



Irish Defence Forces Veterans News

Serving the Veterans Community

NOV 2024 WINTER

VOL 3 ISSUE 4

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Meet the New Faces Behind Irish Defence Forces Veterans News

As we gear up for what promises to be one of the busiest and most exciting years yet for the Irish veterans community, we're thrilled to introduce the talented new members joining the Veterans News team. Together, we're committed to delivering compelling stories, timely updates, and invaluable resources for the Defence Forces family. With each team member bringing unique expertise, we're ready to spotlight the heart and soul of the veterans community across print, digital platforms, and social media.

John Mack – Design, Printing and Editing

With an eye for detail and a passion for storytelling through design, John Mack will be overseeing our magazine's visual presentation. John brings years of experience in design and print, ensuring that every edition not only looks incredible but also captures the spirit of the Defence Forces community.

Kevin Gulding – Content and Events

Kevin is our go-to person for fresh content and event planning. Dedicated to creating articles, stories, and features that resonate with veterans and their families, Kevin will also play a key role in planning community events to keep everyone connected and informed.

John Byrne – Event Coordinator, Event Coordinator

As our new Event Coordinator, John Byrne is organizing meetups, gatherings, and initiatives to strengthen connections within the veterans community. John's passion for fostering camaraderie is evident in his work, and he's already working on an exciting lineup of events for the year ahead.

Paul Boyle – Event Coordinator, Contributor

Paul Boyle joins the team as a contributor, bringing deep insights and a wealth of knowledge about the challenges and achievements of Irish veterans. Paul's thought-provoking articles will champion veterans' rights and celebrate their remarkable stories.

Looking Ahead

2024 is shaping up to be a landmark year for the veterans community. With a full calendar of events, campaigns, and opportunities to showcase the best of Irish veterans, we're ready to make a real impact. From strengthening connections through storytelling to advocating for veterans' rights, our new team is here to inform, inspire, and support every step of the way.

We Want to Hear from You!

Got a story to share or an idea for an article? Whether it's a personal story, a community initiative, or feedback, we'd love to hear from you. Drop us an email or reach out through our social media channels to get involved.

Follow Us Online

Stay up-to-date with the latest news and events by following us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter [include handles or links here].

Join Us!

Want to meet the team in person? Join us at Veterans Night Out on the first Friday of every month at O'Reilly's Bar, Tara Street (under the train station). It's a relaxed evening of camaraderie where you can connect with the Veterans News team, share your stories, and enjoy the company of fellow veterans.

Here's to an exciting year ahead – thank you for being part of it with us!

Together, let's make 2025 unforgettable for the Irish veterans community.

From the Editor

For the upcoming issue of the Irish Defence Forces Veterans News, we're proud to present a diverse array of topics that reflect the experiences, challenges, and triumphs of Ireland's military veterans. As always, our magazine serves as a platform to share stories of service, promote the well-being of our veterans, and advocate for necessary reforms.

This edition covers an in-depth analysis of the Defence Forces' recruitment and retention issues, focusing on pay and pension disparities that impact long-serving members. A special feature on the Single Public Service Pension Scheme highlights how recent changes have left many sergeants and senior personnel with inadequate retirement benefits, sparking debate on the urgent need for pension reform. We juxtapose this with private pension options to illustrate the financial gaps and suggest ways the state can improve support for its military personnel.

In our history section, we delve into the courageous rescue mission carried out by Irish peacekeepers in the Golan Heights in 2014, drawing parallels to past acts of valor, such as the famous Congo mission of 1961. These stories remind us of the enduring spirit of the Irish Defence Forces and the sacrifices made in the name of peace and global security.

Furthermore, we explore the power of community support in our coverage of the Defence Forces Classifieds, a grassroots initiative that has evolved into a vital employment and business resource for veterans. The group's remarkable growth demonstrates the impact of mutual support and volunteerism in addressing unemployment within the Defence Forces community.

We also focus on health and well-being, with articles promoting low-impact activities such as roller skating for older veterans and providing tips for staying active. Plus, the issue highlights upcoming social events, including the monthly Veterans Nights Out in Dublin, offering opportunities for camaraderie and connection.

Through these stories and features, we aim to honor our veterans, advocate for their rights, and celebrate the community that unites us all.

Irish Defence Forces Veterans News,
Robbie McAney
MSc, PG, BA (Hons), BSc, Cert
Development and Marketing Manager
Irish Defence Forces Veterans News (IDFVN)



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Defence Forces Classifieds: The Online Hub Empowering Veterans and Serving Soldiers

By R McAney for IDFVN

In a corner of the social media world, one Facebook group has become an unlikely yet impactful force in combating unemployment and supporting the economic well-being of Ireland's Defence Forces community. "Defence Forces Classifieds," run entirely by a dedicated team of volunteers, has made significant strides in improving job opportunities for soldiers, their families, and veterans. The platform has grown from a small exchange page to an essential resource for employment, entrepreneurial support, and mutual aid within the military community.

The Origins of Defence Forces Classifieds

Established several years ago, Defence Forces Classifieds was initially envisioned as a simple space where members of the Defence Forces, both past and present, could share items for sale, swap, or give away. It also aimed to promote businesses run by veterans and serving members, offering discounted services to the Defence Forces community. However, the page rapidly evolved into much more than a classifieds hub. With thousands of active members and an increasingly robust support network, it has become a critical platform for economic assistance and social support.

The Team Behind the Success

The group is powered by a small but effective team of volunteers who keep the platform running smoothly, ensuring it remains a reliable resource for the Defence Forces community. The dedicated individuals responsible for managing the group's day-to-day operations include Sarah Walshe, who serves as the Admin, along with moderators Hazel Brennan, Shelley Cotter, and Judith Butler Wharton. Their roles extend beyond merely overseeing posts; they actively engage with members, vet job opportunities, and promote veteran-run businesses, ensuring the group meets its mission of mutual support.

These volunteers bring their own experiences and connections to the table, many of them with ties to the military, which helps them understand the unique needs of the community. Their tireless efforts and commitment to the group's cause are a testament to the power of volunteerism, as they work to connect people with opportunities and provide valuable advice for navigating the transition from military to civilian life.

Reducing Unemployment Through Targeted Job Posts

A review of the group's activities over the past five years shows a remarkable trend in employment support. On average, the Defence Forces Classifieds posts around 1,200 job opportunities per year, which equates to approximately 100 job postings per month. These listings range from part-time gigs suited to family members to full-time positions for veterans seeking career changes.

Out of these posts, about 30% are tailored specifically for Defence Forces veterans and officers transitioning to civilian life. That's roughly 360 job opportunities each year directly aimed at helping former service members re-enter the workforce, translating to 1,800 job posts targeted at veterans over the last five years. For serving soldiers looking for additional work to support their families, the group also advertises employment that accommodates the demanding schedules of military life.

Supporting Veteran Entrepreneurs and Sole Traders

In addition to job opportunities, the Defence Forces Classifieds has become a key platform for veteran entrepreneurs. The group actively supports around 100 sole traders each year, offering free promotion to businesses run by Defence Forces veterans, officers, and their family members. With this level of support, over 500 veteran-owned businesses have benefited from the group's promotional activities in the past five years. These businesses span various sectors, including construction, IT services, consulting, and trades such as carpentry and plumbing.

The group has not only helped to connect customers with these businesses but has also created a culture of mutual support where members prioritise hiring fellow veterans. By leveraging the shared bond within the Defence Forces community, these businesses can grow more sustainably and compete in a broader market.

The Impact: A 360-Degree Support Network

The Defence Forces Classifieds is more than just an online marketplace. It has developed into a comprehensive support network that addresses multiple aspects of unemployment and economic hardship. Whether it is helping a veteran start a new business, connecting a soldier's spouse with part-time work, or offering advice on navigating the complexities of civilian employment, the group plays a vital role in reducing financial insecurity.

Moreover, the efforts of the volunteer administrators go beyond facilitating online interactions. They are often involved in guiding individuals through the employment process, recommending training programs, and connecting job seekers with veteran-friendly employers. The cumulative impact is a significant reduction in unemployment within the Defence Forces community, though precise statistics on employment outcomes are challenging to quantify due to the informal nature of the group's operations.

Calculating the Numbers

Over the past five years, the Defence Forces Classifieds has posted an estimated 6,000 job opportunities, supported roughly 1,800 veteran-targeted roles and assisted over 500 sole traders. These figures demonstrate the group's ongoing commitment to economic support and its potential to continue growing as an influential force for the Defence Forces community. The platform's success is a testament to the power of grassroots initiatives and volunteerism, proving that when a community rallies together, it can make a tangible difference.

A Model for the Future

Looking ahead, Defence Forces Classifieds has the potential to serve as a model for other communities in Ireland and beyond. Its success shows how social media can be harnessed not just for connecting people, but for providing real, tangible benefits, especially in times of economic uncertainty. The group's achievements also highlight the vital role played by dedicated volunteers like Sarah Walshe, Hazel Brennan, Shelley Cotter, and Judith Butler Wharton in bridging the gap between military service and civilian life.

For now, the Defence Forces Classifieds remain a beacon of support and opportunity for Ireland's Defence Forces community, driven by the ethos of helping each other out in whatever way they can. As the group's reach continues to grow, so too does its impact on the lives of those who have served, are currently serving, and their families.



Military photographs have played a vital role in documenting wars, conflicts, and other historical events throughout human history. From the earliest days of photography, military photographers have been capturing images that are both powerful and controversial, providing a window into the harsh realities of war and the human toll it takes.

One of the earliest examples of military photography dates back to the American Civil War when photographers such as Mathew Brady and Alexander Gardner captured images that have become iconic symbols of the conflict. These photographers used a large-format camera that required a long exposure time, making it difficult to capture action shots. Instead, they focused on capturing portraits of soldiers, landscapes, and other scenes that conveyed the gravity of the situation.

During World War I, photography technology had advanced significantly, and photographers like Frank Hurley and Ernest Brooks captured more action-packed and dramatic images. They used handheld cameras that allowed them to move around more freely and capture images of soldiers in the midst of battle. These images were often used for propaganda purposes, depicting the heroism and bravery of soldiers and promoting the cause for which they were fighting.

In World War II, photographers like Robert Capa and Dorothea Lange captured some of the most iconic images of the conflict. Capa, in particular, is known for his harrowing images of soldiers storming the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. These images captured the chaos and violence of war in a way that had never been seen before and helped to shape public perception of the conflict.

One of the most controversial images in military photography is the photograph of a naked girl running away from a napalm attack during the Vietnam War. Taken by Associated Press photographer Nick Ut, the image captured the horror and brutality of the conflict in a way that was deeply unsettling to many Americans. It became a symbol of the anti-war movement and helped to turn public opinion against the conflict.

In recent years, military photographers have continued to capture powerful and controversial images. During the Iraq War, for example, photographs of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib prison sparked outrage and led to widespread condemnation of the US military. The photographs showed prisoners being humiliated, tortured, and sexually abused, and served as a stark reminder of the abuses that can occur during times of conflict.

Controversial military photographs have often sparked debate about the ethics of photography and the role of the photographer in documenting war. Some argue that these images are necessary to raise awareness about the realities of conflict and to hold those in power accountable. Others argue that these images can be exploitative and insensitive and that they can perpetuate stereotypes and perpetuate harmful narratives.

Despite these debates, military photography remains an essential and powerful tool for documenting the history and shaping public perception. It can capture the horror and violence of war, as well as the resilience and humanity of those caught in its midst. Military photographers continue to play a vital role in shaping our understanding of conflicts and their impact on the world, and their work will undoubtedly continue to be both controversial and important in the years to come.



VETERANS NEWS



SERVING THE VETERANS COMMUNITY

Dublin Military Veterans Photo Pages

**O'Reilly's Bar
First Friday
of 2025
from 8
till late**



**O'Reilly's Bar
First Friday
of 2025
from 8
till late**



First Friday Never Forgotten, Always United

Join Dublin's Military Veterans for Monthly Nights Out!

Dublin, October 2024 – Dublin Military Veterans are excited to invite all serving members and veterans to their Veterans Nights Out at O'Reilly's Bar, Tara Street (under the train station). This series of social gatherings offers a relaxed environment for veterans and serving personnel to connect, unwind, and enjoy each other's company without the formality of an organization.

Event Details:

- Venue: O'Reilly's Bar, Tara Street (Under the train station)
- Time: First Friday of every month at 8:00 PM
- Start Date: Friday, 1st November 2024

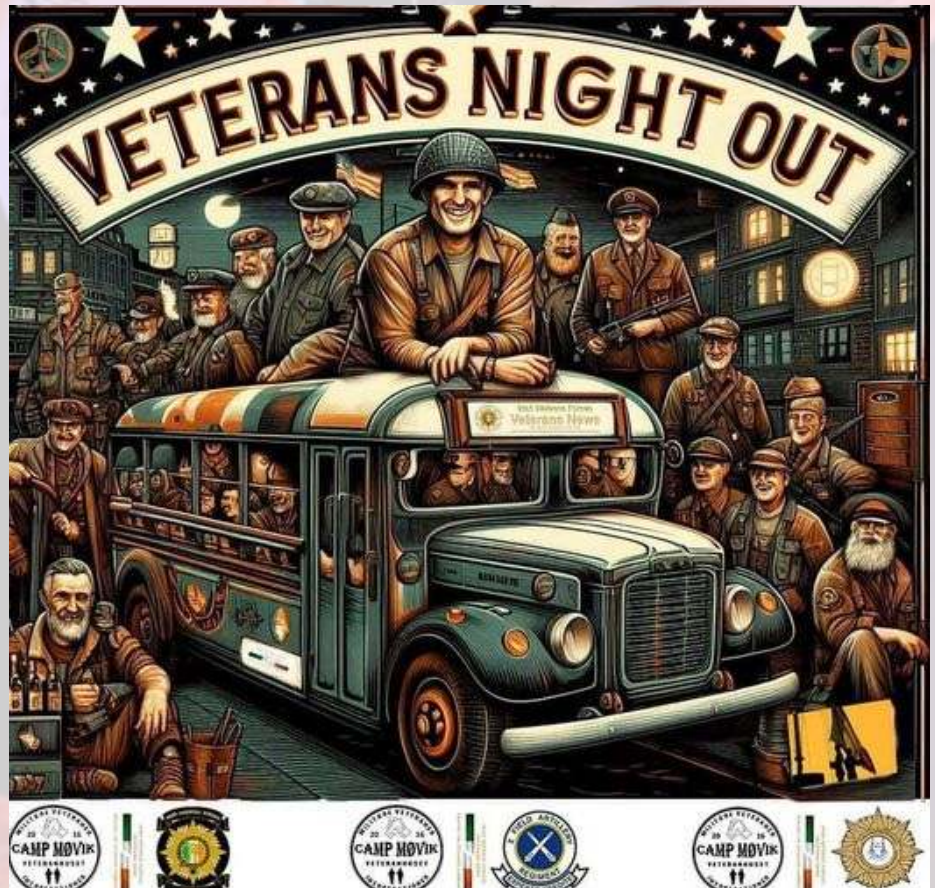
Why Attend?

- Camaraderie: Meet fellow veterans and serving members in a friendly setting.
- Discounted Prices: Enjoy special discounts exclusively for veterans on each first Friday.
- Great Company: Share stories, build friendships, and create lasting memories.

Upcoming First Fridays:

1. 1st November 2024
2. 6th December 2024
3. 3rd January 2025
4. 7th February 2025
5. 7th March 2025
6. 4th April 2025
7. 2nd May 2025
8. 6th June 2025
9. 4th July 2025
10. 1st August 2025
11. 5th September 2025
12. 3rd October 2025

These monthly nights are a perfect opportunity to take a break, enjoy some discounted pints, and celebrate the bonds forged through service. There's no formal agenda—just a chance for veterans and serving members to gather and enjoy a night out together.



How to Join: Simply show up at O'Reilly's Bar on any of the listed first Fridays.

Feel free to bring friends and fellow veterans along. Spread the word by sharing this invitation and inviting others to join the community.

For more updates and information, follow the Irish Defence Forces Veterans News and Dublin Military Veterans Facebook pages

Let's raise a glass to our heroes and enjoy memorable evenings together. See you there!
#DublinMilitaryVeterans #VeteransNightOut #ThankYouVeterans #OReillysBarDublin



VETERANS NEWS



SERVING THE VETERANS COMMUNITY

Dublin Military Veterans Photo Pages

**O'Reilly's Bar
First Friday
of 2025
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**First Friday
Never Forgotten, Always United**

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE DEFENCE FORCES



Coimisiún um Óglaigh na hÉireann
Commission on the Defence Forces

A Deep Dive into the Commission Report on the Irish Defence Forces

By R McAney (IDFVN)

In recent years, the Irish Defence Forces have been a focal point of intense scrutiny and debate. A culmination of these discussions is encapsulated in the comprehensive report by the Commission on the Defence Forces, a document that lays bare the numerous challenges faced by the military and outlines an ambitious roadmap for reform. This article delves into the key findings and recommendations of the commission, the government's response, and the critical reception of these proposed changes.

Background and Scope

The Commission on the Defence Forces was established as part of the Programme for Government commitments, with the aim of conducting a thorough evaluation of the Defence Forces' capabilities, structure, and readiness to meet current and future challenges. Published in February 2022, the report is a significant milestone, marking the first major review in several decades. It comprises 69 main recommendations and an additional 130 sub-recommendations, addressing a broad spectrum of issues from strategic command to personnel welfare and technological advancements.

Key Findings

One of the most striking findings of the commission is the critical underfunding and understaffing of the Defence Forces. The report highlights that the Defence Forces are struggling with severe recruitment and retention issues, leading to a substantial shortfall in personnel. This situation has been exacerbated by inadequate pay and conditions, which have failed to keep pace with the demands placed on military personnel.

Moreover, the commission identifies significant deficiencies in equipment and infrastructure. Many of the Defence Forces' assets are outdated, and there has been a lack of investment in modern technologies essential for a contemporary military. For instance, the air and naval capabilities are deemed insufficient for effective national defense and international peacekeeping roles.

Recommendations

To address these challenges, the commission outlines an ambitious plan to transform the Defence Forces by 2028, aiming to achieve "Level of Ambition 2" (LOA 2). This level envisions a robust, modern, and flexible force capable of responding to a wide range of security threats.

Key recommendations include:

1. **Strategic HR and Cultural Change:** Implementing a comprehensive human resources strategy to improve recruitment, retention, and career progression. This includes enhancing pay and conditions, introducing more flexible career paths, and ensuring compliance with the European Working Time Directive to improve work-life balance for military personnel.
2. **Modernization of Equipment:** Significant investment in upgrading equipment and infrastructure. This includes acquiring new primary radar systems, anti-drone technology, and modernizing the Air Corps' helicopter fleet by 2028. There are also plans to develop a dedicated Special Operations Forces unit with specialized aircraft.
3. **Structural Reforms:** Overhauling the command and control structures to improve efficiency and coordination. This involves establishing joint command structures and revitalizing the Reserve Defence Force to support the regular forces effectively.
4. **Enhanced Training and Development:** Emphasizing the importance of continuous training and professional

development, with particular focus on leadership and specialized skills to ensure personnel are well-prepared for the complexities of modern warfare.

5. Diversity and Inclusion: Promoting a more inclusive culture within the Defence Forces. This includes initiatives to support the promotion of women to senior ranks, reviewing grooming standards to better accommodate different genders, and implementing a female mentoring program .

Government Response

The Irish government has responded to the commission's report with a detailed implementation plan, signaling its commitment to addressing the outlined challenges. Tánaiste and Minister for Defence Micheál Martin has emphasized the need for a concerted effort across all levels of government and military to realize these reforms .

The implementation plan, which was published in November 2023, sets an ambitious timetable for achieving the LOA 2 capability by 2028. It incorporates immediate, short-term, and long-term actions, ensuring a structured approach to the transformation process. Key actions already underway include the simplification of allowances, doubling of patrol duty allowances, and the extension of private healthcare to all enlisted personnel.

Martin's remarks highlight the critical nature of these reforms in light of the evolving global security landscape. He notes that the Defence Forces must be modernized to protect national interests and contribute effectively to international peace and security missions.

Critical Reception

While the government's commitment to reform has been welcomed, there is widespread recognition that the success of these initiatives hinges on effective implementation. Representative bodies such as the Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO) and PDFORRA have stressed the need for rapid and decisive action to prevent further deterioration in morale and capability .

Critics argue that the reforms are long overdue and that the Defence Forces have been neglected for too long. The focus on cultural change is particularly significant, as issues such as poor morale and a lack of career progression opportunities have led to a high turnover rate among skilled personnel.

Cathal Berry, an Independent TD and former military officer, has been a vocal advocate for substantial investment in the Defence Forces. He underscores that the true measure of success will be in the swift and effective execution of the detailed implementation plan .

Conclusion

The Commission on the Defence Forces report and the subsequent government implementation plan represent a pivotal moment for the Irish Defence Forces. The recommendations, if fully implemented, have the potential to transform the military into a modern, well-equipped, and efficient force capable of meeting the diverse challenges of the 21st century. However, the path to achieving these goals is fraught with challenges, requiring unwavering commitment and collaboration from all stakeholders involved.

The coming years will be critical in determining whether these ambitious reforms can be realized, ultimately ensuring that Ireland's Defence Forces are prepared to safeguard national security and contribute to global stability.





Dublin Military Veterans Calendar 2024 -2025

First Friday

The first Friday of each Month is Veteran's Night out in O'Reilly's Bar Under the Bridge @ Tara Street Train Station from 2000hrs until late

1st Saturday of Each Month May to September

1st Saturday of each month is Mindfulness wellbeing day to mark this we do our walking and talking tour around different scenic routes of Ireland. So, Join up Link up and Get up from 12:00 noon on the First Saturday of each month.



Dublin Military Veterans



We are
Military
Veteran
s





Irish Peacekeepers Execute Daring Rescue Mission in Golan Heights

By R McAney for IDFVN
October 27, 2024

On a tense afternoon in the Golan Heights on August 28, 2014, Irish troops from the 44th Infantry Group, part of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), undertook a courageous rescue mission to save their UN colleagues who were under fire from rebel forces.

A Mission of Peace and Valor

The Golan Heights, a strategically significant plateau bordering Syria and Israel, has been a focal point of geopolitical tensions for decades. Established in 1974, UNDOF's mandate is to monitor the ceasefire between Israel and Syria, ensuring the stability of the region. Irish soldiers have been integral to this mission, exemplifying professionalism and bravery in their roles as peacekeepers.

The incident began when a UN convoy transporting Filipino peacekeepers was ambushed by rebel forces in a densely vegetated area of the Golan Heights. The assault left the convoy vulnerable, with Filipino troops struggling to manoeuvre and retreat amidst heavy gunfire. Sensing the escalating danger, the Irish soldiers swiftly mobilized to address the crisis.

Swift Response Under Fire

Led by Captain Liam O'Sullivan, the 44th Infantry Group responded with remarkable efficiency. The Irish troops deployed tactical manoeuvres to secure a safe corridor for the Filipino peacekeepers. Utilizing their training and coordinated efforts, they provided essential cover fire, effectively neutralizing the immediate threat posed by the rebels. This decisive action enabled the Filipino contingent to withdraw to a secure location, averting what could have been a tragic loss of life and a significant humanitarian crisis.

International Commendation

The bravery and professionalism displayed by the Irish peacekeepers did not go unnoticed. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon publicly commended the Irish forces for their actions. In his statement, Ban Ki-moon praised the Irish soldiers, saying, "I commend the bravery of the Irish peacekeepers who helped to protect their fellow peacekeepers and prevent a serious escalation of the situation." This acknowledgment highlighted the pivotal role that the Irish contingent played in maintaining peace and security in a volatile region.

A Legacy of Courage

The Irish troops' actions in the Golan Heights drew parallels to the legendary bravery of A Company, 35th Battal-

ion of the Defence Forces during their mission in the Congo in 1961. In that historic incident, Irish soldiers fought valiantly against overwhelming odds to protect themselves and their comrades. The courage exhibited by those soldiers has become emblematic of the Irish military's dedication and valour, serving as an enduring example for future generations.

Ongoing Commitment to Peace

Following the August 28 mission, the 44th Infantry Group remained on high alert, prepared to respond to any further threats or emergencies. Their sustained vigilance underscored the unwavering commitment of Irish peacekeepers to their mission and to fostering global stability. The soldiers continued to serve with distinction, embodying the principles of duty and sacrifice that define UN peacekeeping efforts.

Calls for Greater Recognition

Despite their heroic actions, there is growing concern regarding the recognition and support provided to Irish military personnel. Advocacy groups have urged the Irish government to enhance support systems and offer greater acknowledgment for the sacrifices made by soldiers serving abroad. "Our troops put their lives on the line to maintain peace and security around the world. It is imperative that we honour their contributions appropriately," stated Fiona Murphy, spokesperson for the Irish Peacekeepers Association.

A Nation's Pride

The successful rescue mission in the Golan Heights serves as a testament to the bravery and dedication of Ireland's military forces. Their swift response and strategic acumen not only saved lives but also reinforced the vital role of international peacekeeping missions in maintaining global security. As Ireland reflects on this act of valour, there is a renewed call for national recognition and support for its military personnel.

Conclusion

The rescue mission carried out by Irish troops on August 28, 2014, stands as a shining example of their commitment to peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts. Their actions under fire demonstrated unparalleled bravery and professionalism, ensuring the safety of their fellow peacekeepers and contributing to regional stability. As a nation, Ireland has much to be proud of in its military's contributions to global peace and security. It is imperative that the sacrifices made by these soldiers are remembered and honoured, reflecting the true spirit of service and dedication that defines the Irish Defence Forces.

IDFVN Advertising Rates

Full Page €450

Half page €200

Quarter Page €100

One Eighth Page €75

**To advertise please contact the Irish Veterans
News team on 00 353 1 6641297
or email us on info@idfvn.com**



The Soldier's Song

We'll sing a song, a soldier's song,
With cheering rousing chorus,
As round our blazing fires we throng,
The starry heavens o'er us;
Impatient for the coming fight,
And as we wait the morning's light,
Here in the silence of the night,
We'll chant a soldier's song.

Chorus:

Soldiers are we

whose lives are pledged to Ireland;

Some have come

from a land beyond the wave,

Sworn to be free,

No more our ancient sire land

Shall shelter the despot or the slave,

Tonight we man the gap of danger

In Erin's cause, come woe or weal

'Mid cannons' roar and rifles peal,
We'll chant a soldier's song.

In valley green, on towering crag,

Our fathers fought before us,

And conquered 'neath the same old flag

That's proudly floating o'er us.

We're children of a fighting race,

That never yet has known disgrace,

And as we march, the foe to face,
We'll chant a soldier's song.

Chorus

Sons of the Gael! Men of the Pale!

The long watched day is breaking;

The serried ranks of Inistail

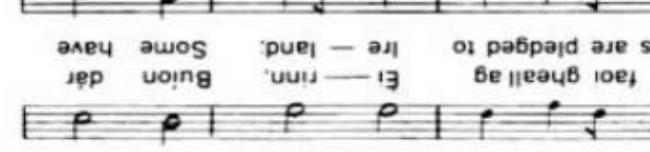
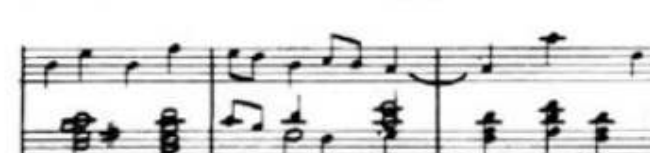
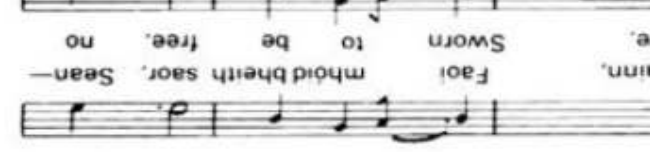
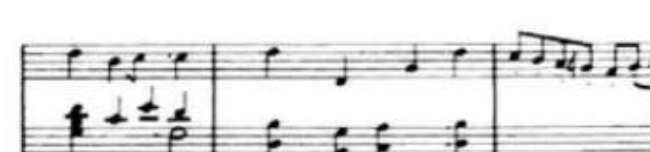
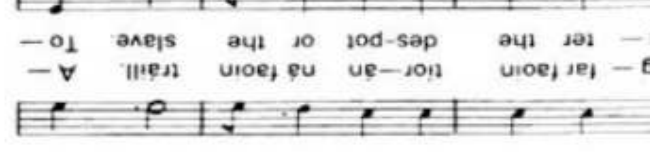
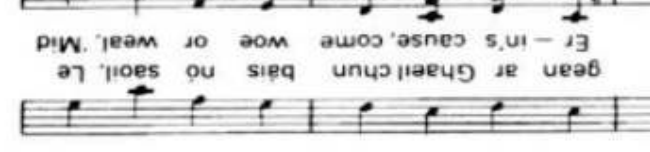
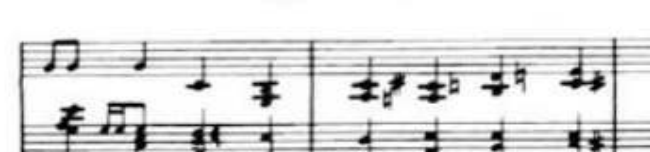
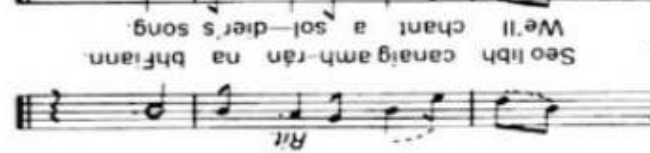
Shall set the Tyrant quaking.

Our camp fires now are burning low;

See in the east a silvery glow,

Out yonder waits the Saxon foe,
So chant a soldier's song.

Chorus



Sin — ne Fian — na Fáil, a — tá
 Sol — — diers are we, whose lives
 slua thar toinn do rai — nig chugha
 come from a land be — yond the wav
 Buon dár slua
 Thar toinn do ráinig chugainn.
 Fáil mhóid bheith saor,
 Seantir ár sinsir feasta
 Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán ná faoin trál
 Anocht a théim sa bhearna baol,
 Le gearn ar Ghaeil chun báis nó saoil
 Le gunnascreách faoi lámhach na bpiléar.
 Seo libh canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.
 Curfa:

Cois bánta réidh, ar arda sleibhe,
 Ba bhuach ár sinsir romhainn,
 Ag lámhach go téan faoin sárhrat seín
 Tá thusas sa ghaith go seolta
 Ba dhúchas riamh dár gcine cháidh
 Gan iompáil siar ó imirt áir,
 'S ag síl mar iad i gcoinne namhad
 Seo libh, canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.
 Curfa

A bhíon nach fann d'fhuil Ghaeil is Gall,
 Sin breacadh lae na saoirse,
 Tá sceimhle 's scanradh i gcroithie namhad,
 Roimh ranna laochra ár dtíre,
 Ar dtínte is tréith gan spréach anois,
 Sin luísne ghle san spéir anoir,
 'S an bíobha i raon na bpiléar agaibh:
 Seo libh, canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.
 Curfa

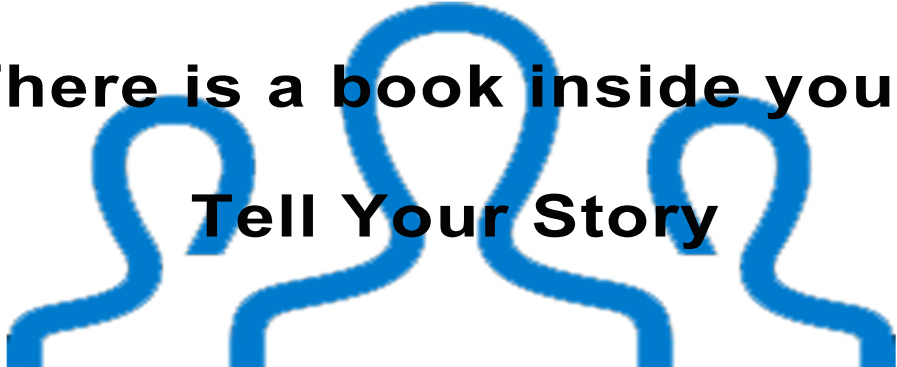
gun — na screách, faoi lámhach na bpi — léar,
 can — non's roar and ri — fles — peal,
 night we man the "bear — na baol", in
 nocht a théam sa bhearn — na baol, le

Amhrán na bhFiann

Seo díbh a chairde duan óglaigh,
 Caitheimeach bríomhar ceolmhar,
 Ar dtínte cnámh go buacach táid,
 'S an spéir go min réalógach
 Is fonnmhar faobhrach sinn chun gleo
 'S go tíuimhar glé roimh thíocht don lé
 Faoi chíunas chaomh na hólche ar seol:
 Seo libh canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.

Curfa:
 Atá faoi gheall ag Eirinn,
 Buon dár slua
 Thar toinn do ráinig chugainn.
 Fáil mhóid bheith saor,
 Seantir ár sinsir feasta
 Ní fhágfar faoin tíorán ná faoin trál
 Anocht a théim sa bhearna baol,
 Le gearn ar Ghaeil chun báis nó saoil
 Le gunnascreách faoi lámhach na bpiléar.
 Seo libh canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.

Curfa
 A bhíon nach fann d'fhuil Ghaeil is Gall,
 Sin breacadh lae na saoirse,
 Tá sceimhle 's scanradh i gcroithie namhad,
 Roimh ranna laochra ár dtíre,
 Ar dtínte is tréith gan spréach anois,
 Sin luísne ghle san spéir anoir,
 'S an bíobha i raon na bpiléar agaibh:
 Seo libh, canaigí Amhrán na bhFiann.
 Curfa



There is a book inside you !

Tell Your Story

Writing a book can be an exciting and rewarding experience, but it can also be a daunting task for many aspiring writers. Whether you're a first-time writer or a seasoned author, writing a book requires dedication, perseverance, and a plan. In this article, we'll explore the essential steps to follow when writing a book.

Step 1: Define Your Idea

Before you start writing, you need to define your idea. Start by brainstorming and identifying the topic, genre, and scope of your book. Consider the message you want to convey and who your audience will be. Make sure your idea is unique and original, and something you're passionate about. Your passion will keep you motivated throughout the writing process.

Step 2: Research

Once you have a basic idea of what you want to write about, conduct research to gather information, statistics, and stories to support your narrative. Researching will help you develop a deeper understanding of your topic and provide you with valuable insights and ideas.

Step 3: Outline

Develop an outline to organize your thoughts and ideas. Your outline should include the key themes and topics you want to cover in your book. It's an excellent tool to help you stay focused and on track throughout the writing process. Your outline will also help you identify any gaps in your research and fill them in as you go.

Step 4: Write

Once you have your outline, start writing your book! Set a daily or weekly writing goal to keep yourself motivated and on track. Consistency is key when it comes to writing a book. It's essential to find a routine that works for you and stick to it. Write in a quiet space with minimal distractions, and take breaks regularly to rest your mind and body.

Step 5: Edit

Once you've finished your first draft, take some time away from your manuscript and then come back to it with fresh eyes. Read through it carefully, make notes, and revise as needed. Editing is a crucial step in the writing process, as it helps you refine your message, clarify your ideas, and improve the overall quality of your writing. Consider hiring a professional editor or proofreader to review your work and provide feedback.

Step 6: Get Feedback

Share your manuscript with others, such as friends, family, or a writing group, and ask for constructive feedback. This feedback will help you identify areas that need improvement and refine your manuscript further. It's essential

to take feedback positively and use it to improve your writing.

Step 7: Publish

Once you're satisfied with your final draft, consider your options for publishing. You can either seek out a traditional publisher or self-publish your book. Self-publishing has become increasingly popular in recent years, thanks to the rise of e-books and online marketplaces like Amazon. Self-publishing gives you more control over your book's content, cover design, and pricing.

In conclusion, writing a book is a big undertaking, but it can also be a rewarding one. By following these essential steps, you can turn your idea into a reality and share your story with the world. Remember, writing a book takes time, dedication, and hard work, so stay committed to your vision and keep writing!

☒ A Festive Treat for Veterans this Christmas ☒

This Christmas, indulge in the perfect pairing of Monavin's exquisite white wine and deliciously handcrafted treats, creating moments of warmth and celebration. ☒☒☒

Let's honor our veterans by sharing the joy of the season with those who matter most. A thoughtful gift or the ideal centerpiece for holiday gatherings, this pairing is sure to add a touch of luxury to your celebrations.

☒ Want to Know More?

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#VeteransChristmas #MonavinWhiteWine #CelebrateTogether #ChristmasJoy #HonoringOurHeroes
#TasteTheSeason



Is the Defence Forces Pension Scheme Letting Down Sergeants with Decades of Service?

The crisis of recruitment and retention in Ireland's Defence Forces has been building for years, with pay and pensions being two of the most contentious issues. Among the ranks, particularly for long-serving members like Sergeants, there is growing discontent about the pension scheme for those who joined after 2013. Under the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, these soldiers face a very different future from their predecessors, with retirement benefits that seem out of touch with the sacrifices they have made.

Here, we explore what a Sergeant in the Defence Forces with 31 years of service can expect from the state pension scheme and compare it to a private pension scheme where the contributions would be the same—but the outcomes could be drastically different.

The State Pension: Falling Short of Expectations

A Sergeant in the Defence Forces who joined post-2013 accrues pension benefits under the Single Public Service Pension Scheme, a career-average system. Pensionable earnings are calculated by deducting 1.5 times the Contributory State Pension (CSP)—currently about €13,156 per year—from the gross salary, and the pension accrues at 0.58% per year of pensionable earnings. For a medium-ranking Sergeant, the pensionable earnings decrease drastically due to this calculation, leaving a less-than-ideal retirement sum.

For example, a Sergeant with a salary of €47,000 would contribute 6.5% of gross pay toward their pension. This amounts to €3,055 annually. However, because of the deductions tied to the Contributory State Pension, the pensionable salary is significantly reduced, leading to a much lower accrual each year.

After 31 years of service, a Sergeant could expect a total pension of around €4,630 per year under the state scheme, or about €89 per week. While they would also be entitled to the Contributory State Pension (currently €253 per week), their total retirement income of €17,786 per year (or €342 per week) seems meagre in light of the demands of military service.

The career-average model used by the state is not designed to reward long-term service with a competitive pension. It's a sharp contrast to the pensions earned by Defence Forces members who joined before 2013, many of whom could retire on half their final salary. For a Sergeant who has served over three decades, receiving just €89 per week from their military pension is understandably seen as an insult to their dedication.

Private Pension: The Alternative Route

To highlight how underwhelming the current public pension scheme is, let's consider the outcome if a Sergeant invested the same 6.5% of their salary into a private pension scheme. In this case, they would still contribute €3,055 annually, but the money would be invested in the market, yielding an assumed return of 5% per year. Over a 31-year career, these contributions would grow to form a pension fund of approximately €320,000. If the Sergeant were to use this fund to purchase an annuity or withdraw it through a drawdown scheme, they could expect an annual retirement income of around €12,800 per year, or €246 per week—far more than what the state scheme offers.

When combined with the Contributory State Pension of €13,156 per year, the Sergeant's total retirement income from the private pension route would be around €25,956 per year or €499 per week. This significant difference illustrates the potential benefits of a private scheme for someone with the same level of contributions.

The Bigger Picture: Recruitment and Retention

The gulf between what the state pension offers and what a private pension could provide is not just a financial issue—it's a factor contributing to the Defence Forces' ongoing recruitment and retention problems. Young recruits see the state pension scheme as inadequate, particularly when compared to the packages offered in private sector

jobs or even in other branches of the public service. For serving members, the realisation that they'll face a retirement pension of €89 per week after decades of service is enough to push many towards early retirement or even resignation.

Meanwhile, the private pension model—where identical contributions yield far better results—shows that the state's pension scheme is simply failing its Defence Forces personnel. A Sergeant who has served for 31 years should be able to retire with dignity and financial security, yet the current system offers neither.

The Urgent Need for Reform

If the government wants to address the recruitment and retention crisis in the Defence Forces, it must look seriously at the pension scheme on offer. For a Sergeant to dedicate 31 years of service and be left with a state pension of €89 per week is a clear indication that the current system is inadequate. Reform is needed—whether through raising the accrual rate, adjusting the pensionable salary calculation, or offering higher contributions.

Until meaningful changes are made, the Defence Forces will continue to struggle to attract and retain talent. As it stands, the state's shallow pension offering is a clear signal to future recruits: a career in the Defence Forces may not provide the financial security that service members deserve.



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"Brotherhood Eternal"

Overview of the Irish Defence Forces Recruitment and Retention

Part one of our five part series on the Irish Defence Forces starts with Pay and Conditions

Pay and Conditions,

The Irish Defence Forces are an all-volunteer force comprised of both officers and enlisted personnel. The pay of enlisted personnel in the Irish Defence Forces varies depending on rank and length of service.

Enlisted personnel in the Irish Defence Forces who hold the rank of Private receive an annual salary of €26,735 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €30,489. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €34,243.

Corporals receive an annual salary of €35,542 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €39,871. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €44,200.

Sergeants receive an annual salary of €46,936 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €52,734. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €58,532.

Lieutenants receive an annual salary of €62,163 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €69,783. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €77,403.

Captains receive an annual salary of €83,379 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €93,422. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €103,465.

Comandants receive an annual salary of €96,890 for the first three years of service. After three years, this salary increases to €108,766. After six years of service, the salary increases again to €120,642.

Enlisted personnel in the Irish Defence Forces receive a range of additional benefits such as paid leave, health insurance, and access to housing.

Overall, the pay of enlisted personnel in the Irish Defence Forces reflects the importance of the role they play in the defence of the country.

It is clear that the Irish Defence Forces value the dedication and commitment of their enlisted personnel and that they are willing to reward them with salaries commensurate with their rank and length of service.



Investigative Journalism

Veronica Guerin was a fearless Irish journalist who gained national and international recognition for her coverage of organized crime in Dublin in the 1990s. She made headlines for her daring investigative work that exposed drug lords and their associates, putting herself at great risk in the process. Her work was so impactful that she was named Irish Journalist of the Year in 1995, and her murder in 1996 sent shockwaves through the country.

During her time reporting on organized crime, Guerin identified and exposed many of the top criminals in Ireland at the time, including those with notorious nicknames such as “The General,” “The Border Fox,” and “Dapper Don.” These individuals were involved in drug trafficking, murder, and other criminal activities, and Guerin’s work helped to bring attention to their actions and put pressure on authorities to crack down on organized crime.

Martin Cahill, also known as “The General,” was one of the most high-profile criminals that Guerin reported on. He was a notorious figure in the Dublin criminal underworld, involved in a range of criminal activities including theft, extortion, and murder. Guerin’s reporting on Cahill and his associates helped to expose their criminal activities, and ultimately led to Cahill’s arrest and imprisonment. However, he was released from prison in 1993 and was later murdered in 1994, just a few years before Guerin herself was killed.

John Gilligan was another figure that Guerin reported on extensively. He was involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities and was suspected of being behind Guerin’s murder. He was eventually arrested and convicted of drug trafficking in 2001.

Dessie O’Hare, also known as “The Border Fox,” was a notorious criminal who was involved in a range of activities including kidnapping, extortion, and murder. Guerin’s reporting on O’Hare helped to bring attention to his actions and put pressure on authorities to take action against him. He was eventually arrested and convicted of kidnapping and other charges in 1998.

Other criminals that Guerin reported on included John Traynor, Christy Kinahan (also known as “Dapper Don”), George Mitchell, Brian Rattigan, Anthony “Nino” Cahill, Gerry Hutch (also known as “The Monk”), and John Cunningham.

Guerin’s brave reporting on these criminals put her in great danger, and ultimately led to her murder in 1996. Her death shocked the country and led to widespread condemnation of organized crime and calls for stronger laws to combat it. In the years since her death, there have been several other journalists who have continued her work in investigating organized crime in Ireland, but few have achieved the same level of national and international recognition as Guerin.

One possible reason for this is the increasingly challenging and dangerous environment for journalists in today’s world. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, there were 34 journalists killed worldwide in 2020 alone, with many more facing harassment, intimidation, and other risks. In Ireland, while journalists are generally able to operate freely and without fear of violence, there are still concerns about the safety of those who investigate organized crime and other dangerous subjects.

Despite these challenges, however, there are still many journalists who are committed to uncovering the truth and reporting on important issues. As we remember Veronica Guerin and her legacy of fearless reporting, we should also recognize and support the many other journalists who continue her work today.

Investigative Journalism A Career

Pursuing a Career in Investigative Journalism, A Path Tailored to Military Veterans

Investigative journalism is a noble profession that plays a crucial role in exposing corruption, uncovering hidden truths, and holding those in power accountable. For military veterans transitioning into civilian life, investigative journalism can offer a fulfilling career path that capitalizes on their skills, experience, and dedication to serving the public. In this article, we will explore the world of investigative journalism and discuss how military veterans can leverage their unique background to excel in this field.

The Significance of Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalism is an essential pillar of a democratic society. It serves as a watchdog, shining a light on injustice, corruption, and wrongdoing, while empowering citizens with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions. In Irish society, investigative journalism has played a vital role in holding public officials, corporations, and institutions accountable, thereby promoting transparency and social change.

Key Skills and Traits of Investigative Journalists

Transitioning military veterans possess a range of skills and qualities that align well with the demands of investigative journalism.

These include:

1. **Research and Analysis:** Military veterans are adept at conducting thorough research and analysis, a critical aspect of investigative journalism. Their experience in gathering and processing information, evaluating sources, and synthesizing complex data makes them well-equipped to uncover hidden truths.
2. **Attention to Detail:** Attention to detail is paramount in investigative journalism, as it involves fact-checking and corroborating information from multiple sources. Military veterans, who have been trained to pay meticulous attention to details during their service, bring a valuable asset to this aspect of investigative reporting.
3. **Interviewing Skills:** Military veterans often possess excellent interviewing skills honed through their experience in gathering information and conducting interrogations. These skills enable them to extract valuable insights and testimonies from sources, a key component of investigative journalism.
4. **Ethics and Integrity:** The military places a strong emphasis on ethics and integrity, and these values align closely with the principles of investigative journalism. Military veterans bring a sense of responsibility, honesty, and dedication to their work, ensuring the highest standards of professionalism.

Navigating the Path to Investigative Journalism

For military veterans interested in pursuing a career in investigative journalism, there are several steps they can take to maximize their chances of success:

1. **Education and Training:** While a formal journalism degree is **not** always a prerequisite, acquiring knowledge in journalism ethics, media law, investigative techniques, and storytelling can be invaluable. Many universities and colleges offer journalism programs, and online courses provide flexible options for learning.

2. **Building a Portfolio:** A strong portfolio showcasing investigative work is essential in securing opportunities in the field. Veterans can start by writing articles or producing multimedia content on topics they are passionate about. Collaborating with established journalists or contributing to local publications can also help build credibility.
3. **Networking:** Building relationships within the industry is crucial for career advancement. Attending journalism conferences, joining professional organizations, and engaging with fellow journalists can open doors to job opportunities and mentorship.
4. **Internships and Fellowships:** Participating in internships or fellowships with reputable media outlets or organizations specializing in investigative journalism can provide valuable hands-on experience and mentorship. These opportunities may also lead to full-time employment.

Job Opportunities and Salaries

Job opportunities in investigative journalism can be found in various media outlets, both traditional and digital. Irish media outlets such as the Irish Times, RTE, the Sunday Business Post, and Village Magazine have dedicated teams working on investigative reporting. Monitoring their websites, as well as job search platforms like Indeed and Glassdoor, can help veterans discover relevant openings.

Salaries for investigative journalists in Ireland range from €53,945 to €70,126 per annum, depending on experience and qualifications. While entry-level positions may have lower salaries, dedicated professionals can expect their earning potential to increase as they gain experience and recognition in the field. It's important to note that salaries may vary based on factors such as the media outlet, location, and individual negotiation.

Challenges and Rewards

While pursuing a career in investigative journalism can be immensely rewarding, it also comes with its own set of challenges. Some of these challenges include:

1. **Time and Resource Constraints:** Investigative journalism often requires extensive research, data analysis, and interviews, which can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Journalists must be prepared to invest significant effort and work diligently to uncover the truth.
2. **Ethical Considerations:** Investigative journalists must navigate complex ethical dilemmas, such as protecting sources, maintaining objectivity, and ensuring the accuracy of their reporting. Veterans with a strong foundation in ethics and integrity can navigate these challenges with the utmost professionalism.
3. **Risk and Personal Safety:** Investigative journalism can involve exposing powerful individuals or organizations, which may lead to threats or potential harm. Journalists need to prioritize their personal safety and take precautions while conducting investigations.

Despite these challenges, the rewards of investigative journalism are numerous:

1. **Making a Difference:** Investigative journalism has the power to bring about significant societal change. By exposing corruption, injustice, and wrongdoing, journalists can contribute to creating a more transparent and accountable society.
2. **Telling Untold Stories:** Investigative journalists have the opportunity to give a voice to marginalized communities, shed light on hidden issues, and challenge the status quo. This allows for a deeper understanding of complex problems and promotes empathy and social change.
3. **Professional Growth:** Investigative journalism offers continuous opportunities for growth and learning. Journalists can delve into diverse topics, build expertise in specialized areas, and develop skills in data analysis,

multimedia storytelling, and digital investigation techniques.

Conclusion

A career in investigative journalism tailored to military veterans can be a fulfilling and impactful choice. Leveraging the skills and qualities gained through their service, veterans have the potential to excel in uncovering the truth, holding power to account, and making a positive difference in society.

While the path to becoming an investigative journalist may require dedication, continuous learning, and perseverance, the rewards of contributing to a more transparent and just society are immeasurable. By combining their unique backgrounds with the core principles of investigative journalism, military veterans can bring a fresh perspective and an unwavering commitment to uncovering the truth.

Aspiring veterans should seize opportunities for education, build a strong portfolio, network within the industry, and gain practical experience through internships or fellowships. With determination, passion, and a commitment to truth-seeking, military veterans can forge successful careers in investigative journalism, making a lasting impact on their communities and the world at large.



DF Veteran's Charter, Honouring Service and Supporting Transition

By R McAney

DF Veteran's Charter

The Irish government has taken a commendable step towards recognizing and supporting our military veterans through the implementation of the DF Veteran's Charter. This charter aims to honor the loyalty, commitment, and

sacrifice of those who have served Ireland through their military service.

What Is the DF Veteran's Charter?

The DF Veteran's Charter represents a set of commitments that our veterans and their families can reasonably expect from the government and the state. It acknowledges the unique circumstances of military service and allegiance to Ireland and our constitution. Let's delve into the key aspects of this charter:

1. Transition Support

Transitioning from military life to civilian life can be challenging. The charter ensures that veterans receive the necessary resources to ease this transition. From employment opportunities to health and well-being support, the government is committed to assisting veterans in their journey.

2. Medical Care Continuity

DF veterans are subject to medical assessment and treatment by the Medical Corps doctors rather than local GPs. This continuity of care ensures that veterans continue to receive treatment for any ongoing medical issues. Additionally, providing GP Cards to cover general medical needs is a practical step towards supporting our veterans' health.

3. Waiving Prescription Charges

Government-levied prescription charges should be waived for veterans with a minimum of twenty years of service. This small but significant gesture recognizes their contribution and ensures that they have access to essential medications without financial burden.

The Impact on Veterans and Their Families

The DF Veteran's Charter goes beyond mere words; it translates into tangible benefits for our veterans and their families. Here's how:

1. Improved Health Services

By continuing to treat veterans for medical issues, we alleviate the burden on our health service. Having a designated "family" doctor ensures personalized care and familiarity with each veteran's unique health history.

2. Strengthening Community Bonds

Veterans play a vital role in their local communities. By supporting their well-being, we encourage them to remain active and engaged citizens. Their military values of loyalty to the state continue to benefit our nation even after their service.

3. A Grateful Nation

The DF Veteran's Charter sends a powerful message: Ireland appreciates and values its veterans. Their sacrifices deserve recognition, and this charter ensures that they receive the respect and support they deserve.

Looking Ahead

As we celebrate the implementation of the DF Veteran's Charter, let us remember that honouring our veterans is not just a duty—it's an opportunity. By supporting them, we strengthen the fabric of our society and create a legacy of gratitude and compassion.

In the words of President Michael D. Higgins, "Our veterans are not forgotten; they are cherished. Their service is etched into the very soul of our nation."

Let us stand together in gratitude and solidarity, ensuring that our veterans continue to thrive as proud citizens of Ireland.



VETERANS NEWS



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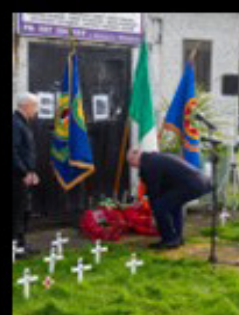
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Garden Village
Annual Event



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Garden Village
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"Lest We Forget"

Stay Active for People Over 50

In this issue we look at the low impact sport of roller-skating Roller skating is a fun and exciting way to stay active for people over 50. With its low impact movements and the possibility for a great cardiovascular workout, roller skating is an activity that can benefit both the body and the mind. In Ireland, there are plenty of roller skating rinks and skate shops so you can get the gear you need to start skating.

The health benefits of roller skating are numerous. Roller skating is a great way to get some low-impact exercise, meaning it won't put too much strain on your joints. This makes it the perfect exercise for people over 50 who may not feel up to running or jumping. The repetitive motions involved in roller skating also help to build strength and endurance. It's a great way to work your legs and core muscles, as well as provide a great cardio workout. It can even help you improve your balance and coordination, as you'll need to maintain control of your body to stay upright on the skates.

Roller skating also has many mental benefits. As an enjoyable activity, roller skating can help reduce stress and anxiety. It can also help improve your mood and mental clarity, allowing you to focus better. For people over 50, it can be a great way to stay connected with friends and family, or to make new ones.

In Ireland, there are plenty of roller skating rinks that offer the perfect place to practice your skating skills. In Dublin, you can find the Guinness Roller Dome, which offers a range of skating classes and events. In Cork, there is the Roller Jam skating rink, which hosts roller skating parties and events. In Kerry, there is the Gleneagle Skate Park, which offers a range of skating disciplines.

If you want to start roller skating, there are plenty of skate shops in Ireland where you can purchase your gear. In Dublin, you can find Skate.ie, which offers a range of skates and accessories. In Cork, you can find the Skate Zone, which specialises in roller skates, inline skates, and skateboards. In Kerry, there is Skater's Paradise, which offers a variety of skates and skateboards.

Roller skating is a great way for people over 50 to stay active and healthy. With its low impact movements, it's an ideal way to exercise without putting too much strain on your body. There are plenty of roller skating rinks and skate shops in Ireland, so you can get everything you need to start skating. So why not give it a try?



