States of America, authenticated, recovered to Ireland by the Defence Forces, and was successfully restored to its original state by the Ordnance Corps.

Historical Background

The 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, was manufactured in England and Scotland during the First World War for the Royal Artillery. 18-pounder Field Guns were deployed in action by the British and Commonwealth forces during this war. Up to 250,000 Irishmen served in the British Army at this time, some of whom served with the Royal Artillery, firing the 18-pounder Field Gun.

Provided by the Royal Artillery, six 18-pounder Field Guns (two Mark Is and four Mark IIs), were deployed by the National Army during the Irish Civil War.

From 28 June through 30 June 1922, four 18-pounder Field Guns were deployed in action at the Four Courts, in Dublin. The first artillery round was fired between 0407hrs and 0429hrs, on Wednesday, 28 June, marking the start of the Civil War. From an historical perspective, this engagement was the first occasion that the Irish Army fired an Artillery Field Gun.

Through contemporary research, efforts are being made to identify the actual Serial Numbers of all of the four Field Guns which were deployed at the Four Courts. Apparently, the Mark II 18-pounder that fired the first round on 28 June had the Serial Number 10756, was deployed at the corner of Winetavern Street and Merchant's Quay, and fired a total of 375 rounds between 28 and 30 June. It is highly likely that Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 was one of the four Field Guns deployed at the Four Courts.

The presence of the anti-Treaty IRA's homemade mines in the building, and its shelling by the National Army, led to the complete destruction of the Four Courts, including the Public Record Office, resulting in the permanent loss of over 700 years of Irish archives. From an analysis of National Army engagements during 1922 - 1923, six deployed 18-pounder Field Guns can be identified, either by the name of the gun (e.g. Four Courts and Drogheda, Rose of Tralee, Hammond Lane No 4), or by the commander (e.g. Gen Sean Mac Eoin, Comdt Dinny Galvin). It is generally understood that the National Army received a total of nine 18-pounder Field Guns from the British Army in 1922.

An 18-pounder Field Gun was deployed as the gun carriage for the funeral of General Michael Collins on 28 August, 1922. The 18-pounder Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, on display in Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition is the last known remaining Mark II deployed in the Civil War. Apparently, there is no record of the location or indeed the existence of any of the other Mark II Field Guns deployed in the Civil War.

Between 1926 and 1941, the Artillery Corps acquired additional Mark I and Mark II 18- pounder Field Guns, as well as the more modern Mark IV version. Despite the introduction of the Ordnance QF 25-pounder in 1949, the 18-pounder Mark IV continued in service in the Artillery Corps, and the last round was fired in Glen Imaal by the 14 Battery, 2 Field Artillery Regiment on Sunday, 28 April, 1974. Preserved 18-pounder Mark IVs are on display throughout Ireland, and one can be viewed in the Curragh Military Museum. In 2006, a private firm in Portsmouth, England, refurbished an 18-pounder Field Gun Mark IV for the National Museum. This Field Gun is also on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition in Collins Barracks, Dublin.

Shipment of Defence Forces Artillery Guns to USA in 1959

In February 1959, having departed Dublin, a Finnish cargo ship, the SS Finnmerchant docked in Alexandria, Virginia. Its shipment of obsolete Defence Forces weapons, purchased by an American arms trader: International Armament Cooperation (InterArmCo) based in Virginia, included:

- Seventeen 18-pounder Field Guns with limbers,
- Twenty-two 4.5inch Howitzers with limbers,
- Six 60-pounder guns with limbers,
- Five 12-pounder guns, and Four 3-inch Anti-Aircraft guns and mounts.

The shipping manifest of the SS Finnmerchant that includes the Field Gun Serial 9168, among the other Mark I and Mark II 18 pounders, 4.5-inch howitzers, and Lewis light machine guns.

The serial numbers of four of the five Mark I 18-pounder guns were: 6460; 7209; 7470; and 10392. The serial numbers of the twelve Mark II 18-pounder guns were: 2819; 2908; 3484; 4254; 4770; 5605; 7554; 7765; 8577; 8976; 9168 and 10756. Serial Number 9168 is the restored 18-pounder Field Gun Mark II currently on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition. Aside from the Mark IV 18-pounder Field Gun also on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, a Mark II 4.5” howitzer (Serial Number 2839) is in a private collection in Virginia, and two more 4.5” howitzers are on display at the Pennsylvania State Museum in Boalsburg (near State College in Pennsylvania).

Historical Narrative

The provenance of the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, is supported by the engravings on various parts of the gun, including the breach, (War Department Mark, FF Mark, Serial Number, Maker and Date). The breech markings indicate that the William Beardmore Company of Glasgow, Scotland, had manufactured the gun in 1918. The ‘FF’ shows ownership by the Irish Free State, and its serial number is recorded as ‘9168.’ This provenance would be further enhanced with the discovery of the Field Gun’s gun history sheet(s).

A physical reminder of the Irish Civil War, in the context of the Decade of Centenaries, the historical narrative associated with this particular Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, has to be meaningfully, proportionately and sensitively presented, in an inclusive manner, in order to broaden the parameters of our nation’s analysis of the Civil War, and to confront its difficult history 100 years later.

In August 2016, an 18-pounder Mark II Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 arrived back in Ireland having left for America in 1959, as part of a large consignment of surplus and obsolete Defence Forces military equipment. The Field Gun had been purchased from Interarmco by the owner of the Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre, Woodbridge, Virginia 22194- 0346, located not far from Washington D.C. The Field Gun was on display as part of an outdoor antique gallery for many years in the Lazy Susan Dinner Theatre. In 2015, Ken Smith-Christmas of the US Army Museum at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, discovered that the gun was for sale, and subsequently facilitated a valuable interface between the gun’s owner Mr Glenn Gates and Commandant Lar Joye (AR) of the National Museum of Ireland and an Artillery Officer, resulting in the owner kindly donating the gun to the Irish Defence Forces.



Colonel Conor Fitzsimons, Comdt Stephen MacEoin and Comdt Lar Joye AR

SECTION 2 · History of the Corps

During the period February through August 2016, the acquisition and recovery of the Field Gun to Ireland was successfully conducted by Colonel Conor Fitzsimons Military Advisor Irish Permanent Representation UN New York and an Artillery Officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Carey J4 Branch Defence Forces Headquarters, Commandant Stephen MacEoin OIC Military Archives, and Commandant Lar Joye (AR). On 1 February, 2016, Colonel Conor Fitzsimons, Commandant Stephen MacEoin, and Commandant Lar Joye (AR) visited the location of the gun in Virginia, negotiated its donation to the Defence Forces with its owner Mr and Mrs Glenn Gates, and its recovery to Ireland. Following its recovery to Ireland in August 2016, the 18-pounder was transported to Custume Barracks Athlone, and held by the 2 Ordnance Group, pending its evaluation, conservation and restoration.

The 18-pounder was subsequently transferred to the Ordnance Base Workshops, Defence Forces Training Centre, The Curragh. According to a Condition Report provided to the Defence Forces by Mr Matthew Hancock, a conservator at Royal Armouries, the Field Gun was heavily corroded in many areas, and most of the moving parts were seized as result of corrosion. The Report stated that the Field Gun required urgent conservation which could take 18 – 22 months to complete. The Artillery Club retained an over-watch posture regarding the conversation and restoration of the Field Gun, with Commandant Lar Joye (AR) taking the lead on behalf of the Club's Committee.

On 10 June 2019, the Artillery Club's President presented a comprehensive submission to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Support), covering issues including: Historical Background, Steering Group, Conservation Expert, Skill Sets – Restoration and Replacement, Recording the Restoration Process, Replica Work, Historical Narrative, National Cultural Institutions Act, Time Scale, and Display.



18pdr being fired at O'Connell Street July 1922

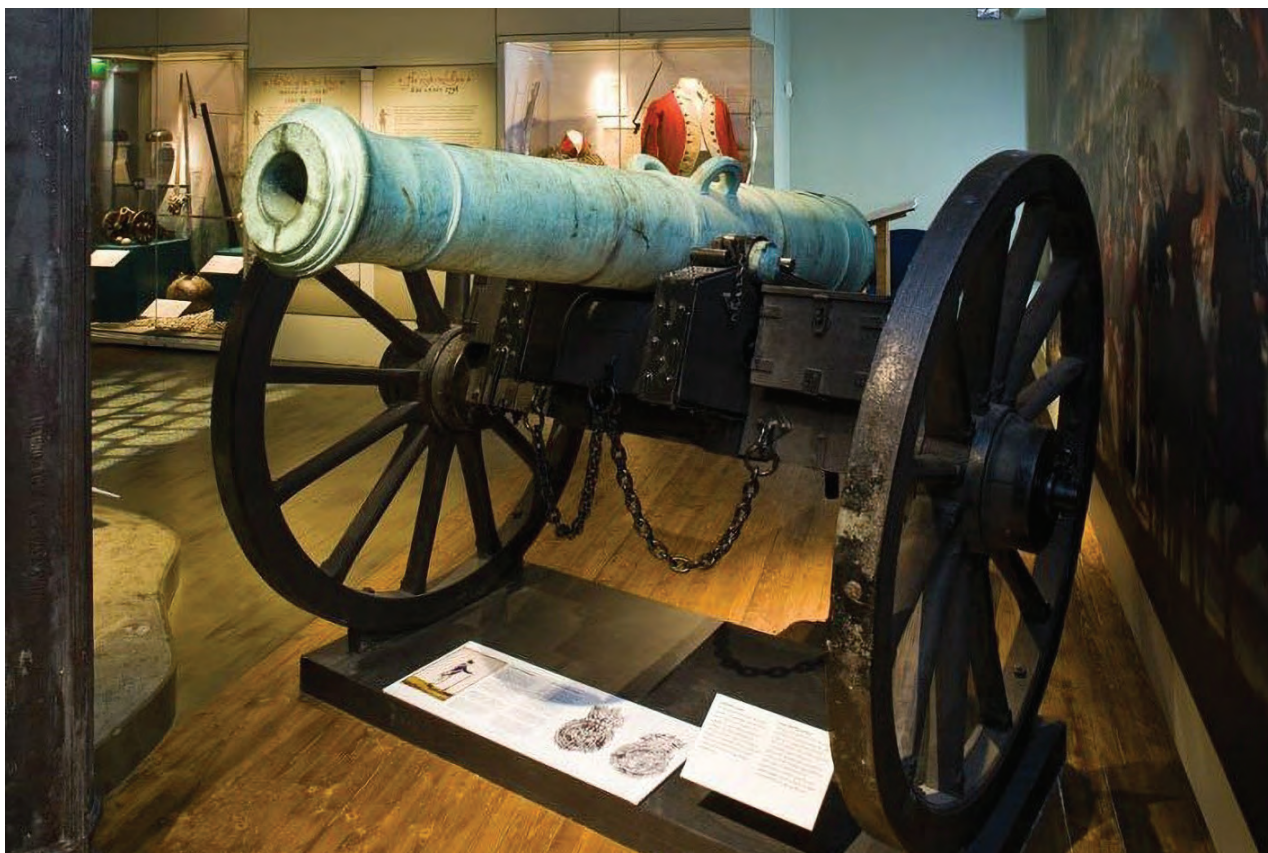
The conservation and restoration process commenced with cleaning and degreasing the Field Gun. All moving parts, nuts and bolts were coated with penetrating oil to facilitate the disassembly of the Field Gun for treatment. The breech block with the firing lock, which was completely seized due to corrosion, was opened for the first time in sixty years, reversing the gun's decommissioning. Areas of steel corrosion and overpainted brass were treated, including the barrel, trail, elevating and traversing mechanisms, range scale and sight rests' It is interesting to note that some of the internal gearbox components in gearboxes were completely untouched by moisture, and were in near perfect condition, still covered with grease.

The conservation of the original “Boynton Steel Shield” presented a challenge, due to the poor state of what little remained of the four ash braces used to strengthen the armoured shield on the front of the Field Gun. New timber was used which fitted around the large flat 100-year-old headed rivets remaining in place. Replicas of the missing two extensions were affixed to the shield.

Small sections of the original grey paint and even smaller areas of Royal Artillery green paint survived on the gun’s cradle and carriage, and were preserved when protective painting using appropriate undercoat and topcoat were applied. Replica timber [cart] wheels were procured and reattached to the Field Gun, thus replacing the pneumatic tyres which were part of the Martin Parry conversion process used in 1939. The Martin Parry conversion kit fitted in 1939 is an important part of the gun’s history and is available for display. Converting the pneumatic wheels back to cartwheels displays the Field Gun as it appeared during the Civil War. The Field Gun was reassembled for display, replacing any damaged parts which were beyond repair.

Following its professional conservation and restoration, the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168, was deployed as a temporary display during a four-day national conference, hosted by University College Cork, from 15 to 18 June 2022 titled ‘The Irish Civil War’. Since 09 February 2023, the 18-pounder Mark II QF Field Gun, Serial Number 9168 is on display in the Soldiers and Chiefs Exhibition, National Museum of Ireland, Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks, Dublin.

This is an abstract of a paper, prepared by the Artillery Club, by Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd) The complete paper can be viewed on the Artillery Club’s Website: www.artilleryclub.ie



12pdr of the Royal Irish Regiment on loan to the Soldiers & Chiefs Exhibition in the NMI



L60 Anti-aircraft gun used during the emergency on loan to the Soldiers & Chiefs Exhibition in the NMI

SECRET REPORT ON ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE

Headquarters,
Anti-Aircraft Battalion, McKee Barracks, Dublin.

10th June 1941

Ref No: AA/34

SECRET

Director of Artillery, Department of Defence, Parkgate,
Dublin.

SPECIAL REPORT ANTI-AIRCRAFT AGAINST BELLIGERENT AIRCRAFT ON 31st MAY 1941

Sir,

I have the honour to report that, as a result of information received at 23.48 hours on 30/5/41 to the effect that unauthorised aircraft were heard east of Carnsore, Co. Wexford, and moving North, AIR RAID MESSAGE "YELLOW" was given to the guns and searchlights of the AA Defences, Dublin.

At 23.58 hours on 30/5/41, on receiving further information to the effect that these aircraft were now at Wicklow Head and still moving North, AIR RAID MESSAGE "RED" was given.

At 00.04 hours on 31/5/41, Dalkey and Sandycove Searchlight Detachments were "On Sound" of aircraft approaching the City of Dublin from a southerly direction. Both searchlights exposed, failed to illuminate and doused. Numerous exposures were made from time to time between 00.04 hours and 02.13 hours by searchlights on aircraft heard in the vicinity of Dublin. Aircraft were successfully illuminated for AA gun action on three occasions.

Fire was opened by AA Units as follows:

CLONTARF: At 00.35 hours, Clontarf AA Gun Outpost opened fire on an unauthorised aircraft seen illuminated East of Post, moving North. Height 7,000 feet. Four rounds of 3.7 in ammunition were fired - two at Fuze 13 and two at Fuze 18.

The proximity of the bursts in relation to the target could not be estimated, as the aircraft jinked from the beams before the termination of time of flight of the shell.

RINGSEND: At 01.28 hours, Ringsend AA Gun Outpost opened fire on unauthorised aircraft seen illuminated North-West of Post, moving South-East. Height 8,000 feet. Four rounds of 3.7 in ammunition were fired - two at Fuze 15 and two at Fuze 9. The first two rounds were observed to burst in the centre of the intersection of beams and close to the target. The aircraft succeeded in jinking from the beams, with the result that no observation for effect could be made on the two later bursts.

CLONTARF: At 01.28 hours, Clontarf AA Gun Outpost opened fire on an unauthorised aircraft seen illuminated West of Post, moving South. Height 8,000 feet. Four rounds of 3.7 in ammunition were fired - two at Fuze 9 and two at Fuze 8. The aircraft, a large monoplane, succeeded in jinking before the bursts in relation to the target were observed. It is considered that these bursts were very close.

BALLYFERMOT: At 01.31 hours, Ballyfermot AA Gun Outpost opened fire on an unauthorised aircraft seen illuminated East of Post, moving South. Height 8,000 feet. Four rounds of 3 inch ammunition were fired, all rounds being fuzeed at 14. The aircraft took avoiding action and jinked from beams before rounds were observed to burst.

SECTION 2 · History of the Corps

STILLORGAN: At 01.30 hours, Stillorgan AA Gun Outpost opened fire on an unauthorised aircraft seen illuminated North-West. Height 8,000 feet. Three rounds of 3 in ammunition were fired all rounds being fuzed at 12. The aircraft took avoiding action prior to shell bursts. No observation for effect possible.

During this engagement by heavy AA gun, the aircraft illuminated was observed endeavouring to get out of the searchlight beams. Two objects thought to be green flares were seen dropping from the aircraft, which coincided with and were probably the bombs dropped in the Phoenix Park. It would appear that the pilot of this aircraft, being unable to avoid the beams, thought it safe to jettison his bomb load rather than risk it being detonated as a result of a hit by AA shell. Two aircraft were observed illuminated during this engagement.

COLLINSTOWN: At 01.30 hours, Collinstown AA Gun Outpost opened fire with two Bofors 40mm and four Hotchkiss Guns on an unauthorised twin-engined monoplane seen over Post. Height 2-3,000 feet, range 1,000 yards. The aircraft was observed to turn back on being fired at, and then fly in a south-easterly direction. Rounds were observed to be low. 54 rounds of Bofors and 248 rounds of .303 ammunition were fired.

COLLINSTOWN: At 01.45 hours, Collinstown AA Gun Outpost saw a twin-engined monoplane approaching Post. Height 2,000 feet, range 1,000 yards. The aircraft was engaged by two Bofors 40mm and four Hotchkiss Guns 58 Rounds Bofors and 490 rounds of .303 ammunition were fired. Rounds were observed to be low.

In these engagements by Collinstown AA Guns, aircraft were easily discernible through being silhouetted against a background of bright sky.

In the engagement of heavy AA guns, the aircraft fired on were illuminated by searchlights for periods of over one minute.

Aircraft were not identified during the period of "alert" which lasted from 23.48 hours 30/5/41 until 02.32 hours 31/5/41. Within this period, four bombs were dropped on the following areas in the city of Dublin, which resulted in loss of life and damage to property:-

Summerhill Parade, North Circular Road, Phoenix Park, Newcoinen Bridge, North Strand.

At 03.45 hours, information was received that an unauthorised aircraft was seen North of Dublin moving South. AIR RAID MESSAGE "RED" was given to AA Defences.

DALKEY: At 03.50 hours, Dalkey Searchlight Detachment opened fire with a Hotchkiss Machine Gun on this aircraft, a twin-engined monoplane flying at 1,000 feet. Thirteen (13) rounds of .3.3 S AA were fired. Rounds were observed to be low. Nationality unknown. Period of alert from 03.45 hours to 04.15 hours on 31/5/41.

I have the honour to be, sir, Your obedient servant,
M.P. MacCarthy, A/Comdt

OFFICER COMMANDING, AA BATTALION
jinxed Copy to/
Operations Officer,
Eastern Command.

OC Air Defence Command, Dublin Castle.

THE HEAVY MORTAR HITS THE CONGO

By RSM Kevin Prendergast

Originally Published in 75th Anniversary of Artillery Corp Book

The first 120mm Mortars to travel overseas was with I the 39 Infantry Battalion to the Congo (Zaire) in November 1962 returning in May 1963. The strength of this 1st Mortar Troop was 42 all ranks drawn mainly from the 4 Fd Arty Regt. The Troop Commander was Capt Tom Boyle, DSM. The GPO/CPOs were Lt P. Hughes and Lt W. Dwyer who is currently serving as Adjutant General of the Defence Forces. As for myself, I was an assistant to the GPO/CPO having enlisted in the army 6 months, previous at the age of sixteen.

In 1960 the Congo was granted Independence from Belgium. Following elections, civil disorder broke out with fighting between rival groups. The province of Katanga seceded from the new nation and declared itself independent. This wealthy copper producing province under one Mr. Moise Tshombe wanted to go it alone with their own army called the Katangese Gendarmerie, trained and led by Mercenaries. At the invitation of the Central Government, United Nations Troops 30,000 strong, 6,000 of them Indian were sent to the Congo to restore order. A large number of these troops were concentrated in the Katanga province mainly around the capital Elizabethville. The following is a brief synopsis of some of the actions in which the Mortar Troop was engaged, namely KERAZIA, SIMBA HILL, KIPUSHI and LUFIRA.



Col SB Condon - ONUC

From arrival in Elizabethville in early 1962 to Christmas, the troop (Heavy Mortar Troop) was engaged in training. Also in Elizabethville at this time was the 121st Hy Mor Bty of the Indian Army. During the latter fortnight of our training, instruction was given on the 120mm Mpr to Officers and NCOs of the Indian Mor Bty. On the 27 Dec (Thurs) when fighting broke out around Elizabethville, the Troop was informed that it might be expected to go out to support an Indian attack sometime on the 28 Dec.

28 Dec (Fri)

At 1000 Bty Comd of 121. Hy Mor Bty arrived with orders for the troop. The troop then proceeded to the Golf Club area where there was some very heavy small arms fire, with the intention of giving support to 2/5 Ghurka Bn in their attack on the radio station. The Ghurkas took the radio station. All this time the troop was under fire (small arms). At 1530 the 4 Madras Bn started to put in an attack on Karavia, a large Katangese Gendarmerie training camp to spend the night.

31 Dec (Mon)

At 1000 the troop was recalled to Elizabethville to prepare to move with an Indian Independent Bde Group towards Jadotville. The Hy Mors were ordered to support 4 Madras Bn and 4th Raj Rifles on Jadotville road.

29 Dec (Sat)

At first light (0530) the troop moved into a gun posn at the edge of Karavia to support the advance of the Ethiopian Bn along the Elizabethville - Simba Hill Road. However, no fire was called for and the troop was again moved at 0930 to a new posn 5,000 yards from Simba Hill which was heavily fortified. It supported the Ethiopian attack on this hill. When the hill was taken the troop moved to a new posn just under Simba Hill and from this posn supported the advance of C Coy 38 Inf Bn on the hill beyond. This hill was taken and at 1830 hrs the troop joined the Irish Bn at Simba Farm.

30 Dec (Sun)

At 0830 the troop moved to a new position short of a broken bridge three miles from Kipushi. B Coy 38 Bii were ordered to take Kipushi, but the town was surrendered without much firing. After a short spell in the town the Hy Mor Tp moved back to Simba Hill

1 Jan (Tues)

After 0300 hrs Mass the troop joined the Indian Bde Group at Old Airfield, Elizabethville. At 0430 hrs the Mor Tp moved out

the Jadotville Road. Heavy resistance was met at Lufuni (about seventeen miles from Elizabethville). Indians suffered casualties 4 dead, 6 injured. They put in a coy attack and took the posns. The column continued for another short distance but again halted when the armoured car (leading) struck a mine. At 0845 the advance continued. NO further opposition was met until 1015 when the first broken bridge was encountered about thirty miles from Elizabethville. At this bridge the column came under mortar fire. The troop went into a gun posn here but did NOT fire due to the limited supply of amn. The Indian Hy Mors however, did fire. After engineers constructed a short detour, the column advanced to the next broken bridge about four and a half miles from Lufira River. From a posn here the troop fired on the area around Lufira. During this firing a helicopter acted as Air OP. Later on the troop moved forward to another posn in a deserted native commune about one mile from Lufira Bridge. This bridge was also blown. The area around the bridge was heavily mined. Before darkness fell a number of targets were recorded. Heavy rain fell for the rest of the night and troops were soon ankle deep in mud. During these hours, the Indians worked on the minefields.

Just as night was falling a troop of Katangese 81mm Mors started firing. The Indian Bty Comdr spotted the flash and called for the Irish 120mm Mors. The first round of Salvo Ranging put them out of action. During this time two Coys of 4 Madras Bn were crossing by the railway bridge which had been partly blown.

2 Jan (Wed)

At 0300 all were awakened by a tremendous explosion. The sky was lit up for fully 25 mins and a large mushroom cloud began to rise. The mercenaries had run a trolley car full of explosives down the railway line and blew the railway bridge. The troop immediately took post and was firing until dawn at Charge 7. All this time there was quite an amount of trouble with base plates in the soft ground. The troop was also fired at by a sniper who launched grenades. During the morning the Indian Engineers rigged up a raft and it was decided to send one section of 120mm mors across to support the leading coys. Lt Hughes, went across with this Sec and 20 rds of amn. This sec manhandled the mors, amn and CP equipment orward about three miles. They had to remain in a rather isolated posn while the advance continued. Later that evening a number of mercenaries were captured near this posn. At 2230 Lt Dwyer crossed with food and orders that the sec was to move forward about six miles to the 121 Hy Mor Troop posn. This move was made with the aid of two jeeps. The new posn was on the FEBA. The mors were mounted and laid out in the darkness. Again it started to rain.

3 Jan (Thurs)

The second sec came forward to the new posn at first light. It was still raining and the ground was in a terrible condition. The mors remained in posn until 1000 hrs at which time they got an order to move forward another three miles, to a posn on the New FEBA with all possible speed. Thirty mins later they reported ready to fire in the new posn. By this time the Landrovers had come up. They fired one round of HE in the Jadotville direction. At 1700 they entered Jadotville.

Conclusion

During the seven (7) day operation the Hy Mor Tp deployed over a distance of some 180 miles. The troop performed professionally throughout all operations. 50% of the troop were fresh off their Artillery Course, Gnrs, Sigs, CP. We also had a good mix of experienced personnel. The food was pack rations, dog biscuits and Spam so the cooks were available for unloading and opening ammunition boxes assisted by the S&T Drivers.

The Indians were impressive by their high standards, kit, equipment and self-sufficiency. They were very decent with their daily personal supply of hard boiled eggs and chapaties, also the nicest tea you could drink.

The following members of the troop were awarded the Distinguished Service Medal:-

0.7275 Capt Tom Boyle
67595 Sgt Jack Quirke
81154 Cpl Billy Allen

Gunner Magee: Defender of Values – The Artillery Corp

Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd)

Introduction

In addition to paying homage to Saint Barbara, its patron saint, the Artillery Corps is unique within the Defence Forces, in that it has an historical figurehead, namely Gunner James Magee, from whom derives the Corps unique esprit de corps, its rich heritage, and its enduring values of professionalism, respect, loyalty, selflessness, physical courage, moral courage and integrity. Since the establishment of the Artillery Corps on 23 May 1923, Gunner Magee's courage, heroism, and resourcefulness have inspired gunners of all ranks, and his heroic stand during the Battle of Ballinamuck has been commemorated and honoured by the Corps.



Magee Barracks Kildare

Arising from his defiant stand in Ballinamuck, Gunner Magee received national recognition in 1954, when the Government formally named the Military Barracks in Kildare Dún Uí MacAoidh (Magee Barracks), which garrisoned the Depot and School Artillery, and the 1 AA Regiment. This reflects an appropriate tribute to Gunner Magee, recognising his resilience and unquestioning valour in the face of superior forces, a fact that is made all the more poignant considering the futility of his heroic stand.

The Magee Gun Trophy

The Magee Gun Trophy honours and commemorates the unquestioning courage of Gunner Magee and his gun crew, their resourcefulness in their ability to keep the gun in action, and their ultimate sacrifice for Ireland. Gunner Magee and his gun crew embodied those values which continue to inspire the present generations of Irish gunners of all ranks. Under the direction of the OC Depot and School Artillery Lieutenant-Colonel A. Dalton, this magnificent replica of a French 6-pdr was designed by Captain Kevin Danaher of the Artillery School, and skillfully executed by the master craftsman, Company Sergeant James F. ‘Tiffy’ Scanlan. Wrought in bronze in 1943 in the workshops of the Depot and School Artillery, the trophy is a model of a smooth-bore gun with a double bracket trail, and with its right wheel broken to recall the scene at the Battle of Ballinamuck.

The trophy remains a reminder not only of Gunner Magee, but also the enduring loyalty, courage and professionalism of Irish gunners past and present. Honouring the courageous and heroic exploits of Irish Gunners in the historic events of Ballinamuck in September 1798, the Magee Gun Trophy resides in the Artillery School, Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh, County Kildare.

The Battle of Ballinamuck Painting

Honouring Gunner James Magee, the Artillery Club commissioned oil on canvas painting of the “Battle of Ballinamuck” by Thomas Ryan PPRHA. The painting was unveiled in the Officers’ Mess Magee Barracks, in 1995. On the closure of Magee Barracks, the painting went on loan to the Officers’ Mess Column Barracks, Mullingar. Restored by Ciara Brennan MA in 2014, the painting is currently on loan to the 2 Artillery Regiment, and is on display in the Officers’ Mess, Costume Barracks Athlone.



Visitor Centre, Ballinamuck, Co Longford

Defence Forces Magee March

In 1992, the Depot and School Artillery invited the Army School of Music to compose a March honouring Gunner Magee, which could be played on appropriate occasions associated with the Artillery Corps. Captain Mark Armstrong, conductor Band of the Curragh Command, composed The Magee March. In addition to the original score, the march avails of the air of the traditional folk song O Tannenbaum, (also the air for the Artillery School's Song You'll never be a Captain, Sir"). The inaugural rendition of The Magee March was played by the Band of the Curragh Command, under the baton of Captain Mark Armstrong, during an Open Day in Magee Barracks. Subsequently, The Magee March, or selected pieces, were played on numerous occasions by Bands of the Defence Forces School of Music, in the context of Artillery Corps ceremonial events.

Ballad of Gunner Magee – Composed in 1949

Familiar with the oral traditions of 1798, in 1949, the bilingual novelist and poet Eoghain Ó'Tuairisc composed "An Gunnadóir Mac Aoidh". Using folk-history accounts of the Battle of Ballinamuck, the poem emotively depicts the last stand of Gunner Magee, noting that " Ach ar éacht an Ghunnadóira beidh trácht go lá an bhráth (the gunner's exploits will be eternally recounted). The poem was republished in 1964, in a well-received collection of poetry titled Lux Aeterna. Lieutenant-Colonel Denis Burke, OC Depot and School Artillery, translated the poem into English.

Service with the Royal Longford Militia

Following the practice in England, the Royal Irish Artillery Regiment trained selected personnel in Irish Militias, such as the Royal Longford Militia, in the art and science of gunnery.

The Royal Longford Militia was a military force raised from the civilian population to support the regular army. It is generally believed that Gunner James Magee served in the Royal Longford Militia. Throughout all the narratives of the Franco-Irish campaign, James Magee is mentioned as Gunner Magee. As Irish Militias did not have the rank of gunner, it is likely that Gunner Magee trained with the Royal Irish Artillery Regiment. Nevertheless, despite Gunner Magee's rank, it comes as no surprise that popular culture and social memory has claimed him as a member of the Royal Longford Militia, (less the "Royal" designation).

1798 Franco-Irish Force

Under the command of General Jean Humbert, the long awaited French expedition landed at Kilcummin on the north Mayo coast near Killala on 22 August 1798, to revive the efforts of the United Irishmen, and to provide the nucleus of a Franco-Irish force equipped with three 4-pdrs, muskets, swords, pikes and ammunition. Having secured Ballina, General Humbert advanced on the Crown Forces concentrated at Castlebar. Reaching Castlebar on 27 August, only one of General Humbert's 4-pdrs was operational. Nevertheless, despite effective artillery fire from the Crown Forces, the Franco-Irish force assaulted and routed a well defended position. Twelve artillery pieces were captured by the Franco-Irish force: five light 6-pdrs and one howitzer from the Royal Irish Artillery Regiment, and two light 6-pdrs from each of the Kilkenny Militia, the Longford Militia and Frazers Fencibles. After their defeat in Castlebar, 53 men of the Longford Militia joined General Humbert's Franco-Irish force, including Gunner Casey and Gunner Magee.

By 30 August, the Franco-Irish force had seized the strategic towns of Westport, Newport, Swinford, Ballinrobe and Hollymount. General Humbert departed Castlebar on 03 September, marched north east towards Sligo, with the intention of crossing the River Shannon, and to advance in the general direction of Granard. Following an engagement in Colooney, the Franco-Irish force captured two additional light 6pdrs.

On 07 September, the force crossed the Shannon at Ballintra. Departing for Granard, General Humbert was obliged to leave an unspecified amount of his artillery assets behind, as a number of gun-chains were stolen.

Battle of Ballinamuck

At daybreak on 08 September, Lieutenant-General Gerard Lake was ordered to attack the Franco-Irish force, without delay. General Humbert decided to adopt a defence posture against the advancing troops, at Ballinamuck, County Longford. The selected location on Shanmullagh Hill represented key terrain, with limited maneuver space on the flanks for an attacking force with superior combat power.

Gunner James Magee and Gunner Casey deployed their two guns at the Black Fort, near Gaigue, accompanied by French grenadiers and Irish pikemen. Concurrently, cavalry and artillery elements of the Crown Forces deployed in the vicinity of the Church in Ballinamuck.

Contemporary accounts record that for some time, the guns on both sides intermittently discharged their grape and canister at the opposing lines. A target round from the Crown Forces disabled Gunner Casey's gun. Encouraged by this, the English rallied. According to social memory, a chain-ball from Gunner Magee's gun stopped their progress. A second chain-ball fired by Gunner Magee's gun struck and exploded a Crown Forces limber containing ammunition.

With the Battle of Ballinamuck technically lost, General Humbert and his officers surrendered their swords. The battle was terminated after an hour of hostilities with a decisive victory for the Crown Forces, and marked the defeat of the French force, which arrived in Ireland on 22 August 1798, in support of the Society of United Irishmen.



4th FAR visit to Ballinamuck in 2012

As a deserter from the Longford Militia, Gunner Magee would have expected little mercy from Lieutenant-General General Lake's victorious army at Ballinamuck. Rather than retreating to an adjacent bog, Gunner Magee remained with his gun. Supported by his gun detachment, a small number of pikemen, and a limited amount of ammunition, Gunner Magee made a gallant stand against all odds.

Soon after neutralising an ammunition limber, Gunner Magee's ammunition supply was almost exhausted. To address the deficiency, broken pots and pieces of metal were mixed with grape and canister. Using this improvised ammunition, Gunner Magee fired at the advancing cavalry forcing them to withdraw.

Whilst preparing his gun for further action, a chain ball struck Gunner Magee's gun, and broke the stock of the right wheel. In order to bring the gun back into action, Gunner Magee's gun detachment heroically stepped forward, and balanced the weight of the gun with their shoulders. When Gunner Magee fired the gun, his gallant comrades were killed by the recoil. Without any subsequent opposition, the gun was captured, and Gunner Magee was taken prisoner.

With the last of the Franco-Irish guns neutralised, the ensuing onslaught by the both cavalry and infantry was "Bloody and Unrelenting". Casualties from this reign of terror were buried in locations such as the Croppies' Grave and Graves Meadow in Ballinamuck, and the Highlanders Grave in Gortletteragh, 5 kilometers from Ballinamuck.

A drumhead court-martial condemned Gunner James Magee to execution by hanging, as a deserter from "His Majesty's Army".

This is an abstract of a paper, prepared by the Artillery Club, by Brigadier-General Paul Pakenham (Retd) commemorating and honouring the 220th Anniversary of Gunner Magee's death on 08 September 1798. The paper provides a basis on which presentations, articles, commentaries, and further studies, associated with Gunner Magee, can be advanced.

The paper is based on research carried out by the Artillery Club in August 2018, which derived from existing narratives on Gunner Magee, information from publications and in the print media, and in particular, specific information arising from historical sources, popular culture, folklore, and social memory.

Information on issues relating to Gunner Magee is also provided: Magee Barracks Kildare, the Magee Gun Trophy, the Battle of Ballinamuck Painting, the Magee March, and the Ballad of Gunner Magee.

The complete paper can be viewed on the Artillery Club's Website: www.artilleryclub.ie



APPENDIX



*BQMS Retd Danny
Mulcahy Addresses the
Sgt Paddy Mulcahy
DSM 2-3 Star Platoon*

Appendix

For Selfless Service and Bravery: DECORATED ARTILLERY CORPS PERSONNEL

Nominal Roll of Recipients of An Bonn Mileata Calmachta

(The Military Medal for Gallantry) and of An Bonn Seirbhise Dearsna (The Distinguished Service Medal).

The Military Medal for Gallantry is the highest military honour in the State. The medal may be awarded in recognition of the performance of any act of exceptional bravery or gallantry (other than one performed on War Service) arising out of, or associated with Military Service and involving risk to life or limb. There are three classes: with honour, with distinction and with merit which equate with the three classes prior to 13 December 1984, 1st Class, 2nd Class and 3rd respectively.

To date only eight awards of the medal have been made, six 2nd Class awards and two 3rd Class awards.

BMC (MMG) RECIPIENTS

Rank Name	Class	Date of Incident	Location.	
Capt	A. Ainsworth	2nd Class	Apr 80	At Tiri, South Lebanon

The Distinguished Service Medal may be awarded in recognition of individual or associated acts of bravery, courage, leadership, resource of devotion to duty (other than any such acts of duty performed on War Service) arising out of, or associated with, service in the Defence Forces and not meriting the Award of An Bonn Mileata Calmachta. The medal may be awarded in the following classes; with Honour, with Distinction and with Merit. These classes equate with 1st Class, 2nd Class and 3rd Class respectively as in the case with the Military Medal for Gallantry in awards made prior to 13 December 1984.

BSD (DSM) RECIPIENTS

Rank	Name	Class	Date of Incident	Location / Incident.
Sgt	J. Quirke	2nd Class	Dec 62 - Jan 63	Katanga / Congo
Cpl	W. Allen	2nd Class	Dec 62	Katanga / Congo
Capt	T. Boyle	2nd Class	Dec 62 - Jan 63	Katanga / Congo
Sgt	P. Mulcahy	3rd Class	Dec 61	Katanga / Congo
Lt	*O'Riordan	3rd Class	Dec 61	Katanga / Congo

* Lt O'Riordan, though originally an infantry officer, had been posted to 6 Fd Arty Regt prior to deployment to the Congo.

GLEN OF IMAAL MEMORIAL

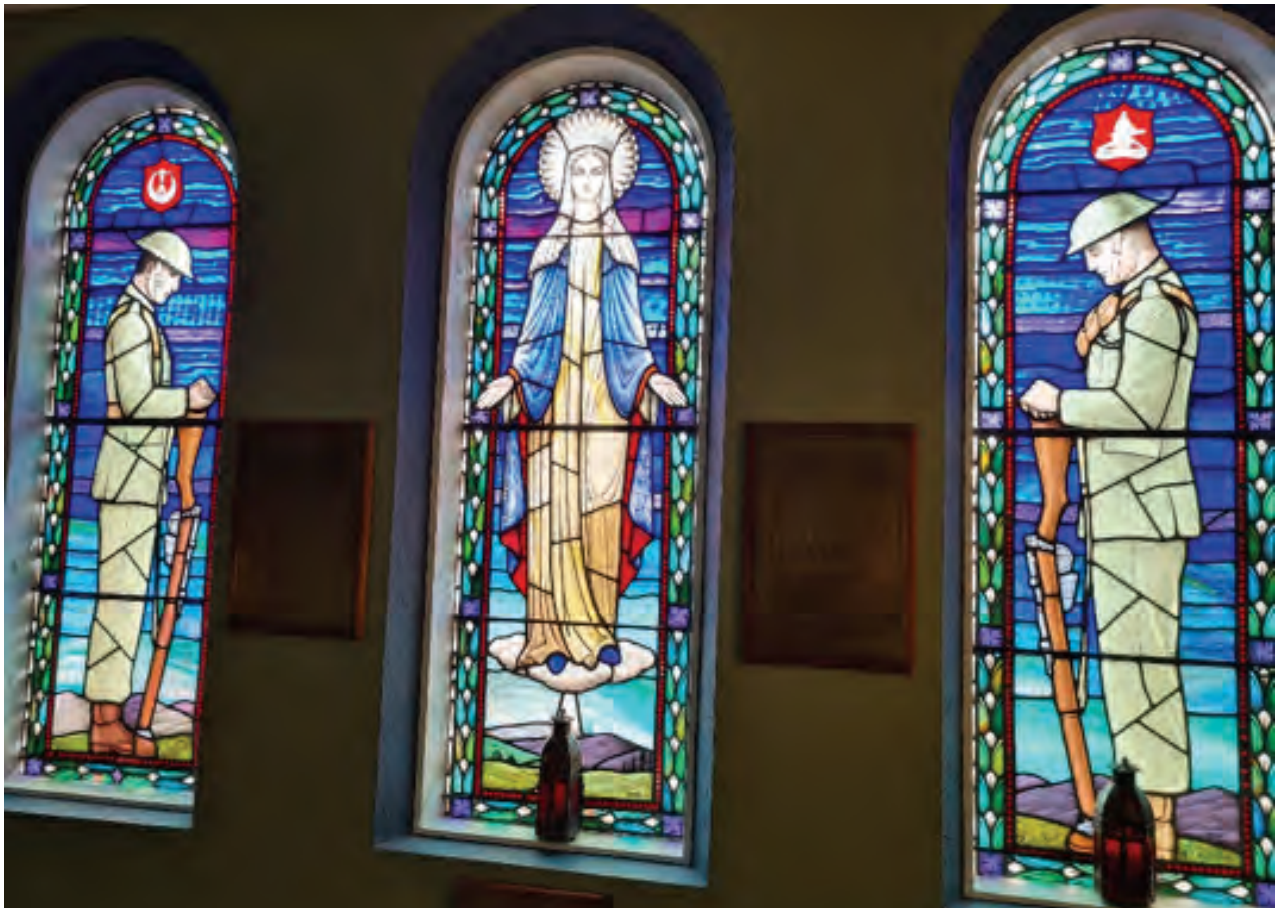
Roll of Honour

Rank	Name	Unit
Lt	J.J. Brierton	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Lt	J. D. Fennessy	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Lt	M. J. McLoughlin	Corps of Engineers
Lt	T. O. O'Neill	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
CS	P. McMahon	Artillery Depot & School
Sgt	M. Scullion	Artillery Depot & School
Sgt	T. Stokes	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Cpl	D. Cleary	Artillery Depot & School
Cpl	C. Heffernan	Artillery Depot & School
Cpl	E. J. Kennedy	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Cpl	W. Shannon	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Cpl	J. Taylor	Artillery Depot & School
Gnr	J. McDonnell	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Gnr	J. Murphy	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Gnr	G. P. O'Hagan	Anti-Aircraft Battalion
Gnr	J. Osborne	Anti-Aircraft Battalion

The Memorial Monument commemorates the tragic death of the above-named Defence Forces personnel who lost their lives as a result of an accidental explosion in Glen of Imaal on September 16, 1941.

The site of the explosion is near the Demolition Dump in the Range two kilometres NNE of the Memorial.

The Monument consists of a 14-ton basalt monolith erected in 1986 upon which is mounted a polished granite plaque. Sixteen individual local rick-stones form a forecourt and the sixteen Mountain Ash trees, as they grow, will embrace the whole and provide a tranquil and pleasant bower, a fitting and appropriate Memorial to the sad event of September 16 in 1941.



Artillery Corps Directors

COL	P. A. Mulcahy	September	1931
COL	M. Maher	June	1935
COL	P. A. Mulcahy	December	1942
COL	J. McLoughlin	January	1949
COL	P. J. Collins	November	1955
COL	P. J. Hally	December	1956
COL	P. Curran	May	1957
COL	A. Dalton	January	1959
COL	J. H. Byrne	October	1960
COL	J. Murray	October	1961
COL	M. Harrington	July	1969
COL	C. M. Mattimoe	September	1970
COL	M. Harrington	June	1973
COL	J. S. Nolan	June	1974
COL	T. Walsh	September	1976
COL	T. McDunphy	September	1978
COL	C. J. McGuinn	April	1982
COL	P. F. Monahan	July	1983
COL	S. B. Condon	August	1986
LT COL	P. J. O'Farrell	September	1988
COL	M. Moriarty	January	1989
COL	M. McMahan	April	1989
COL	G. Murphy	December	1989
COL	M. Shannon	December	1991
COL	M. P. Dunne	March	1994
COL	J. Prendergast	January	1996

OC Combat Support College and College Commandant (Director of Artillery in addition)

COL	J. Prendergast	November	1998
COL	B. O'Connor	August	2001
COL	R. Quinn	September	2003
COL	B. O'Connor	January	2005
COL	R. Quinn	August	2008
COL	McDermott	March	2011

Director of Combat Support (Director of Artillery in addition)

COL	P. Pakenham	July	2004
COL	B. Cleary	May	2017
COL	G. Buckley	December	2018
COL	P. White	July	2020
COL	D. Hanifin	December	2020

The appointment of Director of Artillery ceased towards the end of 1990's and was assigned 'in addition' to Artillery Officers serving as OC Combat Support College and as the Director of Combat Support (later & ISTAR). As the dates above demonstrate, the appointment was inconsistent as these roles were also filled by Infantry and Cavalry Officers. During these periods, OC Artillery School assumed the role of Director of Artillery.

Artillery Officers of the General Staff.

Adjutants General

Col	P. Hally	1957 - 1962
Maj Gen	C. McGuinness	1987 - 1989
Maj Gen	T. A. Wall	1992 - 1996
Maj Gen	W. Dwyer	1996 - 1998

Quartermasters General

Col	P. Curran	1962 - 1968
Col	W. Donagh	1968 - 1971
Maj Gen	K. Duffy	1991 - 1993
Maj Gen P.F. Nowlan	P. F. Nowlan	1997 - 1998

Assistant Chiefs of Staff

Col	R. Callinan	1961 - 1962
Brig Gen	P. F. Nowlan	1994 - 1997

Brigadier General

Brig Gen	Tom McDunphy	1982-1983
Brig Gen	W. O'Dwyer	1994 - 1996
Brig Gen	P. F. Monahan	1987 - 1991
Brig Gen	P. Pakenham	2009 - 2012
Brig Gen	G. Buckley	2019 - Present
Brig Gen	B. Cleary	2020 - Present

Artillery Corp Chief of Staff.

Maj Gen	P. A. Mulcahy	1955 - 1959
Lt Gen	T O'Neill	1986 - 1989
Lt Gen	J.N. Bergin	1992 - 1994
Lt Gen	C. O'Boyle	2013 - 2015

Guns of the Artillery Corps

Field Artillery Guns

Weapon	Country of origin	Year of manufacture	Calibre	Breech	Projectile weight	Max range	Remarks
18 Pounder Field Gun	UK	1904	84mm	SQF	8.4 kg	5,965m	Various Marks
60 Pounder Field Gun	UK	1904	127mm	IS	27.2 kg	15,000m	
3.7in Howitzer	UK	1915	94mm	SQF	9 kg	5,395m	Mountain Gun
4.5in Howitzer	UK	1904	114mm	HSB	15.9 kg	6,675	
75mm Field Gun	France	1897	75mm	NS	7.2 kg	6,850	
25 Pounder Field Gun	UK	1940	87mm	VSB	11.4 kg	12,250	In Service
120mm Heavy Mortar	France	1953	120mm	N/A	13 kg	6,650	Brandt AM 50 replaced by RUAG currently in service
105 Light gun	UK	1974	105mm	VSB/SA	16.1 kg	17,200	L118 in service

Thanks are due to all who have contributed to this publication, without whom it would not have been possible; in particular, the editorial board, consisting of Col Patrick White, Lt Col Shane Bradley, Comdt Lar Joye (AR), Capt Brian Clarke, Capt Dave Franklin and Lt Robert Sheehan. Many thanks also to the staff of Military Archives, to Brig Gen (Retd.) Paul Pakenham and to Lt Col (Retd.) Eamon Fogarty. Our sincere thanks to the DF Printing Press, and in particular Cpl Gareth Murphy, for his help in shaping and producing this book. To learn more about the history of the Artillery Corps, please check www.artilleryclub.ie





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