



THE ADVENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATIONS
IN THE IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

MICHAEL P. GANNON, COMMANDANT, IRELAND

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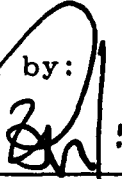
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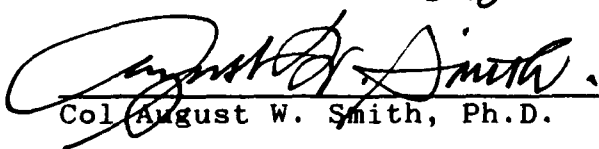
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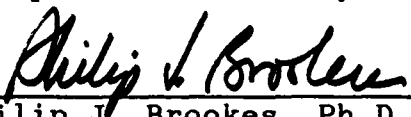
Approved by:


_____, Thesis Committee Chairman
Col Timothy L. M. Porter, OBE


_____, Member, Graduate Faculty
LTC Robert A. Strange, MA


_____, Member, Consulting Faculty
Col August W. Smith, Ph.D.

Accepted this 5th day of June 1992 by:


_____, Director, Graduate Degree Program
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

THE ADVENT OF REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATIONS IN THE IRISH
DEFENCE FORCES, BY COMMANDANT MICHAEL P. GANNON,
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This study seeks to identify the factors that underlie the establishment of representative associations in the Irish Defence Forces.

The thesis establishes the nature and history of military representation. It further finds that the Irish Defence Forces were almost totally unaware of and had no policy on military representation prior to 1988.

By 1991 representative associations were legally established in the Irish Defence Forces. The greater part of the thesis studies and analyses the interactions of the parties involved in this remarkable evolution in such a short period of time.

In addition to the Government, the military authorities and Defence Forces' personnel, the study finds the printed media and a pressure group composed of military wives to be significant players in the process.

The study concludes that a number of intertwined factors led to the establishment of representative associations in the Irish Defence Forces. Critically, many of these factors arise from poor management of manpower, the Defence Forces most important resource.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background to Representation

On 16 May 1991, the Minister for Defence formally signed Defence Forces' Regulation (DFR) S6, permitting the establishment of representative associations in the Irish Defence Forces. Such associations would have been unthinkable some three or four years previously. As a member of the 46th Command and Staff Course 1987, conducted at the Irish Military College, I recall vividly the irrelevance that all the class members attributed to the subject of military representation/unionism that was raised by the Swedish Military attache in a general address to the Course. With such an attitude from the next generation of senior leaders in the Irish Defence Forces, it is scarcely surprising not to find any reference to military representation from an Irish point of view prior to 1988.

However, things were soon to change completely. On 13 Aug '88 the *Irish Times* reported that the Minister for Defence had turned down suggestions to set up representative organisations for members of the Defence Forces¹. An opposition party's spokesman on Defence in the Irish Parliament made the suggestions prompted by a growing unrest within the Defence Forces. (This unrest amongst Irish

military personnel will be examined in detail in Chapter 4.) As the unrest continued to grow the Minister continued to turn down such suggestions throughout the period of the next year or so.² Toward the end of 1989 the Minister's stance had begun to change. By May '91 the whole situation had changed completely and representative structures were legally part of the Irish Defence Forces.

The Irish Defence Forces

On the 1 Oct '24, the Executive Council of the Irish Free State established the Irish Defence Forces. The President of Ireland is the supreme commander of the Defence Forces. Under his/her direction the Government exercises military command through the Minister for Defence.³ Since their establishment the Defence Forces have been an all volunteer force.

The Irish Defence Forces are comprised of The Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and The Reserve Defence Force (RDF). The PDF consists of three services, the Army, the Naval Service and the Air Corps. It has an establishment for a total of 17,980 personnel.⁴ The RDF consists of the First Line Reserve (members who have formerly served in the PDF), An Forsa Cosanta Aitiuil (FCA, a territorial second line army reserve), and An Slua Muiri (the second line naval reserve). It has an establishment for a total of 22,889 personnel.⁵

Post-Civil War Period, 1924-1939. In the period from their establishment to the outbreak of World War II, the Defence Forces went through various stages of growth and decline in numbers, reflecting the policies of that time. To balance the declining numbers in the PDF during the peacetime era between 1927 and 1939, various classes of Reserves were introduced with varying measures of success. These were generally characterised by a commitment to a fixed number of days training per annum. However, between 1935 and 1938 the attendance at annual training of the (then) Volunteer Force averaged only 57%. Accordingly, the standard of training of the Volunteer Force was not what it should have been. Due to financial stringency during this era, and with only 5% of the annual defence budget being allocated to the purchase of weapons, ammunition, and equipment, the PDF and hence the Reserves, were ill-equipped at the outbreak of World War II.⁶ But the Volunteer Force was to make an essential and invaluable contribution to the Defence Forces when called out on active service in 1940.

The Emergency Period, 1939-1945. When mobilised in Sept '39 the Army and Reservists/Volunteers comprised not much more than 50% of an envisaged War Establishment of 37,560 personnel. Through various recruitment drives and the formation of the Local Defence Force (LDF) in Jan '41, the strength was increased to a more satisfactory level. During this period a Marine Service, operating with very

inadequate equipment, and a Coastwatching Service, comprising mainly of Volunteer Force's personnel, were rapidly created. The Marine Service later became the Naval Service in 1946.⁷ This wartime period also saw the formation of a Construction Corps consisting of young unemployed and unmarried men, which undertook public works such as building roads, clearing scrub, building bridges, etc.⁸

Post-Emergency Period, 1945-1958. A Defence Forces' post-war establishment of 12,500 (all ranks) meant a rapid demobilisation after the end of hostilities. In 1947 the First Line Reserve was created, and the FCA came into being as the Second Line Reserve. The organisation of the Army then remained in place as before until 1959. During the late 1940s and the 1950s a period of stagnation existed. Diminished expenditure again led to a lack of investment in modern equipment.⁹ Consequently the Defence Forces of the late 1950s were in an neglected and run down condition.

The Modern Defence Forces since 1958. From the late 1950s events unfolded on a number of fronts that were to have a major impact on the nature, character, and professionalism of the PDF's traditional role. The major factors in this regard may be summarised as follows:¹⁰

1. Internal Security Operations.
2. Involvement in United Nations operations.
3. The introduction of modern equipment and technology.

4. The enlarged scope and scale of assistance to the Civil Authority.

These factors shaped the type of Defence Forces, which in the early 1990s would view a representative structure as a necessary part of its evolutionary process. On this basis the modern Defence Forces is the exclusive subject of Chapter 3 of this thesis.

Roles of the Irish Defence Forces. The most recent definition of the role of the Defence Forces is that provided by the Minister for Defence in Dail Eireann in 1981:

to defend the State against external aggression this being, of course, the primary role;

to aid the Civil Power, which means in effect to assist, when requested, the Garda Siochana, who have the primary responsibility for the maintenance or restoration of the public peace and for internal security;

to participate in United Nations peacekeeping missions;

to provide fishery protection for the exclusive sea fisheries of the State;

to undertake such other duties as may be assigned from time to time, such as search and rescue and helicopter ambulance service; assistance on occasions of natural disasters; oil pollution at sea; and the provision, where essential, of emergency services to the community.¹¹

It is in the attainment of assistance to the Civil Power that the Defence Forces make their truly unique

contribution.¹² This is particularly so when one considers that they are primarily trained, equipped and organised to oppose external aggression, rather than to act as a para-military police force or a border guard. Even though the Gardai are the primary instrument for the maintenance of internal security and the protection of the community against crime, internal security has for many years, in practice, been the dominant and the usual role of the Defence Forces.¹³

UN peacekeeping missions are their second most frequent role after aid to the Civil Power. Since their initial involvement in the UNOGIL mission in Lebanon in 1958 the Defence Forces have contributed to over a dozen UN missions. The concentration of this contribution, in terms of manpower, has been to the UNIFIL mission in South Lebanon where a battalion size force of 750 personnel (approx), have been on peacekeeping duty since 1978. As of 1 Feb '92 members of the Irish Defence Forces were involved in ten UN missions and in two EC missions (Yugoslavia and Russia).

The Research Question

The foregoing is a very short synopsis of the history and roles of the Irish Defence Forces preceded by an introduction to the subject matter of this thesis, which aims to answer the following primary question:

What factors underlie the establishment of representative associations for members of the Irish Defence Forces?

Before I can answer this question, however, I must address other questions:

1. What is the history, the character and the nature of military representation?

With regard to this secondary question the following may be asked.

- a. In what countries has military representation developed?
- b. What are the characteristics of this development?
- c. Are there instances where representation was mooted but failed to develop?

2. Did the Irish Defence Forces and Government have a policy on representation prior to it becoming an issue in Ireland in 1988?

Under this question it is relevant to ask:

- a. If a policy existed, what was its manifestation and nature and how soundly was it based?
- b. If no policy existed, was it because of neglect or default, or were there genuine reasons why such circumstances prevailed?
- c. How was the Irish position influenced by the growth of military representation in other countries?

3. What were the characteristics and nature of the Irish Defence Forces that sought a representative structure in the late 1980s?

Here, the following tertiary questions are relevant:

- a. What was different about the Defence Forces of the 1980s compared to the Forces that preceded them in the previous decades?
- b. What were the factors that contributed to this change?
- c. How well did pay and conditions of service meet the expectations of the modern Irish soldier?

4. How and why did military representation gain official recognition in the Irish Defence Forces?

Under this secondary question answers to the following are appropriate:

- a. When and why did the question of representation arise?
- b. Who were the principals involved, and how did they respond throughout the process.?
- c. What were the key events in the process ?
- d. How significant was the impact of any external influences at work during the process?

The Significance of This Study

This study will look at representation and the Irish Defence Forces in as wide and objective a context as

possible. It will present the facts, and through discussion of these facts, draw conclusions as to the underlying factors which brought about representation. These conclusions should establish whether representation came about because of:

1. A genuine need.
2. Accident or default.
3. Natural social progress.
4. Political expediency.
5. Media Influence.
6. Some other reason(s).

A combination of the above reasons is a more likely explanation for representation. Consequently this study is important for a number of reasons.

To date, no study exists that encompasses all aspects of this remarkable development in the Irish Defence Forces, or which investigates the inter-relationships of the various factors that were at play during the advent of military representation in Ireland.

The parties involved (the Government, the Defence Forces' Authorities, Defence Forces' personnel and their families, and the Media) have been so intimately entwined in the process and in each of their own individual issues that, even at this stage, they may not appreciate what has occurred in an overall context. This progress towards representative associations may also have been clouded, as

far as those most immediately involved are concerned, by the emotional atmosphere that was generated during the process.

This study may also indicate some traditional attitudes/relationships that may have fundamentally changed in the Irish Defence Forces.

In general terms the study may provide some important lessons for the Irish Defence Forces on how to view or deal with difficult issues that may seem irrelevant in an Irish context but which affect the broader military world.

This study may help the principals involved draw lessons to be learned from their role in the representative issue with a view to restructuring their approach to similar situations in the future.

As an extensive study of one country's experience this study will be important to other nations in the democratic world whose military forces have not yet faced the issue of representation/unionisation.

Finally, as a first study it may establish the basis for further exploration and research.

Definitions

Defence Forces. This refers to the Permanent Defence Forces of the Republic of Ireland. The Reserve Defence Force will be referred to by its full title as the need arises.

Submission Group. This group consisted of three teams, a private soldiers' team, an NCOs' team and a commissioned officers' team, charged with the responsibility of compiling the official Defence Forces' Submission to the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces.

The Advisory Group. This was a group of commissioned officers (not to be confused with the Submission Group) tasked with the responsibility of preparing and presenting the Defence Forces' submission to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' pay, allowances, and conditions.

Representation. The establishment of a union(s), a group(s) and/or an association(s), composed of members of military forces or of civilian trade unions with collective bargaining powers, for the purpose of representing the members of military forces, on remuneration and conditions of service, and other such matters as may be agreed from time to time.

National Army Spouses Association (NASA). This was an organisation set up by army wives, to highlight the problems of spouses and to lobby for proper pay and conditions of service, for noncommissioned members of the Defence Forces.

Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Representative Association (PDFORRA). This is an association, within the

Irish Defence Forces, that represents personnel of all ranks other than commissioned officer ranks.

Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO). This is an association formed to represent the commissioned officers of the Irish Defence Forces.

European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL). This association founded in 1972, is a loose umbrella organisation for military representative bodies of nations of the Council of Europe. It promotes the ideological, social and career interests of military personnel and advocates the rights of military personnel to enjoy the freedoms of a democratic society. It was from this organisation that PDFORRA sought recognition as it [PDFORRA] organised on an unofficial basis in the Defence Forces.

Dail Eireann. The Irish Parliament.

Teachta Dala. A member of the Irish Parliament.

Garda Siochana/Gardai. The Irish Police Force.

Limitations

I have limited my examination of the history of military unions, as they developed or failed to develop, to Europe and the USA.

My study of representation in the Irish Defence Forces ends in May '90 when RACO and PDFORRA were officially acknowledged as representing the commissioned and

noncommissioned ranks of the Irish Defence Forces. I do not examine the consequent process of drawing up the constitutions of these associations and changing the Defence Forces' Regulations to legally recognize these associations. Neither do I intend to examine the possible effects that a representative organisation in the Irish Defence Forces will have either now or in the future.

Methodology

Chapter 1. This first Chapter briefly outlines the background to representation in the Irish Defence Forces followed by an overview on the Forces themselves. Next I present the research questions and the significance of the study. An important aspect of Chapter 1 is the outlining of the research secondary questions which in the format of the thesis form the basis of the next three Chapters.

In general, my methodology seeks to investigate the nature and characteristics of representation/unionism as it exists in the military world. It then quickly focuses on the "standing position", i.e. attitude or policy of the principals involved in the Irish issue before the dynamics of representation took over. In my view the initial and most obvious principals involved were the military authorities, the Government and the members of the Defence Forces. My methodology examines the action and responses of these principals when the issue became serious and dynamic

for the parties involved, while also focusing on the roles played by new and emerging principals. Finally my methodology draws conclusions in support of the primary research question through discussion of the facts and findings presented.

Chapter 2. It is important to establish the history, character and nature of military representation at the outset. Chapter 2 examines many countries where military representation exists, and also examines countries where representation was mooted but failed to develop. Another reason for looking at military representation in other countries is to find out if the development and existence of military "unions" in Ireland's European neighbours had any bearing on their subsequent development in the Irish Defence Forces.

An aspect also examined at the outset is the position or policy of the Irish military authorities and the Government on military representation prior to directly confronting the issue as something which was not going to disappear from the focus of the Irish soldier. For me these are important considerations because the factors that underlie the development of representation in the Irish Defence Forces may depend to a considerable extent on "official" policy toward the matter in the first place. Furthermore, I would suggest that mere discovery of such a policy or non-policy alone will not suffice. Some analysis

at to whether the authorities' position on military representation was well founded and realistic in the circumstances or was ill-considered or unsoundly based will ultimately lend more credibility to the factors that underlie this development in Ireland.

In this chapter independent and even random factors with a potential to influence the research question may crystallise. The traditions and customs of the Defence Forces, Ireland's neutral stance and the history of the Irish labour movement are perhaps examples of such factors.

Chapter 3. What was different about the Defence Forces of the 1980s, which saw the need for and pursued a representative structure so single-mindedly, when compared to the type of force which preceded it in the 1950s or 1960s and evidently saw no need for such a structure? Chapter 3 examines this question in detail by exploring the factors, influences, and developments that formed and shaped the Defence Forces of the 1980s.

This examination not only focuses on organisational and technological influences or on changes in the role of the Defence Forces but also focuses on the nature of the Irish soldier in a personal context. I will examine his social background, level of education, expectation level etc., in the context of his pay and conditions of service. This will give a clear appreciation of the nature of the

Irish soldier of the 1980s who saw a representative organisation as imperative to his life in military service.

Chapter 4. This chapter is devoted to an examination of what happened from early 1988, when the movement that eventually lead to representation began to manifest itself, until May '90 when representative bodies within the Irish Defence Forces were formally acknowledged by the Government. I will identify how and why the question of representation arose. In dealing with the chronology of what occurred I will examine the responses of the principals involved specifically the General Staff of the Defence Forces, the Government, the members of the Defence Forces, NASA, and the media. In this regard I will also examine the effects of key events on the process. For instance, I will look at how the trauma in the Defence Forces became a general election issue in June '89 and how the fall-out from this election profoundly affected the progress toward military representation in Ireland.

In this Chapter, I will identify what happened in chronological order and will also identify the forces that came into play in driving the chain of responses from all the principals involved. Because this was the fermentation for military representation in Ireland, the presentation and discussion of all these matters will perhaps have the most critical impact on the analysis and conclusions that follow.

Chapter 5. Armed with the facts and evidence from the previous chapters, this chapter will analyse, and interpret such evidence before drawing conclusions and perhaps making recommendations. I will identify the inter-relationships of this evidence and how they relate to the research question. I will look at all of this in terms of the principals involved, concluding how the actions and responses of each of these principals underlie the establishment of representative associations for members of the Irish Defence Forces.

Summary

In this first Chapter I have introduced the Irish Defence Forces and given a brief background on military representation as it concerns that institution. I have stated the research question together with its principal secondary and tertiary questions. I have offered the significance of the study and have defined terms relevant to the thesis.

I have also carefully outlined the methodology and procedure I will follow in the study from this point forward. The second Chapter will investigate the nature and extent of military representation in other countries and will then establish the "standing position" as it were, of two of the main principals involved in the Irish context (the military authorities and the Government) before

representation became a serious and dynamic issue. The third Chapter will look at the state of the other main principal to the issue (the members of the Defence Forces) before the dynamics of early 1988 were set in motion. The fourth Chapter will address military representation as it becomes an inescapable and developing fact in Ireland. It will focus on the actions and responses of the principals already profiled in previous Chapters and will examine the role of new and emerging parties to the issue. The final Chapter analyses the facts and findings of previous Chapters and then concludes as to the factors that underlie the establishment of representative associations in the Irish Defence Forces.

Endnotes

¹Irish Times, (Dublin), 13 Aug 1988.

²Carol Coulter, "Minister to consider soldiers' plan for association", Irish Times, (Dublin), 8 Jul 1989.

³Irish Government, Report of the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces (Dublin: Department of Defence, 1990), 12.

⁴Irish Defence Forces, The Irish Defence Forces: A handbook (Dublin: Defence Forces Headquarters, 1988), 6.

⁵Ibid., 6

⁶Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces (Dublin: Defence Forces Headquarters, 1989), 3.1 .

⁷Ibid., 3.1 .

⁸John P. Duggan, A History of the Irish Army, (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1991), 290.

⁹Ibid., 3.2 .

¹⁰Ibid., 4.14 .

¹¹Irish Government, Report of the Commission, 17.

¹²Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission, 4.2 .

¹³Ibid., 4.2 .

Chapter 2

Ireland's Position as Military Representation Developed Throughout Europe

Introduction

This Chapter has a twofold aim. First to establish the nature and character of military representation, I will consider the issue as it developed or was rejected in Ireland's European neighbours and in the USA. Secondly and more importantly, I will establish whether the Irish Defence Forces, the Department of Defence or the Government had developed, or should have developed, a policy on military unionisation/representation prior to directly confronting the matter in 1988.

In pursuit of this latter aim, I will clarify whether the Irish Government and/or the Defence Forces were influenced by what was happening in the matter of military representation as it developed in Europe. Also, I will review other independent factors that may have had the potential to form an attitude or policy on representation in an Irish context.

Whether a policy existed and its nature if it did exist, may ultimately have a significant effect on the factors which underlie the advent of military representation in Ireland. Hence the importance of establishing the Irish

position prior to its becoming an issue in the Defence Forces.

European Military Representation

Ireland did not have to look very far from its shores to observe military representation/trade unionism in other armed forces. It is appropriate therefore, to look at the nature of this phenomenon in European military forces before looking at whether such development had any impact in Ireland.

Belgium. A number of factors caused military representation in Belgium. After an improved period for the Belgian military during the Korean War, 1958 saw the beginning of a decline in its support from Government. The prestige of the armed forces began to diminish, just as it had after World War II. Problems of management and leadership in the military became, in these circumstances, most marked. The Belgian soldier became disillusioned. Rightly or wrongly he felt deprived and disadvantaged. He was over-taxed and had to work to order day or night. The industrial 'eight hours per day' law did not seem to apply to him. If the professional Belgian soldier wanted to leave the forces he had to seek permission, which was often refused. In any case, if permission was granted, he probably lost all his pension rights. Recourse to "Conseil d'Etat" (a type of conciliation scheme) had become an

illusory protection against any irregular measures, because it took so long to deliver a decision.¹

As an indirect response to this situation, the officer corps set up in 1961 a charitable organisation (in order to get around legal implications) called "Association des Officiers en Servic Actif" (AOSA). This was the first move in establishing military representation in Belgium. Very soon similar organisations were instituted to represent most other ranks in the Belgian military forces. During the 1960s these organisations began to function, in reality, as representative bodies.² By 1973, more than 50% of the officer body, and over 75% of the enlisted personnel, were members of representative associations.³

In 1992 the membership level differs little, from the mid 1970s figure. Four associations, three major and one minor, now represent personnel from all services of the Belgian military. Representation is now an accepted part of Belgian military life, though the provocative, arrogant nature of their approach appeals less to many commissioned officers than to other ranks. These associations currently involve themselves in negotiating pay, allowances, conditions of service and promotion systems/mechanisms.⁴

Germany. On 12 Nov 1955 the new German armed forces (The Bundeswehr) were officially established. From the beginning, those serving in the Bundeswehr possessed, as "citizens in uniform", the unrestricted right of coalition.

They were entitled to seek membership in political parties, in trade and labour unions, and even to stand for parliament.⁵ It seems as though they were almost encouraged to join unions/associations. The thinking here was that in joining such bodies another element of control was exercised over the military forces in preventing them, from once again becoming politically powerful.⁶ Membership in associations/unions was very slow to evolve. On 1 Aug '66 the Defence Minister reaffirmed the soldier's right to join associations. Thereafter, membership began to increase. By 1977, officers and enlisted personnel, 80% of whom had joined associations, were represented by Deutsche Bundeswehr-Verband (DBwV) and Gewerkschaft Offentliche Dienste, transport Und Verkehr (OTV), the two principal associations of the Bundeswehr.⁷

In 1992 the DBwV is now the only association operating in the Bundeswehr. Membership figures are somewhat lower than those of the mid 1970s, with 60% of NCO's and between 50% - 60% of officers as members. The commissioned officers and warrant officers presently dominate the DBwV. One of its recent undertakings involved the setting of limitations to work hours per week and the negotiation of payment in lieu of these agreed standard hours.⁸

Sweden. The first military representative body/union in Sweden, the Kompani Officers forBundet (KOF), was

formed in 1907 to represent warrant officers. In 1918 the Plutons Officers forBundet (POF) was formed to represent NCOs. This was followed in 1932 by the formation of the Svenska Officers forBundet (SOF) to represent commissioned officers.⁹ The KOF enunciated the following aims for their union in 1907.

to unite all non-commissioned officers in Sweden in an encompassing union of interest, striving for the benefit of the country as well as the benefit of the NCO's to work for a fruitful cooperation and understanding between the different branches of the armed forces; to raise the level of knowledge among the members through the arranging of instructive and educational lectures, evening classes and discussions on military, scientific, historical, tee-totalist or general civic subjects; to raise the reputation of the NCO's as well as make them honoured and appreciated among the civilians and to create reciprocal confidence between these two categories of the Swedish people.¹⁰

The main aims of the POF, established subsequently, were similar. To understand how important and difficult these aims were to achieve, particularly in the context of the NCO's, we must remember that Sweden had for a long time used a conscription system and that military professionals, particularly of lower rank, had an extremely low social status.

When the SOF was formed in the early 1930s, its explicit objective was to achieve a strong bargaining position with the Government on pay and conditions of service. This soon prompted the other two associations to

follow suit and act in a more "trade union" like manner. These military associations were confirmed in their new role by the fact that the right of association and collective bargaining was specified in Swedish law in 1936, and also through necessity, to alleviate the impact of the depression of the 1930s. In 1977 almost 100% of officers and enlisted personnel were members of representative associations/unions.¹¹

Since the early 1980s, when the Swedish military forces reorganised its reserve and active components, the number of representative organisations has dropped from three to two.¹² The membership levels in 1992 is still almost 100%. The two remaining unions have been in competition for membership in recent years. Military personnel generally have not perceived this competition as being in anyone's best interests. Consequently, efforts are currently being made to amalgamate them both.

Netherlands. While the first military union in the Netherlands was reportedly established in 1897, it was not until the 1960s that representation flourished. By 1977, approximately 35 different unions/associations represented the Dutch armed forces. The development of these associations is difficult to trace, but their essence lie in the tradition of extensive union organisation in many sectors of Dutch society and in the history of the many diverse labour organisations in the Netherlands. These

associations, through joint consultation with the Government, focus on pay and conditions, personnel policies and discipline. By the mid 1970s, almost 80% of officers and enlisted personnel were members of at least one of these associations.¹³

An interesting development in the Netherlands was the formation in 1966 of the Vereniging Voor Drinstplichtige Militairen (VVDM). This association, with an able and radical leadership, represented draftees. Its aim was to eliminate those elements or aspects of military service which had no commensurate parallel in civilian life and for which there appeared no justification. The association was very successful in pursuit of its aims. It succeeded in bringing about many changes in military customs, and even in military discipline and authority. These changes included the abolition of shining brasses, reveille, and the obligation to salute.¹⁴

In 1992 the number of "unions" representing the Dutch military forces has been streamlined to six while the membership figures have dropped slightly to 60%-70% (approx). These associations still represent their members on pay and conditions of service, redress of wrongs, etc., but will also comment on more broader issues than before, such as promotion policy and organisation structures. The current trend with these associations is that they are moving closer to and becoming part of civilian union

organisations.¹⁵ The effect, if any, that this move will have is as yet unknown.

Norway. Its first military union was reportedly formed in 1835. However the formalisation of a representative organisation for all, except draftees, did not occur until 1957 with the formation of the Befalets Felles Organisasjon (BFO). By the mid 1970s approximately 90% of officers and 70% of enlisted personnel were members of some military representative organisation in Norway.¹⁶

In 1992, five associations represent the Norwegian military forces. Membership has stayed at the same high level of the mid 1970s. These organisations involve themselves in pay, conditions of service, organisation development and family support matters. Most recently they are involved in restructuring the system of education and career development for their members.¹⁷

Austria. A unionised army existed in Austria from 1920 until 1934,¹⁸ when the Army Law of 1920 permitted the soldier to exercise the same rights as those of the civilian. In 1921, the social democratic party took advantage of this and organised a military union. After World War II, career military personnel were again allowed to join a union/representative body, though it was 1967 before they actively did so. Interestingly military personnel in Austria are represented by the Government Employees Union which is predominantly a civilian

organisation. By the mid 1970s over 60% of officers and 75% of enlisted personnel belonged to this union.¹⁹

Denmark. Danish military representation began in 1922, but did not progress with any speed until after World War II, between 1950 and 1970.²⁰ The 1960s problems concerning the working environment, which was considered by soldiers to be too rough and harsh hastened the proliferation of representative bodies in the Danish Armed Forces. Representative bodies were soon well integrated into the military structure with automatic membership unless an individual specifically declined to join. Similar to the Dutch in the early 1970s, there was a great proliferation of associations in Denmark, fifty five in number by the middle of the decade. Unlike the Dutch, there are no conscript unions in Denmark, though conscripts have a council which meets representatives of the Defence Ministry periodically. This council has no bargaining power and as such does not fit the definition of "representation" in this context .

In 1977 almost 100% of officers and 90% of enlisted personnel were members of at least one of these associations/unions. These bodies represented their members on issues such as pay and conditions of work and grievance procedures.²¹

In 1989 the number of military unions has been streamlined to five: two for commissioned officers, one for

NCO's and one for private soldiers and a centralised military union, which is constituted of representatives from the other four organisations. This "central union" negotiates with government on behalf of the other four organisations. The membership level is still very high, while the unions themselves are seen in a positive manner and regarded as important in the management process.

The Characteristics of European Military Unions

Military representative bodies/unions exist in many European countries. In some cases they have existed for a long time, as in Sweden. Most of these bodies seem to have developed, particularly in terms of standard trade union practices, in the 1950s and 1960s. Another common thread is that they are mainly involved in some type of collective bargaining process on matters pertaining to the social, economic and cultural needs of their members. Furthermore, membership figures of these associations are high and have remained consistently so over the years.

An interesting observation from the foregoing look at European military unions, is that they seemed to have evolved for a variety of reasons. In Belgium for instance, unions developed directly from the need to improve the soldier's pay and conditions and to relieve a perceived oppression of the military in comparison to its civilian counterparts. In Germany, unions developed with the

foundation of the post World War II armed forces as part of the "citizens in uniform" ideal, on which this new force was developed. In Sweden, trade union activity evolved within associations that were set up at an earlier time and with a different social focus. In other cases unions/associations evolved on the basis of the overall changing social legislation within the nation.

Other studies reveal the following characteristics of how European military unions function.²²

1. European military "unions" will not strike. In most cases it is prohibited by law; and in almost all countries where the military has been organised, officials and members are on record as saying that a strike by military forces would be inappropriate and inconsistent with the military mission.
2. They cannot and will not interfere in matters covered by military law.
3. They will not attempt to influence or interfere with military control or tactical decisions in battle or in wartime conditions.
4. They will not interfere with the accomplishment of the military mission or the acceptance of orders. If an individual feels that an order is illegal, the "union" maintains that his first duty is to obey the order, and afterwards he should file a grievance if necessary.

5. An examination of those Western European countries, where there are military unions/associations, reveals that the nations themselves are extensively unionized.²³

The Representation Issue in Other Major Powers

USA. In the mid 1970s at least three federally recognized unions, the Association of Civilian Technicians (ACT), the National Maritime Union (NMU), and the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), indicated that they were disposed to enrolling military personnel in their organisations. While the AFGE changed its constitution in 1975 to accept military personnel into its membership, the other two unions did little more than consider the situation.²⁴

This question of unionisation in U.S. military forces arose soon after the elimination of the draft and the creation of an all volunteer force in 1973. This new force began to lose its traditional attitudes of duty and service to country and saw itself in terms of any other lifelong profession in American society.²⁵ Servicemen demanded better pay and conditions of service at a time when they perceived an erosion in their status and standard of living, in the down-sizing of forces in the post Vietnam era. In a reaction to the continued debate and ever growing threat of unionisation, the Pentagon responded in early 1977 with

Department of Defense (DOD) Directive 1354.1. This directive while respecting the First Amendment (i.e. freedom of association) contained some vital restrictions. It prohibited commanders and officials of the Department of Defense from engaging in collective bargaining with individual members of armed forces or with associations purporting to represent members of armed forces on matters relating to terms or conditions of service.²⁶ It also prohibited strikes and other forms of collective action on the part of service personnel.

In Sept '77 the Senate passed Senate Bill S.274, which applied all the restrictions of DOD Directive 1354.1 and in addition prohibited any military member, active or reserve, from becoming a member of a collective bargaining organisation. This Bill became Public Law 95-610 when passed by Congress in Nov '78.²⁷ The effect was that the issue of unionisation receded, helped not only by this legislation but by the fact that the armed forces started to receive pay rises, increased allowances and improved quality of life programs from Government²⁸. Since then any perceived erosion in military living standards has been responded to by Government. Such proactive response was particularly well demonstrated during the Reagan administration. In addition, a system has also been instituted whereby military personnel have a voice outside the strict chain of command in that they may put their case

directly to public representatives and lobby Congress on matters that affect their service lives.²⁹

U.K. In Great Britain military forces do not have unions/representative associations. In Nov '69, a move by the Transportation and General Workers Union to enroll military members was refused by the Ministry of Defence. There is no real evidence, however, that members of the British military forces ever seriously considered unionisation as being necessary in their case. In the early 1960s the pay of British soldiers had fallen almost 20% below equivalent civilian employment. Interestingly this fact came to notice when the continued decline in recruitment was examined, rather than by members themselves highlighting any erosion in their living standards. About this time the National Board of Prices and Income (NBPI) indicated that the Grigg formula, instituted in 1958 for reviewing military pay etc., was perhaps no longer valid.³⁰ The NBPI itself then took over the annual review of military pay in 1967 on a kind of caretaker basis. Then in Sept '71 the Review Body on Armed Forces Pay (RBAFP) was set up with the task of advising the Prime Minister on pay and benefits in the armed forces.³¹ The members of this review body are appointed by the Government and are all non-active military personnel. It furnishes, to the Prime Minister on an annual basis, an indepth report that examines and makes recommendations on all aspects of pay, allowances and

conditions of service of all ranks in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. Members of the British Armed Forces perceive the RBAFP as a very satisfactory body.³²

This organisation, because it is appointed by the Government and does not have collective bargaining powers, does not fit the definition of military representative associations/unions for the purposes of this thesis.

France. Military representation does not exist in France. In Dec '69, the Conseil Supérieur de la Fonction Militaire (CSFM) was formed in the French Armed Forces. This organisation, of selected personnel at various levels, was a kind of information carrying system that operated outside the strict meaning of the chain of command. It could speak directly to the Minister of Defence expressing the collective views and feelings of French soldiers about their conditions of service in particular. This organisation had no bargaining powers to obtain an improvement in soldier's living standards.³³

The effectiveness of the CFSM system was questionable, because from 1970 to 1974 the pay of French soldiers fell far behind average wages in France, causing resentment amongst both conscript and regular soldiers. In June '74, on the eve of presidential elections, a group of 100 conscript soldiers sent an open letter to the candidates (Giscard d'Estaing and Francois Mitterand) demanding a number of improvements in their conditions of service in

the army.³⁴ This move greatly encouraged fellow soldiers, both regular and conscript. The feelings, which had been brewing in barracks over the previous months, were now more clearly to be seen as members of some units actually took their demonstrations into the streets.

The higher military authorities, seeing the danger in the situation, sensing Trotskyist tendencies, and fearing the establishment of "unions", addressed a solemn warning to Government. The Defence Minister responded by setting up "work groups" in every military district to collect the views, opinions, and suggestions of commissioned and non-commissioned personnel. The results of these studies were conveyed to the French Government through the CSFM. In dealing specifically with conscripts, the Minister of Defence formed an organisation, on the same lines as the CSFM, called the Conseil Permanent Du Service Militaire (CPSM). Its main task was to convey the study groups findings in relation to conscripts, to the Government. The Defence Ministers response was mainly reflected in the 1975 budget which gave a relatively high percentage pay rise to all military personnel.

But even these actions did not calm the situation totally, nor did they stop further demonstrations by conscripts. This prompted a drastic response from the French President to settle the military situation. He sacked the Minister of Defence and, for the first time since

the Third Republic, he appointed an active service military person to the government as Under-secretary of State.³⁵

Subsequent to these changes important measures of a financial nature were speeded up to improve the lot of the soldier. Following these measures, the unrest disappeared and harmony was restored within the French armed forces without having to resort to a representative structure.

The Irish Position Prior to 1988

As we have seen, unionisation/representation was part of many European military forces as the 1980s approached. We have also seen that the USA, the UK, and France were challenged with the prospect of having unionisation in their military forces, albeit to a lesser extent in the case of the UK. Representation in military forces, therefore, was not an unknown phenomenon. It was not something that suddenly arose in an isolated case, and it was not something that was automatically accepted in all the forces where the issue arose. However it was something that would in time arise in Ireland.

In Ireland's case the military representation issue arose as the decade of the 1980s drew to a close. In seeking to clarify the factors that ultimately led to the establishment of a representative structure in the Irish Defence Forces we must establish whether there was a prior

policy developed on the matter and if so, what that policy entailed.

The short answer to this critical question is that there is no evidence available to suggest that the Irish military authorities, the Department of Defence, or the Government had seriously considered or developed a policy on the issue of military representation. The formation and, in some cases, the rejection of military "unions" in its European neighbours and in the USA. does not seem to have impacted in Ireland at all. In seeking evidence of the existence or even the consideration of such a policy, one tends to find reasons for its nonexistence rather than to find any evidence or trace of the fact that military representation was ever considered in an Irish context by the Government or the military authorities. To simply say that no policy existed is not enough because ultimately this lack of policy may have a significant impact on the factors that eventually brought about military representation. Some examination of how well founded or realistic this attitude was, is necessary at this point.

Neutrality

Ireland is a neutral country.³⁶ Successive Governments since the foundation of the state have sought to preserve this neutrality. Ireland, therefore, is not a member of any military alliance (such as NATO), which might

bring it into contact and co-operation with countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium etc., who have military representation. But this military isolation is not total because Irish troops have, during the past twenty five years or so, served alongside those from Sweden, The Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, and Austria on UN missions in the Congo, Cyprus and in Lebanon.³⁷ Furthermore Irish Officers have commanded UN Forces whose members have representative organisations.

Despite its neutral stance, the Irish Defence Forces have had a number of its commissioned officers and NCO's trained by the military forces of other countries. Such training has mainly been conducted in the UK and to a lesser extent in the USA and France. Still less frequently has external training been conducted in any other countries. Consequently such training would have been carried out in situations devoid of direct contact with military unionisation. It is possible of course that some Defence Forces' personnel may have observed the American, the British, or the French Forces confront the issue during the 1970s.

Ireland's Relationship with Europe.

Ireland's location as an island has historically isolated it from the rest of Europe. Even in the 1950s and 1960s Ireland was, by today's terms, still "contained within

the frontiers of an island."³⁸ Its close neighbour, Britain, was its major trading partner and it was to there and to the USA that Ireland exported its people in search of employment. European affairs in matters of trade, politics, social development etc. had little influence on Ireland during this time. In such circumstances developments of a military nature in Europe would have had little impact in Ireland.

Ireland joined the EEC (as it was then) in 1972. This was a turning point in which Ireland began to see itself as a participant in Europe. However military neutrality was, as it still is, pursued within this European context. Significantly, military representation as we have seen had already happened in Europe and by this time was no longer an issue that might have caught Ireland's attention.

On the other hand, since joining the EEC, the French confrontation with military unionisation occurred in 1974. More significant, from Ireland's point of view, were the developments in social legislation/change affecting military representation that took place. On 12 Apr '84 the European Parliament adopted a resolution set out in Document 1-323/81 on the right of armed forces to form associations. The requests, recommendations and instructions pertaining to the adoption of this resolution were as follows:

1. Calls on all member states of the European Community to grant their servicemen the right, in

peace time, to establish, join and actively participate in professional associations in order to protect their social interests;

2. Recommends that the legal provisions of individual states be approximated, taking into account the relevant articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the European Social Charter;

3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Ministers of the European Community meeting in political co-operation, calling on them to forward it to the appropriate ministries and to the parliaments of the member states with a request for an opinion.³⁹

There is no indication that the opinion requested above was given or that one was formed by the Irish military authorities or the Irish Government.

The Institute of Humanitarian Law in a submission to the Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe, who were carrying out a study on the right to associate of professional members of the armed forces in the Council of Europe member States, advised that

it would be best not to speak of 'trade unions' in the armed forces, but of associations', 'corporations', or 'representation' instead.

Basically, individual states can be left to decide whether to allow servicemen to join civil servants' organisations, associations of certain categories of servicemen or a single association covering all servicemen...and whether or not to regulate the setting up of these associations.

The important thing is that these associations should be genuinely representative and be given reasonable scope to defend the interests of servicemen. Their rights in this respect may

range from the mere right to be consulted by the military authorities, to the right to negotiate.⁴⁰

Though neither the resolution nor the report necessarily required any action or response from Ireland (other than to indicate an opinion in the case of the resolution) they were a sign, even a warning, of what might be to come.

The Irish Trade Union Movement

In at least two of the countries where the representation issue arose (the UK and the USA) civilian trade unions made overtures to military personnel to join them. It may be of interest then to look at the Irish Trade Union Movement in this context.

Compared to the Western European countries already profiled, including Britain and France, Ireland was not a highly unionised country, either before World War II, or for the two or three decades thereafter. In the post war years of the 1950s, the Irish Trade Union Movement was itself struggling to develop and spread its influence throughout the civilian labour force and that, at a time of high emigration, social need and difficult economic circumstances.⁴¹ The movement also struggled to unite itself during the 1950s, and it achieved this with the formation of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions in 1959.

The 1960s were a decade of rapid change in Irish society and have been described as "the Decade of Upheaval."⁴² Many internal changes occurred in Ireland during these years. It was a time of marked economic development and consequently there was considerable growth in affluence and self-confidence in the nation. Employment in agriculture decreased considerably with a corresponding growth of employment in industry. Yet, total employment increased by only 1% during those ten years. But this more prosperous environment during "a period of national adolescence"⁴³ had its own problems with many and recurring industrial disputes. For the Irish Trade Union Movement, in a sudden new industrial era, this was an exciting time, and a time that demanded so much just to keep in touch with developments in the Irish labour arena.

The boom of the 1960s carried well into the next decade. In addition the 1970s saw the occurrence of three events that again challenged and taxed the Irish Trade Union Movement. First, a policy on picketing was debated and instituted whereby the Irish Congress of Trade Unions was appointed as the authority for legitimising pickets. Second, national wage bargaining was re-instituted; third, Ireland joined the EEC.⁴⁴

With such a varied and turbulent environment in which to develop and grow, it is not surprising that there

is little or no evidence of the Irish Trade Union Movement ever targeting the Defence Forces as potential members.

Further illustration of this is seen in an address to a military audience by the General Secretary of the Local Government and Public Services Union given in the Infantry School of the Irish Military College, in Jan '80. This address focuses very much on industrial relations in the public service but never refers to or mentions the Irish Defence Forces, in any context, within the trade union world.⁴⁵

Irish Defence Forces' Loyalty to Government

From its foundation on 1 Oct '24, when it emerged from both sides of the Civil War, the Defence Forces have shown exceptional loyalty to the Government irrespective of the political parties in power. This loyalty was manifest on many occasions: through the emergency years (i.e. 1939-1946); during the lean times of the 1950s; through the emerging "Border problems" from 1969; by maintaining essential services in times of industrial action, and in attending to natural disasters and major national emergencies.⁴⁶ In attending to this variety of Government needs, the issue of monetary compensation and award was a matter which was considered almost as an afterthought.

My own experience relates directly in this case. In my involvement in two industrial disputes in the past decade or so, I recall the total and enthusiastic commitment of Defence Forces' personnel in maintaining petrol distribution throughout the country and in maintaining a transport service for Dublin City. I remember little thought being given to monetary compensation in these instances. The underlying feeling, which carried well into the 1980s, was that the Government would properly recompense and "look after" the Forces for their loyal service. This personal experience of such trust and loyalty is also openly recognized throughout the country and frequently articulated in editorial comment.

We see in the Defence Forces a body of men who, over the years, have shown themselves to be loyal to their oath and hard working in their duties.⁴⁷

The Army has claims on our generosity which few other organisations in this country can match. It carries out hard, dangerous work all the year round in silence.⁴⁸

They are a disciplined force which has adhered to the tradition of being totally indifferent to the politics of the country.⁴⁹

Such a relationship, while it existed, between Government and Defence Forces was obviously not a breeding ground for representative associations.

Summary

Military unions are part of the armed forces of many European nations. In one or two instances these organisations date back to the beginning of this century; however, it was during the 1960s in particular, that military representation flourished in Europe. While there seems to be a variety of reasons why unions became established in the different countries, they all now represent their members on fairly similar matters such as pay, conditions of service, and other social issues.

Representative structures were not instituted in all countries where the union issue arose. In such cases the Defence Ministries and/or the relevant military authorities moved quickly to confront the issue. In some cases legislation was enacted to prevent representative bodies from being established. In all cases the Governments involved responded positively to the problems that were driving the need for unions. This meant retaining the initiative by increasing military pay and benefits, setting up review/consultative boards, and where necessary, replacing the responsible office holders even at ministerial level in Government, so that the problems within the military were resolved.

It appears Ireland was not influenced by any developments taking place in the UK, the US, or Europe in the matter of military representation. Neither the Irish

Government nor the Irish Defence Forces had a policy developed on military representation by the time it became an unavoidable and serious issue in 1988.

There are understandable reasons for this no-policy position. Ireland's neutrality isolated its Defence Forces and kept it out of military alliances such as NATO. Any external training of Defence Forces' members was, to a great extent, carried out in the UK, the USA, and France where representation did not exist. In broader terms Ireland's traditional relationship with Europe was not as close as with the UK and the USA. Consequently, it was less influenced by developments in Europe generally. The Irish Trade Union movement never targeted Defence Forces' personnel as potential members unlike their counterparts in some other countries. The traditional relationship between the Defence Forces and successive Irish Governments was based on trust, loyalty, and instant response to orders. Such a relationship was not conducive to pressure for representation.

On the other hand, since the early 1960s, Ireland was not totally isolated in the military world. The Irish Defence Forces have served on UN missions alongside many countries who have military unions. Furthermore, Irish Officers have commanded UN Forces whose members belonged to representative bodies. Ireland's isolation in a European context steadily declined as it joined the EEC in 1972. It

was within this context that the most pronounced alert on military representation was sounded for Ireland, when a Resolution on the right of armed forces to form associations was passed in the European Parliament on 12 Apr '84. This resolution asked for an opinion on its subject matter from each member state. There is no evidence that Ireland responded.

While Ireland's no policy stance may be understandable, a Government with a real interest in the future of its armed forces or military authorities sensitive to developments in the military world at large and wanting to retain their leadership initiative, would hardly have allowed the issue of military representation to go totally unnoticed.

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Chapter 3

The Irish Defence Forces of the 1980s

Introduction

Significant changes were taking place in the Irish Defence Forces as they developed throughout the 1960s, 1970s, and into the 1980s.¹ To illustrate the changes that have occurred in the responsibilities and duties of personnel of the Defence Forces over the past thirty years, it is instructive to compare the day-to-day activities of personnel from both eras.

In the 1950s the Defence Forces were involved mainly in administration, training, and 'house-keeping' duties. In 1988, Defence Forces' personnel were deployed with the United Nations in twelve countries, filling the dual role of peacekeepers and representatives of their country. In the 1950s the soldier trained on a limited range of basic weapons. Today's soldier may find himself training on modern missile systems, laser range-finders; operating computers; maintaining state of the art avionics and electronic equipment, or participating in conventional warfare training exercises using modern field guns, armoured vehicles and helicopters. Thirty years ago the soldier seldom left barracks except on training exercises. The

presence of soldiers on city streets for cash-in-transit escort duty, or on the television screen in an Aid to the Civil Power operation, is now quite commonplace. In addition, the civilian community now expects the Defence Forces to provide search and rescue services, to patrol fishing waters, to provide aid and assistance in times of natural disaster, and to maintain essential services when required.

Factors Contributing to Change

To conduct a detailed analysis of the changes in duties and responsibilities of personnel in the Defence Forces since 1959, it would be necessary to consider not only each rank, but also all rank appointments within each corps and each service. However, in general terms it is possible to show that duties and responsibilities have increased in large measure at all rank levels over the past thirty years. The major factors contributing to these changes are²

1. Internal Security operations.
2. Involvement in United Nations operations.
3. The introduction of modern equipment and technology.
4. The enlarged scope and scale of Assistance to the Civil Authority.

Internal Security Operations. The function and duties of the Irish Defence Forces in this area has increased in a dramatic fashion over the past twenty years. With the emergence of a serious threat to the security of the State, the Defence Forces have assumed a prominent role in opposing that threat. The development of highly sophisticated and durable subversive organisations such as the Provisional IRA, which have succeeded in continuing to operate despite the substantial resources of personnel and equipment of the British Army and the other security organisations in Northern Ireland, indicates the level of professional expertise which the Defence Forces now require. Border duty and Aid to the Civil Power activities such as cash escorts, prisoner escorts, prison guards, ordnance demolition, and Special Search Team operations have become very much part of the day-to-day duties of the Defence Forces.³

Such duties impose a heavy burden of responsibility on all ranks involved. The involvement of armed soldiers in Aid to the Civil Power, operating under the constraints of Civil Law and recognising the possible legal and political consequences of their actions, demands particularly high standards of discipline, control and alertness. The responsibilities of commanders, at all levels, and staffs involved in the command and control of individual soldiers

are much greater than those normally associated with military activities in a peacetime environment.

United Nations Operations. Since their initial involvement in the UNOGIL mission in Lebanon in 1958, the Irish Defence Forces have further contributed to over fifteen United Nations' missions. These missions have involved, and continue to involve, both unarmed officer observers and armed units consisting of all ranks. The involvement of the Defence Forces in United Nations operations brought with it a qualitative and quantitative increase in responsibility.⁴ This increased responsibility is related to the raising, organising, training, equipping, and rotating of units and observers for United Nations service. Increased responsibility is also apparent in the provision of administrative and logistical support for personnel on United Nations duty.

At the level of the individual on United Nations service, all ranks are required to accept the additional responsibility inherent in the delicate and often dangerous functions dictated by United Nations operations. The actions and reactions of the individual member of the Defence Forces, of whatever rank, may well have repercussions at not only the military level but also at international political level.⁵

United Nations forces are deployed in volatile areas in which hazards abound. The responsibility for the safety and security of those under their control imposes a particular burden on commanders at all levels. In addition, the duties and responsibilities of commanders and staffs assume a new dimension consequent to operating as part of a multinational United Nations force. In addition to the discharge of normal military duties, members of the Defence Forces serving with the United Nations must also assume the added responsibility of operating within the constraints of United Nations regulations while being seen as representatives of their country. At present the Irish Defence Forces have almost 900 personnel serving in ten United Nations missions and two European Community missions.⁶ Since 1968 the Defence Forces have supplied in excess of 30,000 officers and soldiers for service with the United Nations.

Modern Equipment and Technology. To enhance the Irish Defence Forces' capabilities to fulfil their primary role of defence against external aggression, a wide range of modern, highly sophisticated weapons and ancillary equipment has been introduced into service in recent years.⁷ This sophistication reflects 'state of the art' technologies such as optoelectronics, control engineering and surveillance and radar systems. The weapons and equipment include modern

missiles, radar and communications systems, armoured vehicles, helicopters and patrol vessels. The introduction of computerisation and video facilities has also been a feature of recent developments.

These advances affect all soldiers within the Defence Forces to varying degrees and not just the experts in particular fields of technology. The evaluation, operation control, and maintenance of this range of weapons and equipment require continuous training and up-dating of personnel to graduated levels of expertise. These changes have brought about an increased responsibility commensurate with such developments and have consequently made the soldier's duties increasingly complex.

Assistance to the Civil Authority. The role of the Irish Defence Forces in this context has been greatly enlarged in recent years. In terms of assistance at times of natural disasters, the Defence Forces have provided support to the community in coping with forest fires, blizzards and flooding. In the context of the maintenance of essential services during strikes, assistance has been provided in a wide range of areas from public transport to refuse collection, to the fire brigade service and to petrol and oil distribution.⁸ The increase in the scope and scale of such operations in recent years has brought with it an

expansion in the range of responsibilities and expertise and a change in duties of all personnel involved.

These factors, bringing with them an enlargement in the role and operational methods of the Defence Forces as a whole, also brought an increase in duties, functions and responsibilities at the individual level. In comparison to the soldier of the 1950s, his counterpart of the 1980's is better educated, possesses a wider range of skills, and has to meet a more complex set of demands as a soldier. As a consequence, the modern soldier's expectations in terms of pay and conditions of service are more demanding than ever before. Unfortunately this expectation level has not always been fulfilled as we will see by examining Defence Forces' pay and the Irish soldier's conditions of service.

Historical Determination of Pay

1924 - 1946. Rates of pay for military personnel were first fixed by a Pay Commission in 1924.⁹ At that time it was accepted by Government that the pay rates of the military should be roughly comparable to the Gardai and the Civil Service, as was the norm in other countries. However, as the Defence Forces were newly established and it was reckoned that officers had not attained the standard of professional efficiency required in the armies of other countries, the rates were set at a lower level than those of the Gardai or Civil Service. Though this was not an

entirely satisfactory situation, from a Defence Forces' point of view, it was nevertheless tolerated.

1946 - 1969. Between 1946 and 1969, the gap widened between military pay rates and comparable grades in the Civil Service.¹⁰ From 1946 through the 1950s and 1960s the Defence Forces had an on-going battle with both the Department of Defence and the Department of Finance in its efforts to bring about some improvement in pay rates. Pay awards granted to other public servants were only applied to military personnel at much later dates, if at all. Retrospection was also difficult to achieve. Apart from pay, allowances in general had fallen well behind similar allowances paid to public servants. This was due, among other reasons, to the lack of a consultative process between the Department of Defence and the military authorities.

When a pay claim was submitted to the Department of Defence, the claim might be altered in character or not supported by that Department in its transmission to the Department of Finance.¹¹ The correspondence between the two Departments would not be available to the military authorities and, accordingly, the military authorities would rarely be aware of the grounds on which the claim was rejected or only partially sanctioned. Throughout this phase, revisions of pay and allowances were undertaken in a most unsatisfactory manner.

1969 - 1988. Eventually, in 1969, the Minister for Finance agreed to set up an *ad hoc* working group consisting of representatives from the Departments of Defence and Finance and, most importantly, the military authorities. Its terms of reference were to examine existing rates of pay and allowances of all members of the Defence Forces in order to rationalise them as regards amounts and span of increments, and then to rectify any anomalies.¹²

This was effectively the first time that the Defence Forces were allowed to argue their case. However, the military representatives were barred from making recommendations in the reports of this Group. The "Working Group", as it came to be known, sat for about three and a half years, produced three reports, and made various recommendations. The result was that military pay was improved. However, while the principle of parity with the Civil Service was still not accepted most military allowances were improved and brought into line with those throughout the public service.

The 1970s signalled the beginning of National Wage Agreements and the terms of these were all applied to military pay rates. Special pay increases or grade awards to Higher Executive Officers (HEO) and Executive Officers (EO) in the Civil Service were also applied to the rank of Commandant (the Irish equivalent to the rank of major) and

lower ranks. Senior officers also received any special pay increases granted to senior civil servants.

In 1979, the Chief of Staff again wrote to the Minister seeking improvements in senior officer's pay. The Government subsequently established a Cabinet Committee composed of An Taniste (deputy Prime minister) and five Ministers; Finance, Public Service, Defence, Labour and Economic Planning and Development. The terms of reference of this committee were to examine and report on levels of remuneration including the differentials between ranks of senior officers (Commandant upwards) of the Defence Forces and to make recommendations.¹³

The main result of the 1979 Committee's report was to formally link senior ranks in the Defence Forces to certain Civil Service grades for the purpose of setting levels of remuneration. An exception was made in the case of Lieutenant General (Chief of Staff) whose rank was equated with that of Garda Commissioner. Grade awards between 1979 and 1988 for the junior ranks approximated to a *pro-rata* application of Commandant increases (which in turn related directly to those of HEO in the Civil Service).

Parity with the Civil Service

The long sought after parity with the Civil Service was finally achieved in 1979. This parity, which may have been appropriate a few decades earlier, came too late and

was outdated in the minds of Defence Forces' personnel within a few years of its being achieved.

In Jun '88 the Pay Allowances and Conditions Board of the Curragh Command argued that parity for pay purposes between the military and the Civil Service was not suitable for three main reasons.¹⁴

First, at the bottom of the scale, a private soldier was equated with a messenger grade of the Civil Service. Such a comparison was seen as invidious because it took no account of the level of training and expertise required of the soldier, nor did it take account of the considerable responsibilities imposed on him. For example, in an Internal Security setting, the soldier may have to make the decision whether to use lethal force in a fast changing situation.

Second and from higher up the scale, where the Commandant was linked to the Higher Executive Officer (HEO) grade, it was seen to operate to the disadvantage of the Commandant. A HEO is normally at least ten years younger than a Commandant on promotion. Furthermore, all Civil Servants may work until sixty five years of age and can be promoted at any time until then, while Commandants must retire at the age of fifty six. The HEO, has therefore, a much longer time in his grade than his military counterpart. Consequently he has much greater earning capacity.

Third, it was and still is impossible to make any realistic equation between the Civil Service and the military. The soldier "enjoys" conditions of service which are simply not comparable to that of the Civil Servant.

1. He is subject to a very demanding code of discipline, which places great demands on him.
2. He has no right to strike.
3. He has no right to consultation or arbitration concerning conditions of employment.
4. He is subject to transfer without notice, appeal, or adequate allowance *in lieu*.
5. He does not operate on a "nine-to-five" basis, but must be prepared to work unsocial hours. The normal duration of a security duty is twenty-four hours. No other organisation operates such a shift system.
6. Work conditions are extremely difficult. He must be prepared to operate out of doors in all weather, whether on a roadside checkpoint or a training exercise.
7. The basic grade of soldier undergoes an amount of training in excess of the average apprenticeship. Throughout his career he will have to undergo career courses to bring his qualifications up to date.
8. The military forms the basis for the security of the State and is one of few services which can be relied on to the full. In particular the soldier has been

required to take over dangerous and unpleasant tasks at short notice, such as in the event of strikes by refuse collectors, firemen, or prison officers.

From this examination of the determination of pay in the Irish Defence Forces, it can be clearly seen that the method of determining such pay has been problematic and has scarcely been satisfactory since the foundation of the Defence Forces. Unfortunately the trends and rates of pay have been perceived in a similar light.

Pay Trends

In their submission to the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces, the Irish Defences Forces Group consisting of officers, NCO's, and private soldiers (henceforth called the Submission Group) compared the pay trends within the Defence Forces to those within Irish industry. This comparison encompassed a fourteen year period from 1975 to 1988.

The Submission Group had difficulty finding appropriate groups in the Irish labour market against which to compare the Defence Forces. But from the point of view of comparing movement in Defence Forces' pay against changes in earnings within a large category of civilians in the Irish Labour market , the average male industrial worker was chosen. In choosing the male industrial worker, it was not suggested that this worker was comparable to Defence Force

personnel from the point of view of levels of pay.¹⁵ Only in the case of private soldiers might it be relevant to compare pay levels as well as pay trends to that of the average industrial worker. Later in this chapter appropriate comparisons in terms of levels of pay will be examined.

Private soldiers. The following graph illustrates the movement in the pay of private soldiers compared to average industrial earnings.¹⁶

Trend in pay for private soldiers compared with average industrial earnings

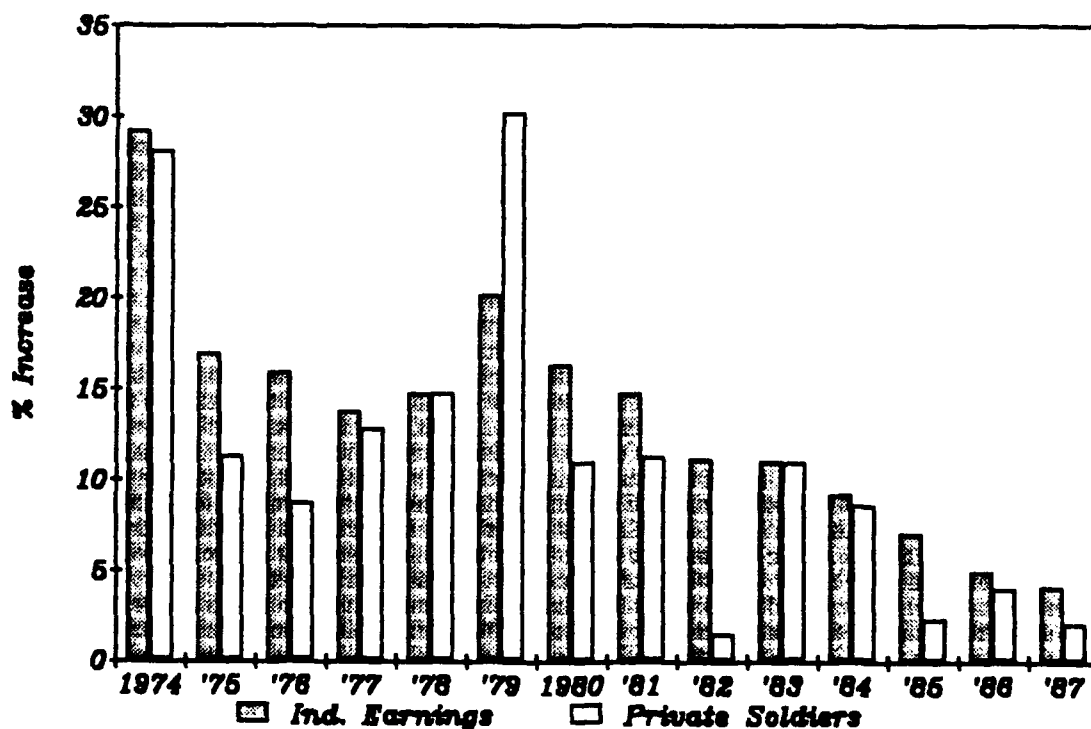


Figure 1.

The results show that the basic pay for private soldiers did not keep pace with the increase in average male earnings in manufacturing. Over the period the aggregate increase in the basic pay for private soldiers was 328% compared with an increase of 476% for the average hourly earnings of male adult industrial workers.

NCOs. This next graph illustrates the movement in the pay of sergeants, taken as typical of NCO ranks, compared to average industrial earnings.¹⁷

Trend in pay for NCOs compared with average industrial earnings

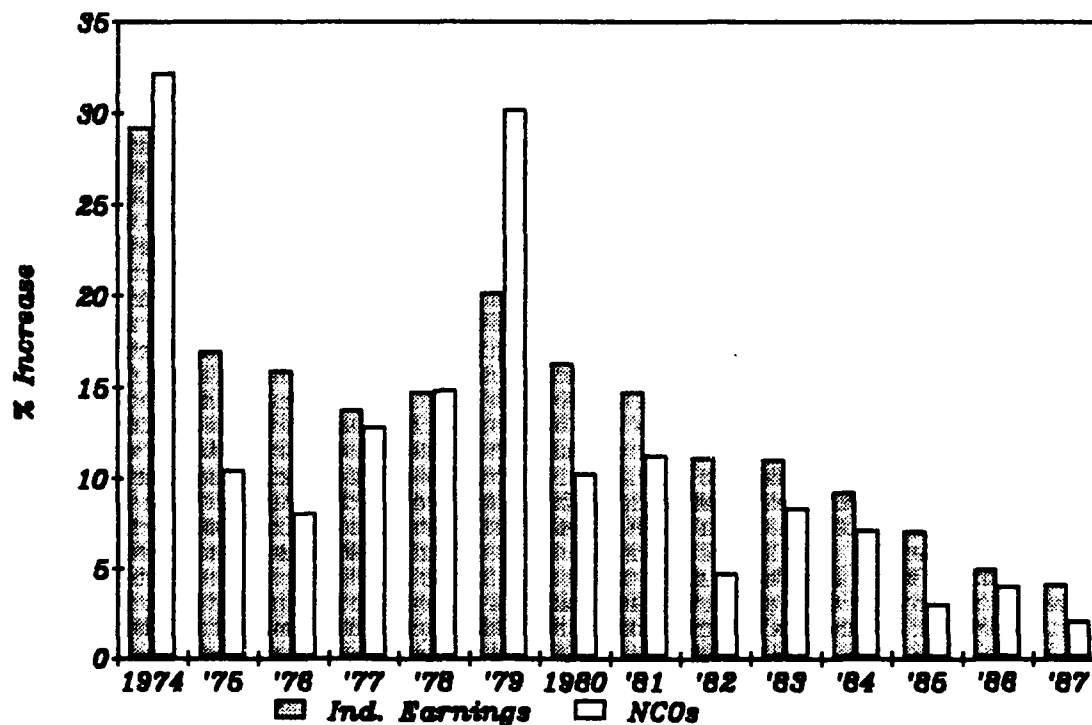


Figure 2.

The results here indicate a similar position to that evident for private soldiers and demonstrate the fact that pay for noncommissioned officers fell dramatically behind the rates of pay increases for male workers in manufacturing over the period. The aggregate increase in the basic pay for sergeants was 333% compared with an increase of 476% for the average hourly earnings of male industrial workers.

Officers. This final graph illustrates the movement in pay of Commandants (Majors), taken as typical of officer ranks, compared to average industrial earnings.¹⁸

*Trend in pay for commissioned officers (Comdt)
compared with average industrial earnings*

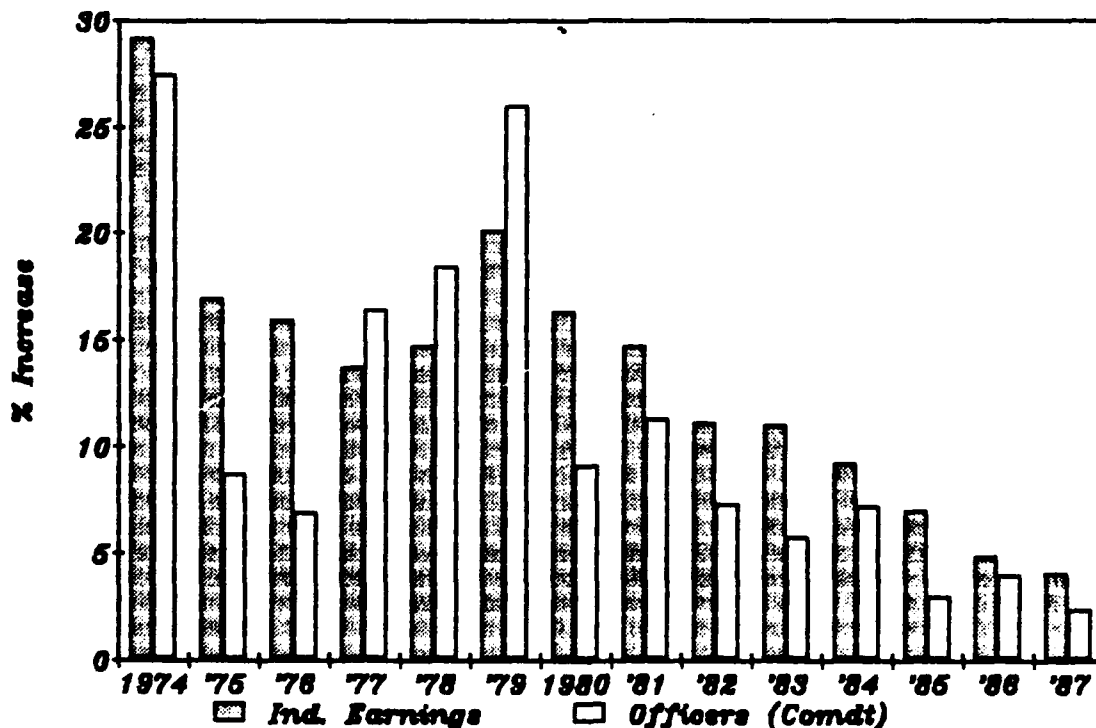


Figure 3.

Again the results clearly indicate that pay rates for officers fell dramatically behind the rates of pay in industry. The aggregate increase in pay for Commandants during the period was 317% compared to 476% for male industrial workers.

In the three graphs illustrated, the year 1979 begs comment because it was the only year that the pay trends of private soldiers, NCOs, and commissioned officers all outpaced average industrial earnings. This occurred because of the effects of achieving parity with the Civil Service in 1979.

Pay Levels

The Submission Group also examined pay levels by comparing the pay of officers, NCOs, and private soldiers to what they deemed to be their closest equivalents in Irish civilian society.

Private Soldiers. The Submission Group cited prison officers and firefighters as the two closest equivalents to the private soldier in Irish society. This similarity was based on the fact that all three belonged to a uniformed service, were required to work unsocial hours, worked within a set disciplinary code, and had at least some risk involved in the performance of their duties.¹⁹ Also, from the private soldier's point of view, he had successfully

performed the work of both the prison officer and the firefighter in recent industrial disputes.

It was found that in Mar '76, the basic pay (maximum) for a prison officer was approximately 28% higher than that of a private soldier (maximum). By Jul '89 it was approximately 40% higher. Indeed prison officers at the minimum of their scale (i.e. with 12 weeks service) were earning 12% more than a private soldier at his maximum (with at least 6 years service) in Jul '89. This was a big change from Mar '76 when prison officers on their minimum earned 8% less than the private soldier on his maximum. While there was always a differential between the basic pay of the prison officer and the private soldier, major increases granted to the prison officer in 1978, 1979 and 1980 dramatically increased the differential between the two.²⁰

When compared to firefighters, the private soldier fared little better. In 1976, the basic pay of the firefighter was approximately 22% higher than for a private soldier. In 1989 this differential had increased to approximately thirty two percent higher.²¹

NCOs. The Submission Group saw in the Gardai equivalents to NCO ranks in the Defence Forces. Similarities between both were found in that both worked unsocial hours, were subject to transfer to new locations, were subject to a strict disciplinary code, could not invoke strike action in industrial relations, had limitations on

external employment, and faced risk in the day-to-day performance of their duties.²² Furthermore, from an NCO's point of view, he frequently worked with and protected Gardai in Aid to the Civil Power operations.

Specifically the Submission Group compared the sergeant (a lower NCO rank) to a Garda, and a Sergeant Major (the highest NCO rank) to a Garda Inspector. In 1974 the Sergeant received an annual basic salary of IR£2,403 while the Garda received IR£2,150. By Jul '89 the positions were reversed, with Garda receiving IR£13,328 and the Sergeant receiving IR£11,098. This represented the Garda going from a negative differential of 10.53% in 1974, in relation to the Defence Forces Sergeant, to a positive differential of 20.09% in 1989.²³

A similar trend was experienced by the Sergeant-Major as compared to the Garda Inspector. In 1974, the Sergeant-Major received an annual basic wage of IR£2,395 while the Garda Inspector received IR£2,753. By Jul '89, the Garda Inspector was receiving IR£17,554 while the Sergeant-Major was receiving IR£13,585. These figures represented the Garda Inspector going from a differential of 14.99% in 1974 to a higher differential of 29.22% in 1989.²⁴

Officers. Twenty eight per cent of officers in the Irish Defence Forces are of Commandant (Major) rank. There are 147 units in the Defence Forces, of which 101 are commanded by Commandants. The remaining units have

Commandants as Second-in-Command and sub-unit commanders. The remaining Commandants are staff officers, specialists and instructors in various schools. The Commandant is a senior officer who occupies the first rung of the senior management structure of the Defence Forces and relates naturally to the junior ranks below him and the more senior ranks above him. For these reasons the Submission Group selected the Commandant as the rank most suitable for comparison with commissioned officer equivalent groups, in terms of pay levels.

In choosing equivalents to the Commandant from Irish society the Submission Group cited the following parameters as being relevant:²⁵

1. Entry requirements.
2. Career development to include educational training.
3. Leadership.
4. Responsibility.
5. Exposure to risk.
6. Management requirements to include span of control, confidentiality, personnel and equipment.
7. Physical effort.
8. Mental effort - judgement and decisions
9. Restrictions - legal and constitutional.
10. Experience and age profile.
11. Overseas service.

After detailed examination of many job specifications, the Garda Superintendent, Prison Governor and Assistant Chief Fire Officer were selected as the closest equivalents to the Commandant rank.

In comparing the pay of a Commandant and a Garda Superintendent it was noted that the former's pay in 1974 was 11% ahead of the Superintendent. However, by 1988 the Commandant's pay had slipped behind his Garda equivalent by 27.2%.²⁶ In the case of the Assistant Chief Fire Officer the Commandant's pay in 1979 was behind by 15.2%. By 1988 the gap between the two had widened to 56.9%.²⁷ The most remarkable change was vis a vis the Prison Governor. In 1979 the Commandant's pay was 15.7% ahead of the Prison Governor but by 1988 it had fallen to 41.4% behind his Prison Service equivalent.²⁸

Further examination of Commandant's pay compared to middle management also enhanced the perceived neglected position of the Commandant and by implication commissioned officer ranks generally. From 1974 to 1981 the pay of the Commandant kept pace broadly with that of middle management of the private sector, according to Irish Management Institute Survey figures. Since that time however, despite awards made under the various pay rounds, the pay of Commandants had fallen behind significantly. In 1974 a Commandant's pay was 2.9% higher than that of the middle

manager; whereas in 1988 a Commandant's pay had fallen adrift of his private sector colleague by a massive 41.6%.²⁹

Conditions of Service

The Submission Group cited approximately twelve broad areas pertaining to conditions of service that were unsatisfactory or in a state of deterioration from a Defence Forces' personnel point of view. This thesis does not intend to examine each of these areas. However, an examination of some fundamental conditions of service particularly from a social point of view, is seen as important.

Welfare. In 1958 43% of noncommissioned ranks were married. By 1988 that figure had risen to 60%.³⁰ In the 1980s the soldier had to cope with a higher incidence of twenty-four hour duty due to Aid to the Civil Power operations. He also had to cope with long separation from family due to duty on UN missions. The stresses induced by such service were all the more intensified by the fact that while demands on the Defence Forces had increased, their strength, as a percentage of establishment had declined from 83% to 74% between 1978 and 1988.³¹ Clearly the stresses on the soldier of the 1980s were greater than at anytime prior. Because of the higher percentage of married soldiers, these stresses now affected more families than in the past.

No development in social welfare facilities to support the soldier and his family took place within the Defence Forces in line with the increased duty demands. The Irish Defence Forces had little to offer a soldier and his family if he had serious financial, marital or family problems. It was little wonder then that the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council reported in 1988, that soldiers had become one of the occupational groups in the country most identifiable with marital problems.³² In this same context, a leading child psychologist suggested that 20% of his caseload of child abuse involved soldiers.³³

Married Accommodation. In 1922 the State inherited a policy of low-rent Married Quarters from the British Administration. A policy of providing such quarters became established and continued up to 1982. A similar policy of providing low rent Married Quarters applied to the Gardai and prison officers. The benefits derived by Defence Forces' members from the provision of Married Quarters were:³⁴

1. Low occupancy charge. The rent charges were considerably less than what soldiers would have had to pay under the differential rents scheme of the local authorities. This resulted in a net saving to the soldier. This low rent charge, while providing him with low cost housing, also provided him with an opportunity to arrange his finances and to

purchase private accommodation if he so desired.

2. Low travel costs to work due to the proximity of Married Quarters.

3. Allowed for ease of mobility especially on promotion.

4. Facilitated emergency call-outs.

In 1951 there were 889 Married Quarters for NCOs and private soldiers and 126 for officers. All of these houses were inherited from the British Administration, and no new building of Married Quarters took place until 1951. Between 1951 and 1982 it was Government policy to replace unsuitable Married Quarters by modern housing for NCOs and private soldiers. In 1982 the total number of Married Quarters available to NCO's and soldiers was 723 old type and 346 new type which housed 12.2% of married personnel.³⁵

In 1982 a new Government policy pertaining to married accommodation in the Defence Forces was outlined in Dail Eireann.³⁶ In summary, this policy indicated that the responsibility for providing married accommodation was henceforth a matter for local authorities but that the Department of Defence would supplement their efforts where soldiers' housing needs were greatest by replacing existing unsuitable quarters with new housing.

However, up to 1988, the Department of Defence had not provided new housing despite the fact that 469 houses had been either demolished or closed since 1982.³⁷ Local

authorities did, in some cases, give special consideration to occupants of those 469 quarters. This was no consolation to potential future occupants of Married Quarters as the stock of such quarters declined.

In 1988, a Married Quarters purchase scheme was introduced. Two hundred houses were offered for sale to occupants. By the end of 1989 eighty had been purchased and forty were in the process. While this may well have benefited the occupants/purchasers, it was perceived as further decreasing the number of Married Quarters available to members of the Defence Forces and as such, represented a penalty to those seeking married accommodation.

Single Accommodation. Defence Forces' Regulations require that single members reside in barracks. Such accommodation is generally provided in the barracks in which members serve. This applies to both officers and noncommissioned ranks. Should suitable accommodation not be available or personal circumstances merit it, the single officer could apply and receive an exemption from the requirements to live-in from the Quartermaster General. In the case of NCOs and private soldiers, such an exemption may be granted by their Commanding Officers.

In Sept 87 the Quartermaster General conducted a survey of accommodation available to all ranks.³⁸ This survey classified accommodation as standard, sub-standard or emergency.

Standard accommodation was either newly-constructed or consisted of cubicalised billets. The room was designed for four, with a floor space of eight square metres per soldier. The accommodation was attractive and comfortable and, in the case of cubicalised billets, the renovations extended to the main entrance, stairway and landings.

The room was furnished with built-in design to current Barracks Services Accommodation Section specifications. Floor covering was at a minimum, linoleum and all windows had curtains. The room was centrally heated. Lighting including over bed wall-light and sockets for electrical equipment were provided. The accommodation block included a sub-unit recreation room and laundry and drying facilities. Ablution/WC facilities were readily available.

Sub-standard accommodation held a minimum of twenty men. It was in a reasonable decorative order, with limited floor covering and furniture. Heating was provided by open fires or gas heaters. Ablutions were available in the building.

Emergency accommodation was classified as large open billets holding more than twenty men. This type of accommodation was not normally in use and received only minimal care and maintenance. It was consequently in poor decorative condition and structural repair. It was not intended for long term occupancy and privacy was minimal.

Bunk beds were probably in use. Heating was by open fire or "pot bellied" stove. Wardrobe facilities were limited and floor covering was poor or non-existent. Ablution/WC facilities were not available within the immediate building and the ratio was below modern scales.

This survey established a number of noteworthy points:³⁹

1. In general, there was an adequate supply of standard accommodation for officers.
2. In the case of other ranks, however, only 15% of available accommodation was of standard quality. Eighty five percent was sub-standard or worse.
3. Only 38% of single NCOs and private soldiers had access to standard accommodation.

Medical. Prior to May '87 the Minister for Defence under Defence Forces' Regulations (DFR) assumed responsibility for the medical welfare of spouses and dependants of Defence Forces' members (DFR A 12 part 3 paragraphs 30 to 41). On that date the Minister amended the relevant DFR and seemed to have washed his hands of this responsibility.⁴⁰ The sudden way this decision was made by the Minister, without any prior notification, was the cause of much concern to soldiers and their families. The Minister's actions did not allow Defence Forces personnel the time or the opportunity to make alternative medical arrangements for their spouses and dependents.

The Defence Forces, even at present, have no medical scheme to cover soldiers' spouses or their dependents. With the ever increasing cost of medical care this was perceived as a very unsatisfactory situation. Membership of the Voluntary Health Insurance scheme (VHI) was seen as too costly for the vast majority of soldiers.

A further inequality in the medical system was the fact that in the Curragh Command (one of four Army Area Commands) soldiers' spouses and families could avail of outpatient medical care at State expense. This long-standing arrangement originally arose because of the then remote location of the Curragh camp.⁴¹ In all other areas of the Defence Forces soldiers' dependents must avail of the medical care available to the Irish population generally under the Department of Health regulations.

Education. Since 1969 it has been the policy of the Defence Forces to have all young officers attend University College Galway (UCG) or a similar third level institute for the purpose of acquiring a degree. By and large, this has been a very successful system with many benefits accruing to both the students and the Defence Forces in general.

While the educational opportunities for officers are very good because of the UCG scheme, the same cannot be said for noncommissioned personnel.⁴² Under the system, which still prevails, an NCO or private soldier may usually only attend a second or third level educational institution on a

part-time basis, at night time and/or at week-ends. The student in most cases must pay his fees as required and then claim them from the Department of Defence at the end of the school or college year on producing a certificate of attendance and achievement. In recent years, the reclaiming of fees has become somewhat more difficult for the student, as the authorities imposed more stringent conditions on when educational fees would be reimbursed.

The main stumbling block in this regard is the insistence on the part of the Department of Defence that the subject or subjects being studied by all military students (both commissioned and noncommissioned personnel) be relevant to their careers in the Defence Forces. This imposition obviously limits the scope of the student's educational ambitions to the extent that many now pay their own fees and do not bother with the reclaiming process.⁴³ Another impediment to the student is the fact that if his fees for third level studies are paid by the Department of Defence, he must contract to serve an equivalent period for which the fees were paid. On average this covers a period of three years. If he leaves the Defence Forces before serving out this period he must refund the fees for the appropriate time he had left to serve.

Fitness Facilities. Serving members of the Irish Defence Forces are required to maintain a high degree of personal physical fitness to perform various aspects of

their duties. Achieving and maintaining this condition should reasonably presume an infrastructure of recreational facilities including gymnasia, sports pitches, and so forth. In turn a soldier should reasonably expect such facilities to exist widely in accessible locations throughout the country.

The Submission Group noted, with a few exceptions, the obvious lack of recreational facilities available to the members of all three Services (Army, Navy and Air Corps) to enable them to maintain the physical fitness standards required of the professional member of the Defence Forces.⁴⁴

Summary

In the decades of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the impact of the new challenges posed by Internal Security operations, UN operations and the introduction of new technology etc., changed the nature of the Irish Defence Forces dramatically. As a consequence, the modern Irish soldier had become a better educated individual, possessing a greater range of skills and expertise than ever before. However, when compared to those in Irish society whom he perceived as his equals, his pay rates fell far short of expectations. Worse still, the trend in his pay continued to fall behind the average increase in the basic industrial wage in Ireland. Probably the most disappointing aspect of all was that there was no indication from a historical or

contemporary point of view that a satisfactory mechanism for determining Defence Forces pay would be instituted. In the modern, more stressful Defence Forces of the 1980s the Irish soldier found that no effective welfare system was in place to assist him in financial, family, and marital matters. Furthermore he found that, married or single, the standard and availability of accommodation provided fell far short of expectations. Other conditions of service such as medical facilities for his family and educational opportunities and fitness facilities for himself, were either not available or continued to be eroded. In such circumstances the modern Irish soldier and his family perceived themselves to be neglected and disadvantaged.

Endnotes

¹Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces (Dublin: Defence Forces Headquarters, 1989), 4.14 .

²Ibid., 4.14 .

³Ibid., 4.15 .

⁴Ibid., 4.16 .

⁵Ibid., 4.16 .

⁶Commandant D. Ashe, (Irish Defence Forces Press Officer), interviewed by author, Leavenworth, Kansas, 2 Feb 1992.

⁷Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission, 4.15 .

⁸Ibid., 4.16 .

⁹Ibid., 2.2 .

¹⁰Ibid., 2.2 .

¹¹Ibid., 2.2 .

¹²Ibid., 2.2 .

¹³Ibid., 2.3 .

¹⁴Curragh Command, Briefing to Advisory Group on Pay Allowances and Conditions (Curragh: Command Headquarters, 1988), 3.

¹⁵Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission, 10.2 .

¹⁶Ibid., 10.6 .

¹⁷Ibid., 10.6 .

¹⁸Ibid., 10.6 .

¹⁹Ibid., 11.11 .

- ²⁰Ibid., 11.13 .
- ²¹Ibid., 11.13 .
- ²²Ibid., 12.2 .
- ²³Ibid., 12.17 .
- ²⁴Ibid., 12.17 .
- ²⁵Ibid., 13.12 .
- ²⁶Ibid., 13.24 .
- ²⁷Ibid., 13.24 .
- ²⁸Ibid., 13.24 .
- ²⁹Ibid., 13.22 .
- ³⁰Ibid., 4.25 .
- ³¹Ibid., 4.24 .
- ³²Ibid., 9.15 .
- ³³Ibid., 9.16 .
- ³⁴Ibid., 9.6 .
- ³⁵Ibid., 9.8 .
- ³⁶Irish Government, Dail Report Vol 334 No. 6, (Dublin: Dail Eireann, 13 May 1982), 1.
- ³⁷Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission, 9.8 .
- ³⁸Irish Defence Forces, Survey of Accommodation (Dublin: QMG Branch, Defence Forces Headquarters, 1987), 1.
- ³⁹Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission, 9.6 .
- ⁴⁰Ibid., 21.37 .
- ⁴¹Irish Government, Report of the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces (Dublin: Department of Defence, 1990), 108.

⁴²Irish Defence Forces, Submission to the Commission,
21.26 .

⁴³Ibid., 21.26 .

⁴⁴Ibid., 9.10 .

Chapter 4

Representation Becomes a Reality

Introduction

In the early months of 1988, articles began to appear in Ireland's national newspapers highlighting the fact that, because of low wages some military families had to avail themselves of supplementary social welfare benefit payments.

Scores of full-time soldiers in the Irish Army are receiving supplementary Social Welfare Benefit payments because their wages are so low.

Welfare officers in every Army barracks are informing soldiers of their entitlements under the Family Income Supplement (FIS) scheme, which was introduced three years ago to help working families on low incomes.

Army sources said last night that dozens of full-time soldiers were receiving FIS payments. A spokesman said that it was not known exactly how many soldiers were receiving the allowance, because the scheme was confidential, but he confirmed that there were certainly "dozens" who qualified for the supplement.¹

Letters to the editors of these papers from Defence Forces' members and their families soon began to appear, further highlighting the predicament of some military families in a very personal way.

I would like to say how pleased I was to read your article about soldiers on the breadline. I am

married to one and I know, as a young mother of four kids, you are right....

I know many housewives who feel as I do but won't talk because their husbands might get into trouble. Some families have to go to the moneylender to pay the bills.

I have had to learn to live week to week. We have never had a family holiday as every penny has gone on the kids and bills. Why don't the Top Brass take note that their fellow soldiers are in need of a pay increase?²

Such articles and letters continued to be published from Mar '88 into the summer of that year.

On 27 Apr '88 the Defence Forces' Head Chaplain wrote to the Chief of Staff "on behalf of all the Chaplains throughout the country"³ pointing out the poor state of morale and the sense of injustice felt by the members of the Defence Forces.

A Government decision (s.25682) dated 8 Jun '88 set up an Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' pay, allowances and conditions. On 13th Aug '88 the *Irish Times* newspaper reported that the Minister for Defence had turned down suggestions to set up representative organisations for members of the Defence Forces. On 15 Aug '88 a meeting of army wives formed the National Army Spouses Association (NASA).⁴

These were the first tangible signs of a changing mood within the Defence Forces. It is appropriate then that we take the year 1988 as the starting point in the study of

representation as it began to develop in the Irish Defence Forces.

The Chaplains' Letter

The Chaplains' to the Irish Defence Forces, in a letter dated 28 Apr '88, expressed their collective views to the Chief-of-Staff on the declining state of morale and injustice felt amongst the members of the Defence Forces. This was the first time in the history of the Defence Forces that the Chaplains felt the need to put their collective views to the Chief-of-Staff. In the letter the Chaplains expressed "deepest concern for what we perceive to be grave injustice being perpetrated on the members of the force at this time."⁵ This letter in its opening remarks further noted that "there exists certain areas which are the cause of our concern and are evidence furthermore of exploitation and abuse of personnel...."⁶ The three areas identified, which according to the Chaplains demanded a redress in justice, were pay, high incidence of duties, and lack of promotional prospects. In closing the Chaplains exhorted the Chief of Staff to make their views "known both to the Minister for Defence and also to others in Government who influence policy and effect change as a matter of basic justice."⁷

**Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' Pay
Allowances and Conditions.**

This Committee, established by the Government on 8 Jun '88 had the following terms of reference:

To examine and report on the pay, allowances and conditions of officers, non-commissioned ranks and privates in the Defence Forces, the examination to give special attention to problems caused by an outflow of personnel with special training or skills.⁸

The Committee was chaired by a Teachta Dala (member of Parliament), and had four civil servants but no member of the Defence Forces on its membership. Even so, the military authorities welcomed this move by Government. The Chief of Staff established an Advisory Group on 16 Jun '88 and tasked it to prepare the Defence Forces' submission to the Committee. This Advisory Group completed its work and made its submission, in three parts, on 1 Sept '88.⁹

Part 1 of this submission contained proposals to improve pay, allowances, and conditions of noncommissioned personnel. Specifically it proposed that:

1. The basic pay of noncommissioned personnel be increased by 25%.
2. Military service allowance (an allowance roughly equivalent to the "X"-factor in the British Armed Forces) be set at 10% of basic pay.
3. Military service allowance be made reckonable

for pension and gratuity.

There were a further ten proposals contained in Part 1 concerning security duty allowance, prison duty allowance, border duty allowance etc.

Part 2 of the submission specifically proposed that:

1. Basic pay be increased by 15% for captains and commandants and by 10% for lieutenant colonels.
2. Military service allowance be set at 10% of basic pay, up to and including the rank of lieutenant general.
3. Military service allowance be reckonable for pension and gratuity.

There were a further eleven proposals contained in Part 2 of the submission. These proposals concerned security duty allowance, prison duty allowance, border duty allowance, uniform replenishment allowance etc.

Part 3 of the submission contained proposals to improve technician pay of personnel of technical class in the Defence Forces. Technician classes were examined very closely, resulting in a proposed restructuring of the grouping system from three groups to five groups. Pay rates were proposed to compliment these new groupings and while it was difficult to compare these proposed rates to the old rates because of the group restructuring, the average increase sought in technician pay was in excess of 60%.

Between 1 Sept '88 and 10 Nov '88 the Committee and the Advisory Group met on six occasions for what was referred to as 'clarification purposes.'

The setting up of this Inter-Departmental Committee did not lessen the profile of the Defence Forces' problem in the minds of military personnel. They saw this Government move as too little and too late. Most members further perceived it as a move to stall the issue of a pay increase for at least another six months or possibly longer. Many soldiers had by now lost a certain amount of confidence in the Minister for Defence and in politicians generally. Consequently they were less than happy with the composition of the Inter-Departmental Committee, which was headed by a politician but as already noted, did not have a member of the Defence Forces on its membership. Even the promise to ease the ban on promotion and to commence the recruiting of five hundred new soldiers did little to defuse a worsening situation. The ban on promotion, in all ranks of the Defence Forces, had been introduced the previous year in a bid to reduce public spending. It was a very restrictive measure whereby only 10% of vacancies at each rank, both commissioned and noncommissioned, would be filled.

Neither did the setting up of the Inter-Departmental Committee lessen the profile of the Defence Forces' issue in the printed media. The Chief of Staff was reported to have "made an unprecedented move to stave off a pay revolt in the

ranks, by advising his senior officers to 'go public' on the wage crisis."¹⁰ In a letter to the editor of the *Irish Press*, published on 16 Jul '88, the Chief of Staff personally refuted this allegation.

The officers of the Defence Forces have not been instructed by me to lobby public representatives in relation to their pay, nor have there been any secret meetings of senior officers.¹¹

In this letter the Chief of Staff also said that it was his "conviction shared by the Defence Forces in general that the establishment of a representative body or a trade union would be entirely inappropriate".¹² Letters from other members of the Defence Forces and their families continued to appear, as before, in the national daily newspapers. The Inter-Departmental Committee, therefore, carried out its work at a time when frustration and disquiet in the Defence Forces was very obvious indeed.

National Army Spouses Association (NASA)

The continued momentum of rising frustration within the Defence Forces was clearly illustrated by the formation of NASA in Aug '88. The association was formed by the wives of noncommissioned personnel to highlight the plight of their husbands and to bring pressure to bear on those who could change what they perceived as a disgraceful situation. NASA began to gain support quickly throughout the military

community, as it contributed a new dimension to the Defence Forces' issue. Its progress was also profiled in the media. "In recent months, NASA has enjoyed great success in highlighting what they believe are appalling levels of pay in the Army and a general crisis in morale."¹³ In highlighting their situation NASA lobbied politicians, arranged protest marches to Dail Eireann, and picketed both the Dail and selected barracks throughout the country. In this way it became a formidable pressure group, forcefully articulating the feelings and frustrations of noncommissioned personnel in particular, who under military law could not do so. The resolve of NASA to get an improvement in the pay and conditions of their husbands quickly became apparent:

We have planned on disrupting Dublin today - That is the whole aim of this. We are not just silly housewives but are here to stay. If it takes years to get better pay and conditions NASA will be fighting all the way.¹⁴

So said the chairperson of NASA at one of their protest marches through the streets of Dublin to Dail Eireann. Under such circumstances the Minister for Defence continued to come under pressure. Attacks from opposition deputies on his handling of the Defence Forces' issue intensified while the media, particularly the printed media, continued to consistently profile the Defence Forces' issue throughout the Autumn and up to Christmas of 1988.

Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee

The Inter-Departmental Committee reported its findings on 22 Dec '88. As far as the members of the Defence Forces were concerned this report served only to increase the level of dissatisfaction.¹⁵ There are three reasons why this report exacerbated an already deteriorating situation.

First, the Advisory Group who prepared the Defence Forces' submission had asked on several occasions that the Committee tackle the totality of the problem and not to focus just on particular aspects. Eventually the Advisory Group, still not convinced that the Committee had the right focus, made a final statement which proved prophetic.

The recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee must address the totality of the problems presently facing the Defence Forces and not selected portions of them.

Piecemeal solutions invariably serve sectional interests, are counterproductive and only exacerbate existing difficulties, frequently giving rise to additional complications.¹⁶

On publication, the report was found to have a very narrow focus and was perceived by the Defence Forces' members, NASA, and many opposition politicians to be cosmetic in nature.

Second, a general increase of between 12% and 15% in pay for Defence Forces' personnel, which was highlighted on the day of publication, turned out to be less than what it

seemed. Most military equivalent grades in the Civil Service had been granted an arbitration award of 11% some weeks earlier. As had been the convention since 1979, that award would have been passed on to commandants (majors) and other junior Defence Forces' personnel. When it was clarified, some weeks after publication, that the Committee's recommended increase of 12% - 15% included the "Civil Service" 11% award, the reaction among Defence Forces' members turned very sour, as they felt cheated and deceived.

Third, the timing of the publication also upset many Defence Forces' personnel. The report was published on the day that the Defence Forces commenced privileged leave for Christmas '88 and on the day after the Lockerbie air disaster in Scotland. Rightly or wrongly the timing of publication was perceived by members of the Defence Forces as deceitful in that it tried to avoid both the collective attention of Defence Forces' members and media focus.

For members of the Defence Forces to have perceived deliberate intent on the part of Government to publish the report at a time when the media were focused on the Lockerbie air crash may have been unfair. But what this perception did indicate was the heightened level of distrust on the part of Defence Forces' personnel in the Minister for Defence and in the Government.

At first the Chief of Staff was noncommittal on the report, but having "sought the views of officers on the pay increase in what an Army spokesman described as normal consultations..."¹⁷ he was reported to have impressed on the Minister for Defence the inadequacy of the Inter-Departmental Committee's recommendations. The Minister reacted by warning that there would be no review of the Defence Forces' situation. Calls for representative bodies in the Defence Forces now took on a new impetus among its members, with such calls getting high media profile. More importantly, however, was the fact that representation now seemed to be the only option left whereby Defence Forces personnel could achieve what they perceived as a fair rate of pay and appropriate conditions of service.

Noncommissioned personnel, in particular, now saw a representative body as imperative. On the basis of the Inter-Departmental Committee report, they perceived that the Government did not take the Defence Forces seriously and furthermore they perceived their commissioned officers to be powerless in looking after their welfare.¹⁸ NASA heightened their activities with frequent pickets outside the Dail and other selected locations, where embarrassment to the Government and the Minister for Defence could be maximised.

These early months of 1989 were very difficult months for the Irish Defence Forces. Rumour and counter

rumour abounded about resignations of some of the General Staff, mass resignation of NCOs in particular units, formation of "unions", and about the fact that the Chief of Staff and the Minister for Defence were no longer on speaking terms. The very existence and fabric of the Defence Forces seemed threatened.

Another feature of the first six months of 1989 was the repeated assertions by the Minister for Defence that there would be no further review of Defence Forces' pay and conditions of service, that they had already been treated as a special case by Government.

In addition, he continually denied that there was any discontent or problem of morale in the Defence Forces. Nowhere was this attitude of the Minister to be more clearly seen than in an interview on a prime time current affairs programme on national television on 4 Apr '89. In this programme (*Today Tonight*), even though faced with the strongest evidence to the contrary, the Minister denied any problem whatsoever in the Defence Forces and further suggested to the interviewer that "you must be speaking to a different army to the army I'm speaking to and that I know of."¹⁹ This interview further depleted whatever trust now remained between the Defence Forces and their Minister and caused opposition politicians to call for his resignation.

On 24 Jun '89 the Minister for Defence finally made his only concession when he announced the reactivation, and

expansion by two new members of the original Inter-Departmental Committee. These new members were retired military personnel, one a Trade Unionist and the other a University Lecturer. It never became very clear what were the new committee's terms of reference. But as far as one could gauge it was an attempt to set up an organisation similar to the Review Body on Armed Forces Pay as instituted in Britain. This new committee's terms of reference were unclear because it never had time to function and was soon cast aside in the aftermath of the General Election of Jun '89.

General Election

Due to other political issues, the Government called a General Election for 15 Jun '89. Three former members of NASA decided to stand as candidates in the election. In order to preserve the non-political identity of NASA these three election candidates resigned from the association. This was merely a technical move and did not interfere with the cause for which they campaigned. While none of the three candidates won Dail seats their performance, in one constituency in particular, caused a sitting Government Deputy to lose his seat. The loss of this Government seat was significant because the outgoing Government did not retain an overall majority in the incoming Dail.²⁰ After the election, the Fianna Fail party (i.e. the outgoing

Government), for the first time in its history, had to engage in a coalition with a minor party in order to stay in power.

Following the General Election a new Minister for Defence was appointed. He was a very senior member of the Fianna Fail party, who in addition to his Defence portfolio, was also both deputy leader of the Government and deputy leader of his political party. He had in the past been the person to whom his party had turned in times of crisis and trouble.

Soon after his appointment on 30 Jun '89, reports began to appear in the press of the formation of a representative association for noncommissioned ranks of the Defence Forces.²¹ On 5 Jul, an opposition spokesman on Defence welcomed the setting up of this representative association and called on the Government to give it full recognition.

Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces.

On 27 Jul '89 the Government established the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces, an independent commission with the following terms of reference.

To carry out a major review of the remuneration and conditions of service of the Defence Forces

having regard to their separate and distinct role and organisation and to make recommendations.²²

Together with the establishment of the Commission, the Chief of Staff was instructed to carry out a study of the structure of military representative bodies in European armies. The establishment of the Commission received a general welcome from all the interested parties in the Defence Forces' issue.

Members of the Defence Forces now perceived a change in attitude on the part of the Government. Confidence began to grow in the new Minister for Defence, who portrayed a far more conciliatory attitude from the beginning of his Ministry. The composition and terms of reference of the Commission were also more acceptable to Defence Force personnel. An important point in the Commission's acceptance by the Irish soldier was that the composition of the group tasked with making the Defence Forces submission to the Commission included a private soldiers' team, an NCO's team, and a commissioned officers' team. Each team would compile their part of the submission on the basis of the countrywide views of their respective groups. Notwithstanding this means of communication with the Commission, every soldier had, as a private citizen, the right to make his personal views known to the Commission. The fact that the Chief of Staff was to carry out a study on the structure of military representative bodies in Europe

was seen as positive in terms of the fledgling representative body now being established by noncommissioned personnel. In general terms then, the soldier felt that consequent to his protest at the ballot box, he was at last being heard.

The confrontation generated prior to the General Election by opposition deputies and in the media now ceased, to some extent, giving the new Minister for Defence and the Commission time to deal with the issues. NASA however continued to be active while the Commission carried out its work. It continued to profile the fact that as time continued to pass, Defence Forces' members were no better off, and as yet had received no extra pay.

The Recognition of Representative Associations

The issue now turned to the recognition of the new representative association. It was clear that the feelings articulated by the Chief of Staff in his letter to the Irish Press on 16 Jul 88 in which he stated that "a representative body or a trade union would be entirely inappropriate"²³ were still held at General Staff level. It was perceived within the Defence Forces that the General Staff saw the idea of a group presenting the views of ranks in the very narrow terms of "a structure for consultation and information on pay and related matters..."²⁴ and within their [General Staff] control. Noncommissioned personnel,

in particular, saw such a structure in much broader terms, under their control and independent of the General Staff.

In Sept '89, "The Minister [for Defence] gave a broad hint that the authorities may now be adopting a more open approach towards the idea of a group presenting the views of the ranks on a continuing basis."²⁵ As the Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Association (PDFORRA, the new association) continued to organise, the Chief of Staff requested that no further action be taken until his study of systems in other European countries was completed. In Nov '89 the Minister "agreed, in principle with the formation of a representative body."²⁶ However the Minister would not recognize any body not constituted under Defence Forces' Regulations.

This continued to leave PDFORRA with an unofficial status. Its response was that the association was set up under Article 40, section 6, subsection 1(iii) of the Irish Constitution which guarantees freedom of association. PDFORRA pressed on with setting up their organisation, paying little attention to the Chief of Staff's request for no further action.

The General Staff and the Minister proceeded to examine the type of representative structure that should be instituted in the Defence Forces. PDFORRA continued to be ignored and remained unconsulted on the matter. The battle of wills eventually came to a head in Feb '90 when the

secretary of PDFORRA attended the Annual Conference of EUROMIL in Denmark. While at the conference he gave an interview on Irish radio, and on arrival home he gave a press conference at Dublin airport, all with the intention of publicising PDFORRA's position. On arrival back in his unit he was informed by his Company Commander that he would be charged under Defence Forces' Regulations (DFR) for giving unauthorised media interviews.²⁷

The secretary of PDFORRA then sought and got an interim injunction in the High Court to prevent his being charged under the DFR. When this expired after fourteen days, he decided against applying to renew or extend it.²⁸ The military authorities did not proceed with disciplinary action.

In Mar '90 the Minister for Defence sent a delegation to meet with PDFORRA officials including its secretary. In over fourteen hours of negotiations they [Minister's representatives] failed to get PDFORRA to agree to structures proposed by the Minister and the General Staff.²⁹ PDFORRA insisted that if such structures were implemented, nobody in the Defence Forces would stand for office. However, later in the same month the Minister agreed the terms demanded by PDFORRA.³⁰ It seems that the General Staff were scarcely consulted on this move by the Minister.

A group of commissioned officers, initially formed as the commissioned officers team to make submissions to the Independent Commission on behalf of the officer body, extended its work in Dec '89, at the behest of the Minister for Defence, to include consideration on the matter of representation. As the team set about its newest task, it further focused the debate on the type of representative structure appropriate for the commissioned officer body of the Irish Defence Forces. The perceived success of PDFORRA had already started the debate amongst officers. On 24 Apr '90 the team incurred the displeasure of the General Staff because of the content and tenor of its draft findings on officer representation.

The General Staff apparently considered that the findings had exceeded the terms of reference of the team, were premature, proposed to breach the law, and to act contrary to regulation. Amongst the officer body it was perceived that the General Staff were not happy with an independent representative body on the lines of PDFORRA to represent commissioned officers. The Minister for Defence then seems to have intervened and "privately ticked off" the General Staff for their attitude toward the officer group.³¹

By mid-May '90 the Chief of Staff acknowledged the right of officers to set up their own association. Work then proceeded on forming a representative association for commissioned officers. This association, called the

Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO), was formed shortly thereafter.

On the 31 Jul '90, the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces published its report. The Commission did not address the subject of representation, other than to acknowledge that while it carried out its work, important developments took place in relation to the establishment of representative associations for members of the Defence Forces.³² The Commission further recognized that many of the issues drawn to its attention before representation was announced could now be dealt with under these new arrangements.

From May '90 until May '91, legal and technical procedures were undertaken to hold official elections to the two associations, to agree on their constitutions and to bring the whole procedure within the legal framework of Defence Forces' Regulations. It is not within the scope of this thesis to examine the 1990/91 period because by May '90 RACO was officially acknowledged as the representative body for commissioned officers and PDFORRA was similarly acknowledged as the representative body for the noncommissioned ranks of the Irish Defence Forces. The concept of a representative structure for members of the Irish Defence Forces had become a reality.

The Media Influence

The printed media in particular contributed significantly to this whole movement toward representation in the Irish Defence Forces. Radio and television also made a contribution but not in the same sustained way as did the national and provincial press. So far in this chapter, I have used press references to build the chronology of what took place in the Irish Defence Forces between 1988 and 1990. But it is also important to look at the influence of the press on the military representation issue during the 1988/90 period.

It was in the national daily press that the first public indications of unrest and dissatisfaction in the Defence Forces began to appear. Soldiers and soldiers' wives in particular began to vividly illustrate their perceived neglected situation through the 'letters to the editor' section of almost all the national daily newspapers. This gave a voice to those who wished to have their complaints heard, and a focus to those who were in a similar situation but who may not have been able to articulate their plight, even to themselves.

At the same time newspaper editors saw the substance of good news copy in what was fermenting within the Defence Forces. Soon newspaper articles by reputable journalists began to appear. These articles were mostly investigative and had the effect of confirming and therefore legitimising

the claims and allegations that continued to appear in the 'letters to the editor' section of the national newspapers. The Defence Forces' issue also received editorial comment on a relatively frequent basis. In Aug '88, soon after the situation in the Defence Forces became a public issue, the editorial in the *Irish Times* stated:

But the defence forces, as Mr Cooney [opposition politician and former Minister for Defence] expressed it are the final guarantors of our democratic system. It would be a foolish administration, a foolish society, which failed to recognize the necessity of maintaining their morale, their self-esteem and their individual capacity to provide for themselves and their families.

The very fact that the defence forces do not have a negotiating structure obliges the State to ensure that they are reasonably well looked after. In an economic climate that shows some signs of improvement, a review of their pay and conditions should be well up the list of priorities. Otherwise, the manifest pride of politicians in the Army's achievements at home and abroad will begin to sound very hollow indeed.³³

In May '90, when representative bodies for both commissioned and noncommissioned personnel had been officially acknowledged and were being set-up, the editorial in the *Irish Independent* noted;

There is nothing unusual in this [organising representative associations] as far as Europe is concerned. But in Ireland we have been extraordinarily slow in recognizing that Army people have genuine grievances and should have representation in voicing and trying to remedy these grievances....

We are generous with words. When the Army comes through some hazardous operation in the Lebanon or goes into action against our home-grown terrorists

we lavish praise on it. But men with families cannot live on praise alone. When they see their opportunities are limited and their financial horizon clouded they leave the Army - the country's loss, and a totally unnecessary one. Government and Opposition should join together in ensuring that our small Army should at least be a content one.³⁴

In these circumstances the Defence Forces' issue became a matter of public debate.

Although it depends on one's point of view, it is probably fair to say that the press, while supporting the Defence Forces' demands took an otherwise objective stance in the debate in that it reported and recorded all the interested parties' points of view. There was however, at least one national daily newspaper which seemed to profile the plight of the soldier above all else. The effect of this was to give the soldiers and their wives and families a voice at the national level on a continuous basis. Such headlines and reporting (extracts follow), brought an emotional dimension to the debate, continued to focus the soldier's attention on his plight, and applied continuous pressure on the other principals involved (i.e. the Minister for Defence, the Government and the military authorities.)

ISN'T IT TIME MICK [Minister for Defence] GOT HIS MARCHING ORDERS? Swashbuckling is not Michael Noonan's strongest suit. If the Minister of Defence walked into most Irish pubs the customers would probably think he was an insurance salesman who had lost his way. And, while anonymity can be a useful asset, it is not a quality required for leading a hard-pressed modern army.

With the charisma of a small town draper, he wears the red badge of courage on his lapel-a Pioneer

Pin. He owes his government career to the patronage of Charlie Haughey who he has followed faithfully since he assumed the Fianna Fail party leadership in 1979.³⁵

NOW THE NAVY BEG *THE STAR* THE PAPER THAT FIGHTS FOR OUR ARMY BALE US OUT TOO!³⁶

ARMY WIVES GO ON THE WARPATH. Army wives will be on the march in Ireland shortly to protest over their men's paltry pay. They are to lobby TDs [members of parliament] for better conditions following *The Star's* revelations over cash.

And disgruntled wives who have formed the National Army Spouses Association meet in Dundalk tonight to form a plan of action.³⁷

PAY ROW SOLDIERS ISSUE A WARNING TO GARDAI: HANDS OFF OUR WOMEN. Furious Army officers delivered a harsh warning to the Gardai: 'Don't dare touch our women.' A senior Army officer warned that the country's soldiers would not stand idly by if Gardai moved in on their wives when they picket the Dail over scandalously low pay.

In an ominous threat, delivered exclusively through *The Star*, he said Ireland was on the brink of anarchy as the crisis facing the Army entered a new, more deadly, dimension.³⁸

In the overall context, all sides availed of the press to highlight their particular message as the occasion arose. We have already seen how the Chief of Staff did this. Through articles and reports, and press headlines (extracts follow), the views of the Minister for Defence, the Government and opposition politicians were frequently contributed to the on-going debate on the Defence Forces' issue.

CRISIS IN THE ARMY 'MYTH' -- NOONAN [Minister for Defence]. The growing morale crisis in the Army was dismissed yesterday as a 'total myth' by the Minister for Defence Michael Noonan, who said he would be the first to bring it to the attention of

the Government if it existed. And he declared the criticism levelled upon him in recent weeks was most unjustified, unwarranted and unfair.³⁹

ARMY PAY: GOVERNMENT STAYS TOUGH. The Government is determined to hold its tough line on Army pay - despite the decision to include two Defence Force representatives on the special review committee, it emerged last night.

This committee has now been expanded and reconstituted into a Grievance Board, but the move does not represent a softening of the Government's approach on the controversial pay issue, senior Cabinet sources warned last night.⁴⁰

NOONAN SHOULD BE SACKED SAYS DUKES [Leader of the main opposition party in Dail Eireann]. Defence Minister Michael Noonan faced mounting pressure over the Army pay controversy yesterday, including calls for his sacking....

Mr Dukes said yesterday that it 'mightn't be a bad idea if the Minister was sacked'. Speaking on the RTE Radio, he stated: 'It is a very serious thing to find that the Minister, who is in political charge of running a major part of the security forces, appears to be so totally ignorant of what is actually happening.'

Mr Dukes said Army pay had fallen behind others who had benefited from special pay increases over the years, and the recent Government review of Army pay was a cruel deception.⁴¹

Summary

The first signs of frustration and dissatisfaction in the Defence Forces appeared when the national press reported that many soldiers and their families had to avail themselves of Family Income Supplement. Soldiers and their wives quickly confirmed this situation in letters to the editors of the national press. Soon after the press learned of the Defence Forces situation, the Chaplains to the Forces

advised the Chief of Staff of the grave injustice being perpetrated on soldiers. In addition, they exhorted that the situation be made known to those who could bring influence to bear.

Within two months the Government established the Inter-Departmental Committee to report on the soldier's pay and allowances. This Committee did not have the confidence of the majority of Defence Forces' personnel or their families from the beginning. As the Committee set to work so too did soldiers' families, particularly their wives, who organised NASA to lobby for acceptable pay and conditions.

The Inter-Departmental Committee confirmed most peoples' pessimistic views of it in the manner and recommendations of its report. Not alone did it shun a vital opportunity to redress a widely accepted injustice in the Defence Forces, it compounded and deepened the sense of injustice felt within the forces. Consequent to the report, there followed a most disturbed period in the Defence Forces. It was a time of rumour and counter-rumour, a time when basic military values were threatened but above all it was a time that demanded effective leadership. This did not come from the Minister for Defence who denied that any problem existed and it scarcely came from the General Staff, who asked for patience in resolving the problem, but were seen to be ineffective in achieving anything.

It was NASA who seized the initiative, as it began to flourish and get widespread support. Ultimately its

initiative paid off in a remarkable performance in a national General Election. The noncommissioned ranks, seeing the success of NASA, then set about organising their own association immediately after the General Election.

To all of this the Government reacted by appointing a new Minister for Defence, by setting up an independent commission to investigate the Defence Forces issue and by accepting a representative structure within the Defence Forces. The General Staff were then caught between the Government smarting from a ballot box lesson and the noncommissioned ranks, who had seized the initiative, and were in the process of organising a representative structure. The Government and the Minister for Defence, intent on correcting the Defence Force's problem, seemed almost to ignore them [General Staff]. Eventually the commissioned officer body received their own independent representative association with little or no General Staff input.

The Chapter ended with a look at the influence of the media in the whole process. Its influence was considerable, from initially bringing the situation to public attention, through supporting the Defence Forces' demands and in presenting all the principals' points of view. Perhaps one of its most significant contributions was to give a voice to the soldier, who ordinarily under military law would not have had such a vital facility.

Endnotes

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Chapter 5

Analysis and Conclusions

Introduction

In this Chapter I will analyse, and interpret the facts and evidence presented in the previous Chapters. I will then draw conclusions as to the factors that underlie the establishment of representative associations for members of the Irish Defence Forces. Finally I will make recommendations for future study in this subject area. My analysis will centre in turn on each of the principals/ parties involved in this Defence Forces' issue to identify and analyse the inter-relationships of these principals and to interpret their interactive responses.

I suggest that the principals involved are the Defence Forces' personnel, the military authorities, and the Government. These three parties would normally be considered as the most usual and integral parts of a military organisation in a modern democracy and as such have been examined in Chapters Two and Three. In this case as evidenced in Chapter Four, NASA and the media, particularly the printed media, emerged as important parties to the issue and are consequently included in my analysis.

Defence Forces' Personnel

The Defence Forces' personnel will be my main focus because it was their perception of pay and conditions of service that caused initial expression of unrest. Then as the military authorities and the Government failed to adequately address this unrest, the military personnel demanded and eventually got the type of representative structure they wanted.

The Defence Forces of the 1980s was a very different force to what had preceded it at any time since its foundation in 1924. The effects of internal security operations at home, UN operations abroad and the impact of technology in general had done much to fashion the different nature of the Force. The soldiers who comprised this force were also different in many ways from those who had preceded them. They were better educated, possessed a greater range of skills, and carried out a greater variety of duties than before. Consequently their expectation level in terms of pay and conditions of service was also higher.

The existing pay and conditions of service did not meet these expectations. In reality, not only did pay and conditions of service fall short of what the soldier perceived he was worth, but they had also deteriorated over the period from the mid 1970s. The soldier perceived welfare support to be inadequate both for himself and his family, who now had to cope with new stresses induced by

high incidence of duty due to Aid to the Civil Power operations and long family separations due to duty on UN missions. Many other conditions of service were also perceived to have eroded, such as married and single accommodation, family medical care and education and fitness facilities. The unfulfilled expectations of the Irish soldier were therefore the prime cause of the dissatisfaction that was ultimately to lead to the creation of representative structures in the Irish Defence Forces.

The frustration of Defence Forces' personnel with regard to their situation found initial expression in the national printed media. The Military Chaplains responded to this public expression of soldier unrest by writing a strongly worded letter to the Chief of Staff exhorting him to have their views conveyed to the Minister for Defence and the Government. These and probably other views were conveyed to Government because in Jun '88, approximately three months after the initial public indications of dissatisfaction in the Defence Forces, the Government set up an Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' Pay.

This move by Government did not satisfy Defence Forces' personnel. The composition of the Committee was unsatisfactory in that it had no Defence Forces' personnel on its membership. It had a politician, a member of the Dail as its chairman, but this political influence was seen negatively by the Irish soldier. Confidence in the Minister

for Defence and in politicians generally was not as high as it traditionally might have been because soldiers felt that the Minister should not have allowed their conditions fall into such a decline in the first place. Another reason for the soldiers' negative perspective was that political influence was seen as degrading the independence of the committee.

The historical determination of Defence Forces' pay was a recurring source of disquiet throughout the years; neither the terms of reference nor the membership of the Committee gave any positive indication that this problem would not recur. Probably one of the most unsatisfactory aspects pertaining to this Committee from the soldier's point of view was that he had no direct access to it in order to present his views. The Advisory Group set up by the Chief of Staff to make the Defence Forces Submission to the Committee was perceived as too remote from the vast majority of Defence Forces' personnel and overly influenced by the military top management.

Denied a voice at this level, Defence Forces' personnel continued to voice their dissatisfaction as individuals in the national press. The setting up of the National Army Spouses Association in Aug '88 gave the Irish soldier a further more powerful means to express his growing dissatisfaction. Such dissatisfaction and unrest would

reach its peak in the aftermath of the Inter-Departmental Committee report.

The report of the Inter-Departmental Committee in Dec '89 not only confirmed the soldiers' initial suspicions and doubts, but it grievously exacerbated an already deteriorating situation. Defence Forces' personnel perceived the report to be deceitful and dishonest in its findings. As a result their trust in Government and their already diminished belief that the military authorities could meet their needs was almost totally destroyed. This report from an Irish soldier's point of view proved conclusively that he was not being listened to or being taken seriously. Furthermore he concluded that he had to fight his own cause and, in the circumstances was prepared to do so in radical terms if necessary; hence the first serious calls for "unions" in the Irish Defence Forces.

During the first half of 1989 a stalemate existed in which the Government became totally intransigent and the military authorities seemingly could make no impact on either the Government or Defence Forces personnel in order to mollify the situation. The initiative in these circumstances passed to NASA which in reality meant that Defence Forces' personnel also shared the initiative. The General Election of Jun '89 finally broke the deadlock as NASA seriously damaged and embarrassed the Government at the ballot box.

NASA's success since its foundation and particularly in the General Election was a clear indication to Defence Forces' personnel as to what they should now do. Consequently we see the setting up of an unofficial representative body by noncommissioned personnel within two weeks of the election.

Another fall-out from the election that was important to Defence Forces' members was the appointment of a new Minister for Defence, which brought an experienced and likeable personality to the scene. The Minister moved quickly and set up the Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces. The membership and terms of reference of this Commission were far more amenable to the soldier than those of the earlier Inter-Departmental Committee. It was an independent Commission offering full access for all ranks and while it did not have serving military personnel amongst its membership it did contain two retired Defence Forces' members.

None of this however would alter the course that was already being pursued with respect to military representation. Knowing that the initiative was theirs, Defence Forces' personnel, through the focus of the Permanent Defence Forces Other Ranks Representative Association (PDFORRA), set about getting an official representative structure within the Defence Forces. At the

very least they saw themselves as party to the consultation process that would set up such a structure.

Official (i.e. Government) recognition of the principle of having a representative structure was conceded in Nov '89. But PDFORRA remained unrecognized and outside the forum for consultation. However, this did not dilute its resolve. It claimed legitimacy under Article 40 section 6, subsection 1(iii) of the Irish Constitution. It further boosted its claim for legitimacy by its association with the European Organisation of Military Associations (EUROMIL). Eventually PDFORRA's persistence and initiative paid off by getting full consultation privileges with the Minister for Defence in setting up the structure for representation in the Irish Defence Forces.

Clearly then the noncommissioned members of the Defence Forces through PDFORRA, led the field to gain an officially acknowledged representative structure in the Defence Forces. The commissioned officers lagged behind in the process and seemed to be happy to take the lead from PDFORRA. Following closely in the path of PDFORRA, their organisation, the Representative Association of Commissioned Officers (RACO), was officially recognized in May '90.

The Military Authorities

There is no indication that the Military authorities were aware of the extent of the frustration brewing in the

Defence Forces at the time soldiers' letters began to appear in the national press. Having considered the Chaplains' letter, the military authorities then moved positively and were an obvious influence in the Government setting up the Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' pay, allowances and conditions.

The Chief of Staff then set up the Advisory Group to present the Defence Forces' case to the Committee. At this time the military authorities did not in my opinion understand the nature and depth of the soldier's feelings about his plight because with this Advisory Group they (the military authorities) missed an opportunity to give the soldier an effective forum, other than the national press, in which he could express his views and make himself heard. Nor was the potential capability of the Inter-Departmental Committee "sold" to the soldier who had little or no confidence in it from the outset.

There is no doubt however that the military authorities recognized that the work and findings of the Inter-Departmental Committee would have a vital impact on the future evolution of the Defence Forces. In this regard we noted that the Advisory Group asked the Committee on several occasions to tackle the totality of the problem. The Advisory Group eventually made a formal statement to the Committee in a final effort to have all aspects of the problem resolved.

The formation of NASA in Aug '88 and the continued use of the media by military personnel must surely have indicated to the military authorities that the traditional use of chain of command was not effective in communicating the soldier's needs or in assuring him that his welfare would be looked after. Perhaps this was the time (Autumn '88) for the military authorities to act and take some radical initiatives in order to regain the full confidence of Defence Forces' personnel in the belief that they (soldiers) would best be represented by their General Staff.

There were examples of structures in many countries close to Ireland illustrating how soldiers could be represented. These structures ranged from outright "Trade Unions" as in the Netherlands or Sweden to alternative non-union type arrangements as in the UK and the USA. In addition other countries such as USA, Belgium, and France had experienced broadly similar problems in their military in the past. I submit that an opportunity to learn from others' experiences, to develop a policy on representation and by other proactive measures regain the initiative in representing Defence Forces' personnel was missed by the military authorities at this point.

The report of the Inter-Departmental Committee was nothing short of disastrous from a military authorities' point of view. The members of the Defence Forces became totally convinced that the General Staff were powerless in

taking care of their welfare. There is little doubt that the Government had created a most difficult and unenviable situation for the military authorities. The months that followed were rife with rumours that the Minister and the Chief of Staff were hardly on speaking terms. Among other rumours that abounded were the threatened resignations of some of the General Staff.

It could be argued that such resignations were now a real alternative. Notwithstanding this option, it is my view, as in the case of not winning back the initiative in Autumn 1988, that had there been a policy or position paper prepared on manpower management and representation in the military forces, the General Staff would have had alternatives to offer the Minister. This would surely have challenged his chosen stance of denying the existence of the problem and in the process the standing of the military authorities could have been recovered and enhanced.

After the General Election the military authorities were faced with a Government and a new Minister for Defence intent on solving the Defence Forces' problem quickly and, one is tempted to suggest, at any cost. The Commission on Remuneration and Conditions of Service in the Defence Forces was established by the new Minister and an excellent submission organisation (The Submission Group) instituted by the General Staff. The findings of this Submission Group

explain, in my view, much about the position of the military authorities in the whole affair to this point.

There was no manpower management system within the Defence Forces that might have supplied even some of the information that the Submission Group provided. The fact that it took many people, representative of all the ranks within the Defence Forces, almost four months to clearly articulate the causes of the unrest indicates the disadvantage that the General Staff were under. Without comprehensive analysis, comparisons and correlations as produced by the Submission Group, it may have been all too easy to underestimate the nature, expectations, needs and wants of the Irish Defence Forces of the late 1980s. I submit that because of the lack of such a comprehensive picture, the military authorities underestimated both the needs and the resolve of Defence Forces' personnel. In these circumstances they lacked the resolve and confidence to take a stronger line with the Government such as the French military authorities did with their Government in 1974.

As the Commission set to work, the focus turned to representation in the Defence Forces and the form it would take. The military authorities obviously wanted a structure over which they had control. PDFORRA, organised soon after the General Election, wanted an independent organisation controlled by its members.

At the same time as the Commission was set up, the Minister instructed the Chief of Staff to examine European representative structures with a view to developments in the Irish Defence Forces. For the third time in a year the lack of a policy or even research on representation was a serious problem for the military authorities. It would have greatly benefited the General Staff if they had produced the study required by the Minister when requested instead of having to constitute a board and commence research from scratch, all of which guaranteed the retention of the initiative by PDFORRA who had completed their own research and were putting an organisation into place. Furthermore, PDFORRA essentially ignored the Chief of Staff's request that no further action be taken until the report of his investigation in Europe was finalised.

When directly challenged by PDFORRA, (e.g. in ignoring pleas for no further action or in its General Secretary's press conference after the EUROMIL conference in Feb '90) the military authorities did not take action. Again the matter of not listening to, or consulting with Defence Forces' personnel rebounded on the military authorities. The Minister for Defence bypassed the General Staff, negotiated directly with PDFORRA, and conceded its terms on the type of representative structure it wanted. Finally, the Minister intervened on the side of the commissioned officers when the type of organisation they

foresaw was seemingly not to the liking of the General Staff. Consequently, due to political expediency and their own unpreparedness, the military authorities were denied any real input into the type of representative structure the Defence Forces would have.

The military authorities could have compromised and offered consultations with PDFORRA or other members of the Defence Forces on the type of representative organisation that might be suitable to all concerned. Perhaps the fact that the General Staff again choose not to listen directly to the members of the Defence Forces is indicative of their failure to realize that some aspects pertaining to relationships in the Irish Defence Forces had by now changed profoundly. No longer would soldiers respond to or necessarily accept what senior officers alone saw as appropriate for them in terms of their pay, conditions of service, welfare and even personal dignity in the service of their country.

The Government

The Government, the ultimate authority over the Defence Forces, allowed conditions in the Defence Forces to deteriorate to the point that saw soldiers and their families tell of their deprived circumstances in the national press. The Government finally accepted that problems existed in the Defence Forces when it instituted

the Inter-Departmental Committee on Defence Forces' pay, allowances and conditions. It is impossible to conceive that the Minister for Defence and his Government colleagues were not aware that the very composition of the Committee was not readily accepted in Defence Forces' circles. We have already noted that the General Staff, through the Advisory Committee, stressed the importance of dealing with the Defence Forces' matter in its entirety. Yet, the nature of the findings of the Committee indicates that they had either seriously underestimated the extent and nature of the Defence Forces' problem or had taken the Forces for granted. Either way the Government gave the soldier every reason to believe that the traditional loyalty and sense of duty hitherto shown by the Defence Forces was no longer appreciated.

With this report the Government missed a vital opportunity to solve the Defence Forces' problem and re-establish the sense of trust and the traditional relationship that was the hallmark of both parties' dealings with each other since the foundation of the State. Rather than improve matters, the Inter-Departmental report only exacerbated the situation by compromising the military authorities and confirming the soldiers' own perceptions that their contribution to their country was not appreciated.

It is difficult to rationalise the utter intransigence of the Minister for Defence in the months following the Inter-Departmental Committee's report. The evidence available indicates that it was a combination of three possible factors. Firstly, the feelings of the Defence Forces' members and the nature and depth of their needs continued to be seriously underestimated. Secondly, the Government believed that the Defence Forces could be forced, over time, to accept their lot and get on with it. Finally, the Government, who had no experience with nor policy for military manpower management or military unions, had run out of ideas on what the next step should be, and consequently opted to deny that the problem existed at all. As the Minister continued to deny that any problem whatsoever existed in the Defence Forces he gave away the initiative and moral high ground to NASA.

The Government suffered an unexpected setback because of NASA's participation in the General Election of Jun '89. Following this election a new Minister was appointed and the Government's attitude to the Defence Forces' issue changed dramatically. It soon became clear that votes lost to NASA would be recovered at almost any cost. Such a turn of attitude was bound to have implications for others involved in the issue. The General Staff found itself being bypassed and being brought almost to public admonishment as the Government demonstrated its

new found approach. PDFORRA skilfully manipulated this new Government attitude, gauging that it could risk ignoring the pleas of the General Staff by continuing to organise and push its own program and eventually set its own terms for the structure of representative organisations in the Defence Forces.

These varying Government actions and responses were particularly injurious to the military authorities. As an arm of Government, the military will always be vulnerable to political expediency. From their point of view it is important to acknowledge this fact and be as well prepared as possible for every political eventuality.

National Army Spouses Association

Formed in Aug '88 by the wives of noncommissioned personnel, NASA set out to highlight the plight of their husbands and bring pressure to bear on those who could change what they saw as a disgraceful situation. From the outset it was widely accepted and quickly gained the support of Defence Forces' personnel.

There is little doubt that NASA made a critical contribution to the issue of representation in the Irish Defence Forces. It was, in the broadest terms, the first organisation to represent Irish soldiers in terms of their pay and conditions of service. By its performance, it convinced the soldier that representation was his best

alternative. NASA could speak openly to the media, lobby politicians, and organise protest demonstrations and marches which under Defence Forces' Regulations soldiers could not. NASA also brought a new emotional/moral dimension to the issue where the public witnessed women and their children on the street protesting for what amounted to a decent standard of living. I would suggest that politicians were particularly susceptible to this emotional/moral dimension. Furthermore I would hold that the military authorities, familiar only to an almost totally male environment, did not know how to respond to NASA.

After the Inter-Departmental Committee published its report, NASA took and held the initiative by becoming active in seeking to pressure and embarrass the Government through a policy of protest marches, pickets and high media profile. However the most profound effect NASA had on the issue was through its impact at the polls in the General Election of Jun '89.

It is not a coincidence that immediately after NASA's success at the polls we witnessed the formation of PDFORRA albeit in an unofficial capacity. NASA had shown how effective it was as a quasi-representative body. It pointed the way for Defence Forces' personnel and removed whatever doubts they may have had in taking the unique step to organise the Irish Defence Forces first "union". Critically

too, the initiative and momentum gathered by NASA was passed on to and greatly benefited PDFORRA in its early stages.

The Media

The printed media in particular had a remarkable impact on this Defence Forces' issue. It was often the main medium of communications between the principals involved, in that the views of Government, the military authorities, NASA and the Defence Forces' personnel were continuously carried in the national press.

The national press also became the initial means whereby soldiers gave expression to their concerns about the conditions of service. Thus the printed media became a vital factor in the issue. It gave the soldier and his family a voice at a level that was difficult to ignore. Unauthorised comment to the media by Defence Forces' personnel is prohibited by Defence Forces' Regulations, but soldiers got around this restriction by requesting their names to be withheld in letters to the editors of Irish newspapers. The continued use of "letters to the editor" soon acted as a focus for the feelings of soldiers, generally articulating what most felt but perhaps were not able to clearly express.

These letters, soon followed by articles from reputable journalists and editorial comment, were also vital in giving credibility to the soldiers' case at the national

level. One particular national newspaper championed the cause of the Irish soldier and his family continually by supporting and profiling NASA and frequently attacking the Minister for Defence and the Government. This newspaper played a critical part in continuing to focus the soldier on his plight and in sustaining his resolve throughout the period of the debate.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

In answer to my thesis question as to what factors underlie the establishment of representative associations for members of the Irish Defence Forces the following factors are, I believe, the most critical.

1. The primary factor was that the Government allowed pay and conditions of service in the Defence Forces to decline below what members felt was a satisfactory standard.
2. Defence Forces' personnel found expression for their cause in the media, particularly the national press and in the process solidified the credibility of their cause to themselves and at a national level. The media was the vital factor in profiling the soldiers' plight at a level that could not be ignored.
3. The Government passed up a critical opportunity to correct this decline and solve the problem and in the process seriously exacerbated the situation.

4. The lack of a prior policy or study on the nature and issues in manpower management and military representation severely restricted the military authorities in the assistance and advice they could offer the Government. Coupled with this lack of policy was the inability of the military authorities to recognize the full nature of the soldier's perception of his neglected state. Consequently the military authorities failed to demonstrate to Defence Forces members that they could take care of the soldier's welfare.

5. The performance of NASA in the General Election of Jun '89 profoundly changed the attitude of the incoming Government toward the Defence Forces' issue. This Government, with a new Minister for Defence, was intent on solving the Defence Forces' issue at almost any cost.

6. In the wake of NASA's success PDFORRA was formed. It assumed the initiative created by NASA and exploited the Government's intent on solving the Defence Forces' issue. It further exploited the fact that neither the Government nor the military authorities had developed a policy on military representation/unionism. Consequently PDFORRA had many of its terms accepted as the basis for the type of representative structure to be enshrined in Defence Forces' Regulations.

7. PDFORRA's success, coupled with the Government's new found intent, ensured a similar independent structure for RACO, the representative body for commissioned officers.

While the above points may sum up the factors that brought about "unionism" in the Irish military forces it is also important to reasonably consider possible implications for the future.

There will no doubt be new and searching issues to be confronted in future in the Irish Defence Forces. While I concede that it would be pure speculation to try and identify what these issues might be, I suggest that the role of females in the Irish Defence Forces or a changed attitude to neutrality are examples of such issues.

To effectively deal with these issues, one of the first focuses for the military authorities must be to critically examine how best they can sustain an effective leadership role in the debate. On the basis of the representative question examined here, the General Staff should continuously be mindful of change and developments in the Irish Defence Forces, in foreign military forces, and in society in general. Such awareness will help focus on the issues that may become critical and thereby facilitate the preparation of a policy on the most likely matters to be confronted.

The gaining and retention of the initiative proved critical for Defence Forces' members in getting the type of representative structure they sought. The military authorities should henceforth be mindful that the traditional exercise of military command alone may not gain or maintain the initiative for them.

This study also indicates that Government will engage in politically expedient actions that may be neither consistent nor sensitive to other parties. The military authorities, as servants of their political masters are particularly vulnerable in this regard but nevertheless must live with such a reality. Any future Defence Forces' issue may evoke similar inconsistent political attitudes. It behoves the military authorities to reflect on what happened here so that they may not find themselves so hindered and compromised in future.

This evolution in the Defence Forces has, in my opinion, significantly changed the relationship between superiors and subordinates. Subordinates may no longer accept what their seniors see as appropriate for them in terms of conditions of service, welfare, and other social parameters. Commissioned officers particularly should pay close attention to this fact and how it may impinge on their role as leaders.

The advent of representative associations indicates that commissioned officers, in particular, should reassess their leadership role in order to become more effective

military leaders. Commissioned officers must face the challenge to their leadership role that PDFORRA now poses in representing noncommissioned personnel. Likewise, the military authorities must face the leadership challenge that both RACO and PDFORRA pose for them in representing all military ranks below that of general officer. For the commissioned ranks generally, this whole matter of representation has been a sobering experience in that the noncommissioned ranks lead the way and retained the initiative in achieving representation in the Irish Defence Forces. The implication of this fact must not be lost sight of as this new leadership challenge is confronted.

Circumstances are continually evolving, even in the military which is often regarded as one of the most conservative of institutions. Therefore what might be unthinkable today may be tomorrow's reality. Pardon me if I return to the very first paragraph of this thesis and my vivid recollection of the total irrelevance that my colleagues and I attributed to the issue of military representation in 1987. In reflecting on this I see a clear lesson for military authorities/leaders in that they must observe, keep an open mind, and at least maintain some focus upon developments in the military world to ensure that they are well placed to influence what eventually may become critical issues within the Irish Defence Forces.

Finally, manpower is the most critical resource in any nations' military force. It is a resource that must be

properly managed under clearly defined policies using up-to-date methods and technology. The Irish Defence Forces have learned this lesson in what many would consider as very painful circumstances. As the Irish Defence Forces begin to complete an extensive overhaul of its personnel management system I suggest that it may not have been alone in neglecting the management of its greatest resource, perhaps there is a lesson here for you, the reader, too.

Future Research

This thesis has only shown how representation developed in the Irish Defence Forces. It does not attempt to examine the procedure and negotiations involved in integrating representative structures within Defence Forces' Regulations. Neither does it make any attempt to investigate the effects of representation on the Irish Defence Forces. Has representation fulfilled the needs of those who demanded it? How have those to whom it was an anathema dealt with the situation? What has been its impact on military leadership? I think it appropriate that after a suitable interval, possibly three or four years from now, these and many other questions should be researched so that a more complete story of military representation in the Irish Defence Forces is told and its full impact be understood.

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