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NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SEMINAR



*Back row, left to right: Ronan O'Boyle, Sharon McManus, Adrian Ryan, Séan White, John Hamill, Owen Ross, Gerry O'Leary, Mick Geraghty.
Front row, left to right: John O'Keefe, Paul Allen, Brian O'Keefe, Séan O'Shea.*

The RACO National Executive Seminar took place in Galway on the 17th and 18th April 2002. The new National Executive participated in the two-day seminar which included a briefing from the professional staff on all current association issues such as RACO finances, pay, pensions, allowances, and medical, as well as bullying and harassment.

During the colloquium, the new executive formulated their general policies for the next

two years, which included a decision to investigate possible entry into the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and the European military union (EUROMIL). The decision was also made to publish a RACO Code of Practice on Bullying, Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Harassment.

It was also decided to secure improvements in pensions, guided by the seven motions on pensions arising from ADC's.

This executive consists of the chairpersons of the eight regional committees, including the new USAC committee which represents full-time 3rd level students and Lt. Col. Paul Allen, President; Col. Brian O'Keefe, General Secretary; Col. Adrian Ryan, Deputy General Secretary and Capt. Mick Geraghty, Research Officer.



John Hamill

Rank: Commandant
Unit: Combat Support Section DFHQ
Marital Status: Married
Age: 46
Work No.: 2050

John's goals as chairperson are to elicit the views of the members in DFHQ and to submit these to the National Executive and to effectively communicate policy to our members. His vision for the future of RACO is for the Association to continue serving the officer body in the same effective professional way that it has up to now.

John is an Artillery Corps Officer with approximately 30 years service in the Western Brigade, The Military College and Defence Forces Headquarters. He has seven overseas tours of peacekeeping duties. He has held both command as well as staff appointments at home and abroad, and also held instructional appointments in the Artillery School and Command and Staff School.

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Sean O'Shea

Rank: Commandant
 Unit: Logistics
 Base: Curragh
 Marital Status: Married
 Age: 38
 Work No. 5452

Sean's goals as Chairperson are to represent the views of all rank of officers within the DFTC and ensure that RACO continues to be a vibrant association, particularly in the DFTC. He aspires to ensure that RACO continues to be a professional representative Association in order to make certain that Defence Force officers have a professional, challenging and rewarding career. Sean is an officer of the Ordnance Corps with over 21 years service in the Western Brigade and the Curragh. He has a BSc in Chemistry and has served overseas in Lebanon.

Gerard O'Leary

Rank: Commandant
 Unit: Headquarters, 1 Southern Brigade
 Marital Status: Married
 Age: 43
 Work No.: 4104

Gerry aims to develop greater participation at a strategic level between RACO and the official side and to enhance partnership structures at national and regional levels. This is Gerry's first time as an elected representative. He has over 25 years military experience ranging from service in Donegal, Galway, Curragh and Cork as well as over two years service in the Middle East.



Owen Ross

Rank: Captain
 Unit: 4th Cavalry Squadron
 Marital Status: Single
 Age: 29
 Work No.: 1954

Owen wants to ensure minority groups are fully and fairly represented as well as to increase the interest and involvement of officers in the Western Brigade in RACO. Owens' ambition for RACO is to ensure an all-encompassing association that continues to improve the pay and conditions of service of officers. Owen was commissioned in 1993 and has a BComm in Human Resource Management and a M.A. in Communication and Cultural Studies. He has served in both Athlone and Longford.



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Sean White

Rank: Captain
 Unit: 2nd Field Communications and Information Systems Company
 Marital Status: Married
 Age: 36
 Work No.: 6281

Sean has over 15 years service as an officer and graduated from UCG with a BSc. He also has an Hdip in IT, and has served in the Curragh, Baldonnel and Dublin as well as overseas service in Lebanon and Somalia. Sean is keen to ensure that RACO is seen as a positive influence on all aspects of an officer's service within the Brigade. He aims to maintain RACO as a modern and vibrant association that seeks to enhance the service of the professional military officer.

John O'Keeffe

Rank: Commandant
 Unit: No. 3 Support Wing (Heli)
 Marital Status: Married
 Age: 31
 Work No.: 7588

John has 14 years military experience and he received his flying wings in 1991. He is the Chief Helicopter Instructor in the Air Corps. John vows to continue to highlight the concerns of Air Corps members particularly in the area of flight safety, and to strive to remove the significant distractions that prevent officers from managing the flying operation. John views RACO as a highly competent professional organisation, and he intends to encourage Air Corps officers to be more involved in issues ranging from benchmarking to bullying and sexual harassment.



Ronan O'Boyle

Rank: Lieutenant (NS)
 Unit: Naval Service
 Marital Status: Married
 Age: 30
 Work No.: 4994

Among Ronan's goals as chairman is to coordinate an efficient and effective team on the Naval Service committee in order to ensure timely representation for all RACO members in the Naval Service. Ronan would also like to pursue increased affiliation with other representative associations such as ICTU. Ronan has eleven years experience and has served on LE Deirdre, LE Roisin and LE Orla as well as attending an international naval course with the Royal Navy. Ronan is completing a BSc in IT at present.



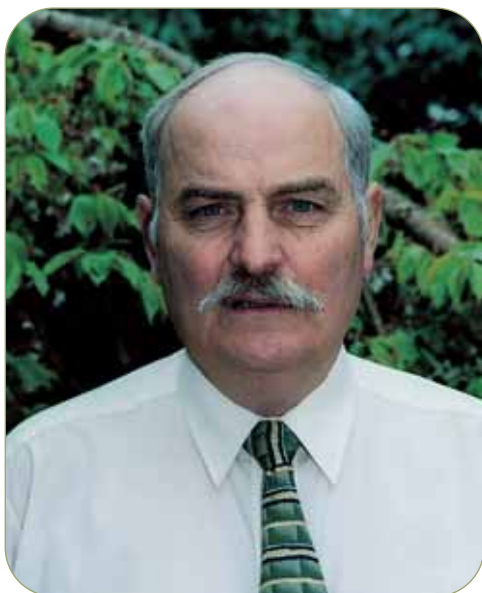
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Sharon McManus

Rank: Lieutenant
 Unit: USAC
 Marital Status: Single
 Age: 23
 Work No.: 1765

Sharon is the first Chairperson of the newly formed USAC. This committee was established principally in light of the fact that one in 12 officers are stationed in USAC at any particular time and do not have ready access to their barrack representatives. Sharon intends to increase awareness among the officers in USAC as to the functions, services and benefits of RACO. She is aware of the need to facilitate the passage of information to and from USAC members to the National Executive as well as to provide a platform for junior officers to air their views opinions. She has been a member of the Defence Forces for seven years and is in her 3rd year of the Civil Engineering Degree programme.



*Pictured far left: Lt Col. Paul Allen,
 President of RACO.*

*Pictured left: Comdt. Brian O'Keefe, General
 Secretary of RACO.*



*Pictured far left: Comdt. Adrian Ryan,
 Deputy General Secretary of RACO.*

*Pictured left: Capt. Mick Geraghty, Research
 Officer, RACO.*

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The following claims are currently under negotiation at Conciliation Council

- Claim for an increase in overseas telephone allowance
- Claim for the payment of travel allowances for officers attending career courses
- Claim for the payment of change of station allowances to an officer on attachment
- Claim for the payment of FMD allowance
- Claim - starting pay on promotion to the rank of Comdt (Army Line)
- Claim - Travel Pass Scheme
- Claim for Reimbursement of Membership Fees - Irish Nautical Institute
- Claim that substitution allowance should increase incrementally for officers who serve in 'acting up appointments' for periods in excess of one year
- Claim - Asia Deployment LE Niamh
- Claim for an increase in leave for Officers who have 20 or more year's commissioned service
- Claim for continuation of medical services on retirement
- Claim in respect of carry over leave
- Claim for an increase in PDA - weekend & holiday rates

must all strive to ensure our personnel operate in an environment which has a zero tolerance of any level of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

RACO is also confident that personnel systems already in place within the Defence Forces, coupled with the recommendations accompanying the report, can form the basis of the best possible solution to these important personnel issues now raised. The ongoing review of Grievance Procedures and instructions on Interpersonal Relationships, the introduction of an Ombudsman, the family-friendly policies, the Personnel Support Services - and other significant human resources' initiatives can all contribute to a better and more supportive working environment. The positive and sensible response of Defence Forces management to this report is welcomed and required. The Irish Defence Forces now operate in several countries around the world and contribute to the overall positive image of Ireland on a daily basis. We should not be satisfied with standards which pertain elsewhere on personnel issues - we must develop systems and responses which act as a model for the Defence Forces and like organisations around the world - and this we believe is entirely possible. The Independent Monitoring Group (IMG) has already been established and consists of the following members: Dr. Eileen Doyle, Chairperson; Brian O'Keefe, RACO; Gerry Rooney, PDFORRA; Major General Jim Sreenan Deputy Chief of Staff (Support); Michael Howard, Assistant Secretary General, Department of Defence.

The terms of reference of the IMG are:

1. To agree a draft implementation plan for the Minister's approval
2. To co-ordinate and manage the overall implementation process
3. To provide a forum for the discussion and agreement of issues which arise in the course of the implementation.

The group will agree to proceed at all times by consensus. The group will be kept fully informed of specific measures being undertaken by the Defence Forces or either Association in connection with the implementation of the report and will seek to co-ordinate such undertakings. The group may delegate the drafting of specific elements of the plan.

A copy of the full report can be found on www.gov.ie/defence/ExternalAdvisoryCommitteeReport.pdf

The Doyle Report

RACO has welcomed the Doyle Report on 'Harassment, Workplace Bullying, Discrimination and Sexual Harassment in the Defence Forces'. The report raises many serious issues, which require an immediate proactive approach - and the Association welcomes the response from Defence Forces management, which outlines a clearly-defined policy and the motivation to tackle the issues raised. It is also of interest to note in the report the comment to the effect that Defence Forces

personnel experience a "high level of satisfaction with various features of their lives in the military... regarding colleagues, conditions of work and those with whom they worked. This report follows the analysis of a detailed questionnaire issued to a substantial cross section of Defence Forces' membership. This constitutes a comprehensive response from membership on crucially important issues in regard to the conduct, management and support available to personnel. We fully accept this report and welcome it - and firmly hold the view that with the appropriate responses we can create a better and more effective Defence Force."

RACO also recognises that, as outlined in the 'Report of the Task Force on the Prevention of Bullying in the Workplace' organisational change can contribute to bullying and other behavioural issues. Three of the four factors outlined in the Task Force report that contribute to bullying are particularly relevant to the Defence Forces at this time. They are as follows:

- New management/management turnover
- Reorganisation,
- Introduction of new technology

EU research on sexual harassment and statistics from research on Defence Forces in both Australia and the US help put the present findings in context. Whereas this report by Dr. Eileen Doyle shows that the findings for Defence Forces are not unique or as excessive as the studies referred to above we



Eileen Doyle, author of the report.

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Dress Code

In a demanding job with varied responsibilities, the need for rapid response to work wear demands is important for getting the job done. You need the right equipment, the right tools, and the right clothing to be able to meet the day-to-day challenges of the Defence Forces. As a market leader in the career wear industry, Acorn Fashions continue to meet this challenge by combining traditional skills with technological advances and have forged a reputation as a company that can be relied upon.

Acorn understands that different industries, and even organisations within the same industry have unique design, fabric and supply requirements. Comfort and practicality are always designed into each garment. And with a wider choice of stock supported uniforms available, the collection offers true diversity and reliability. Acorn strongly believes that the professional at work expects and deserves a lot more from what they wear.

Commercial Report.



One per cent lump sum - 1st April 2002

Officers, like all public and civil servants, were paid a 1% lump sum as part of the national wage agreement, the PPF. The 1% is calculated of each person's basic annual salary including allowances in the nature of pay (but not other allowances such as SDA etc.) on 1st April 2002. Officers on a career break/leave of absence are not entitled to the lump sum but those on maternity or sick leave are.

Civil Service Travel Pass Scheme

This scheme, published by the Department of Finance last autumn, was introduced across the civil service on 1st January last. The scheme permits an employer to purchase a bus or rail commuter ticket for their staff tax-free. When raised by RACO last year the Department of Defence contended that the scheme did not apply to the Defence Forces. RACO lodged a formal claim for the applicability of this scheme to officers of the Defence Forces and it transpires that it did apply to the Defence Forces from its inception. However, having conceded that members of the Defence Forces may avail of this scheme, the department have expressed reservations about their ability to administer this scheme and have proposed that the scheme be deferred until January 2003. Quite clearly the department's contended inability to administer this scheme will cost Defence Forces bus and rail commuters a lot of money. RACO have insisted that this scheme be introduced immediately and have raised this issue at DFHQ Forum in order to encourage the military authorities to expedite the current problems.

Defence Forces HQ Forum

The following items were discussed at the recent meeting:

- Undertakings, under the following areas:
 - USAC & Pilot Undertakings
 - Refund of Fees Scheme
 - Courses of Fundamental necessity to the Defence Forces
 - Military Courses outside Defence Force establishments.
- Instructors Selection Criteria (Foreign International UN Courses)
- Pay (Individual Case)
- Review of the Rates of Commuted Car Allowances
- Review of Overseas Selection Criteria
- Military Administrative Procedures
- Officers Serving Overseas
- Criteria governing the selection of officers for overseas courses
- VHI Global Cover - Overseas Accompanied Missions-Policy Statement for Naval Officers who qualify for four-year honours BSc degree
- Border Rotation Policy for Junior Officers
- Officer Accommodation Policy
- Public Service Travel Pass Scheme.
- DF Dental Service
- FCA Reorganisation
- Subsistence Payments to Yos
- Provision of Annual Confidential Reports for the ADC to the President and the Taoiseach.

Family-friendly policies

Family-friendly policies were introduced as part of the current national wage agreement, the PPF. One of those policies, the civil service term-time working scheme, was introduced on a pilot basis in some departments last summer. The scheme allows an employee to take two months unpaid leave during the summer school recess but to have the balance of the annual salary paid in 12 equal amounts. RACO formally claimed the applicability of this aspect of the PPF due to the fact that negotiations on the introduction of the term-time scheme for officers were progressing at an unsatisfactory rate. These human resource and management practices as directed by the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness are applicable to the rest of the civil service. The department, in a letter to RACO have now stated that they are denying the term-time scheme to RACO members. They stated that the military authorities have examined the feasibility of implementing the scheme and they concluded that the introduction of such a scheme would pose considerable problems. The official side have not divulged the research that supports this personnel policy.

Pte Peadar Ó Flatharta

Glacann Uachtarán RACO agus an Coiste Gnóthaí Náisiúnta comhbhrón ó chroí le muintir Pheadair Ó Flatharta, lena chomhleacaithe agus lena chairde uilig de bharr a bhás tragóideach agus é faoi sheirbhís síochánta ar son na Náisiúin Aontaithe le ghaird.

Ar Dheis Dé go raibh a anam dhílis.