



## CAVALRY CLUB NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2024

### **Message from the President** Col. Anthony Bracken (Retd.)

Welcome one and all to the first Cavalry Club Newsletter of 2024. May I first thank all contributors, and those who were involved in the final editing and formatting of the product. I hope and trust that you will find it informative, and perhaps entice you to consider contributing to the next edition!

### **Dates for the Calendar:**

**Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> July – The Cavalry School, DFTC**

**Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> July – The Elders Lunch, Cathal Brugha Barracks**

**Saturday 07<sup>th</sup> July – Cavalry Day, DFTC**

**Saturday 09<sup>th</sup> November 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner, Hotel Minella, Clonmel**

### **Monday 22 July 2024**

#### **A Briefing and Visit to the Cavalry School, courtesy of the School Commandant & Staff.**

The Cavalry School has kindly agreed to host a briefing for Club Members at 1000hrs on 22 July. Assembling at the former Plunkett Officers Mess Anteroom, a cup of cha may be available, to be followed by the briefing and school tour commencing at 1030hrs. Unlike when many of us served in the Corps, the School now occupies the central position in the Corps. It effectively combines the tasks normally associated with an academic military institution, and in addition the onerous responsibility previously carried by a full Directorate. I suspect that running career courses for officers and NCOs is the lighter portion of the school's current activities.

Now is your chance to gain an insight into where the Corps sits in 2024, and perhaps also find an avenue to assist and advocate for its continued growth and prosperity.

The Club will also invite those newly commissioned Cavalry officers of the current year and 2023 to attend this event.

### Thursday 25 July 2024

#### **The Elder's Lunch - Cathal Brugha Barracks Officers Mess**

By kind permission of GOC 2 Bde and the Officer Commanding the Mess, the Club will cordially invite its elders to lunch at 1330hrs on 25 July.

Separate invitations to be sent. **RSVP to Hon Sec by 11 July, please.**

### 07 September 2024

#### **Cavalry Day - Plunkett Barracks Memorial Garden**

The committee exhorts its membership to make a special attempt to attend this auspicious day in the annual calendar. As 2024 marks the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Cavalry Club, we appeal even further to you to come and meet your comrades, and to fondly remember those who have passed on to their eternal reward. The essence of the Club's raison-d'être will be greatly served if you make the effort to meet your Corps and Club comrades on this special day. We look forward greatly to seeing as many members as possible attend.

### 09 November 2024

#### **Cavalry Club 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Dinner at the Hotel Minella, Clonmel, Co Tipperary.**

In this important year for the Club, it is proposed to hold the Annual Dinner at the Hotel Minella, Clonmel. By way of connecting with the inaugural social activities of the Club, we are suggesting that this year's 'main event' revert to being held outside the barrack walls. There are many compelling reasons to so do, and we will attempt to convince you, the membership, of the merits for such a move. The invitation to the Gala Dinner will be sent separately to Club Members by the middle of July, with an RSVP date of 12 August.



## **Club Subscriptions**

Anecdotally and de-facto, we are aware that many Club Members wish to regularise / update their current status vis-à-vis paying their annual subs. Please find below the IBAN and BIC required to do so. **25 Euro** is the required stipend, and I kindly request that all members who need to update, do so as a matter of importance. Beginning the next eighty years on the right note, as it were. Continued appreciation to our Hon Treasurer, Lt Col Gerry Brennan (Retd), who is available at [gerrybrennan2003@yahoo.ie](mailto:gerrybrennan2003@yahoo.ie) should members wish to clarify any matters regarding their current subscriptions. Many thanks to you all in advance.

BIC: BOFIE2D

IBAN: IE43BOFI90001717065214

## **Club Memorabilia – A Plea**

Sincere thanks to Colonel Dick Heaslip (Retd) who both researched and compiled the piece on our memorabilia for this Newsletter. A past president of the Club, Dick is a fount of knowledge on matters Corps and Club and had many encounters on the subject with the ‘Fathers’ of the Corps during his time in office and beyond. I can promise that future newsletters will contain further inputs from REM on these important heirlooms.

I would like to avail of this opportunity to ask all Club members who may have items of Corps or Club memorabilia / interest in their possession to consider availing of the opportunity to deposit them with the Cavalry School. The histories of the Corps and Club are intertwined since the foundation of the Club in 1944, and many items of significant historical value to both may have been rescued by diligent souls during the closure of Cavalry Barracks, the adjustment and repurposing of infrastructure, the dis-establishment of Cavalry Units and other seismic events that have befallen the Corps in the last forty years or so. May I kindly request that if you are among this cohort, to have a check in the attic or garage and see if you are in a position to add to the significant collection that is currently being gathered, recorded and retained in the Cavalry Scholl by RSM Scanlon. You will be in a position to observe his great work on our shared history should you visit the School on the 22 July or at any other time you may choose.

This request includes any copies of documentation / photographs that you have from your own career that you now feel may have a broader significance than you had first thought.

Any Club Member who wishes to or is in a position to contribute to our historical collection, thereby preserving them for future generations of the Corps, can make contact with me personally, or simply send whatever he/she may have to: The RSM, Cavalry School, Plunkett Barracks, Defence Forces Training Centre, Curragh.

## **In Memoriam.**

### A Tribute to Lt Col Ken Kelly (RIP)



The Club lost one of its most stalwart members and supporters, Lt Col Ken Kelly (Retd), on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024. It was fitting that on that very day members of the club gathered at the Royal Curragh Golf Club for the annual outing. It was a sad and poignant start to the day, but there were also many happy memories shared of Ken and his contribution to the Corps and Club alike. A minute's silence was observed at the presentation of prizes. A past President of the Club, Ken seldom missed any significant event and was an ever-present at Cavalry Day, the Elder's lunch and the Annual Dinner – the last event he attended was the Annual Dinner in November 2023 at Collins Barracks, Cork, and we have some fine photos of him at the event below.

He will be fondly remembered by his comrades throughout the Corps and the Club.

Ar dheis De go raibh a anam dilis.



### **Biography**

O.8038 Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth T. Kelly (Retd) was born on 27 June 1943, and he joined the Defence Forces as a Cadet with 36 Cadet Class on 12 December 1961. He was a member of the Special Guard of Honour provided by the class for President John Fitzgerald Kennedy at Arbour Hill on 28 June 1963.

He was commissioned on 15 July 1963 and he was appointed as a Tank Troop Commander, 1 Tank Squadron at Plunkett Barracks, Curragh Training Camp. He later served with Depot Cavalry, in the Office of the Director of Cavalry, as an instructor in the Infantry School, in the Cavalry School and in the Command and Staff School; he was Brigade Adjutant and later Intelligence Officer at HQ 6 Brigade, he was School Commandant at the Military Police School, Squadron Commander and Camp Adjutant at Air Corps Administration Wing, Squadron Commander 1 Cavalry Squadron, on promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, he served as Officer-in-Charge Intelligence Staff at Air Corps HQ, Commandant of the Cavalry School and in Combat Support Section at Defence Forces HQ.

### **Overseas Service**

He served as a peacekeeper in the Congo (ONUC), Cyprus (UNFICYP), in Lebanon (UNIFIL), in the Middle East (UNTSO), in Central America (ONUCA), with the European Community Monitor Mission (Yugoslavia) (ECMMY) and in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the Stabilisation Force (SFOR). Three months after commissioning in 1963, he deployed to the Congo with 2 Infantry Group in October 1963 until May 1964.

He served on two tours of duty with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus UNFICYP, with the Armoured Car Group, 8 Infantry Group from March to September 1967 and with the Armoured Car Group, 13 Infantry Group from September 1969 to April 1970. He deployed with the first unit to serve with UNIFIL as Recce Group Commander, 43 Infantry Battalion from June to December 1978, later he was Senior Liaison Officer at UNIFIL HQ from October 1998 to November 1999, he completed a two-year tour as an unarmed military observer in the Middle East from January 1986 to January 1988, he served with the United Nations Observer Group in Central America from December 1990 to April 1991. He completed his considerable overseas service as the Irish Contingent Commander with the Stabilisation Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Bosnia and Herzegovina from July 2000 to January 2001.

*Ken's short bio was kindly put together by Col George Kerton (Retd).*



## Cavalry Club Annual Dinner 2023

Some photos from the **Cavalry Club Annual Dinner** held in Collins Barracks Cork 4<sup>th</sup> November 2023, courtesy of Sean O’Keeffe.



Comdt (Retd) John Power, Comdt (Retd) Tony Marshall, Lt Gen (Retd) Sean McCann, Cavalry Club President 2023 Col (Retd) Sean O’Keeffe, Lt Col (Retd) Ken Kelly (RIP)



GOC 1 Bde, Brig Gen Brian Cleary, Lt Col (Retd) Ken Kelly (RIP), Lt (Retd) Patrick Corr



Col (Retd) Sean O'Keeffe, Col Colm O'Luasa, Brig Gen Cleary, Comdt Ciaran Dillon



A happy gathering of Cavalry Officers!



## **AGM 2023**

The Annual General Meeting 2023 took place in the Anteroom of the former Plunkett Barracks Offices Mess on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The Outgoing President, Col Sean O’Keeffe (Retd), began by thanking all attendees and he particularly thanked the Cavalry Club Committee who served with him and provided wonderful support throughout the year. This was Sean’s second time to be honoured in the position of Club President, having previously held the role in 2000.

He reminded all that the Club was entering its 80th year and that it remains the oldest of all Associate Clubs of the Defence Forces. It was important to recall that the Club remains a vital and most important link between all Cavalry Officers, young and old, serving and retired. It fosters and encourages the unique esprit de corps and camaraderie only found within the Cavalry. Furthermore, he emphasised the importance of keeping in touch with all members of the Corps, and outlined the key asset of the Club Newsletter as a forum for ‘keeping the torch lit’, as well as the use of social media. Finally, Col O’Keeffe said that it was an honour and a privilege to hand over the reins to the incoming President, Col Anthony Bracken (Retd), and wished him well for the forthcoming 80<sup>th</sup> year of the Club.

## Cavalry Club Golf Outing at the Royal Curragh GC

8 May 2024

23 energetic souls took on the Curragh GC on the 8 May. A fine summer's day greeted all, and the golf was evenly matched by the hoots of meeting up once more with former comrades.

Several honoured guests attended this year, including members of the local Glengarry Club, a very welcome addition which we hope will be sustained into the future. The wonderful Cavalry Golf Cup is a great prize for participating Club Members and the niceties of reminiscence were quickly parked for the few hours it took to negotiate a testing track. Capt Kevin Byrne (Retd) took the spoils, turning in a very creditable 37 points, despite being pushed all the way by the usual suspects.

Club Members are encouraged to make a special effort to attend in 2025. Suggestions are welcome to Hon Secretary and the Club President in respect of this great event.

A special word of thanks to Sean McCann and Seamus Ryan for their continuous support in organising this event, and to Eamon Cullagh for his generous sponsorship of prizes. In the true spirit of the Club, no one went away empty-handed.

Many thanks also to the staff at the Royal Curragh GC for their hospitality and the excellent condition of the course.



**Above:** Hon President of the Cavalry Club, Col Anthony Bracken (Retd.) presenting Capt Kevin Byrne (Retd) with the winner's trophy

**Below:** 4 Cav Reunion – L-R Maurice McQuillan, Padraig McCarthy, Michael Murtagh, Kevin Byrne and Tony Bracken



**MEMORABILIA CAVALRY CORPS / CLUB  
PLUNKETT OFFICERS MESS DFTC CURRAGH<sup>1</sup>**

**Carpe Diem.** The Latin phrase “Carpe Diem” meaning “Seize the Moment”<sup>2</sup> was on a plaque which used to hang on a shot chain over the bar in Plunkett Officers Mess from about 1960 onwards. The sign was made by the blacksmith in Cavalry Workshops, Paddy Scullion and we are presently trying to establish its whereabouts. The phrase, apparently, was much quoted by The Dean (the late Brig Gen Kevin Noonan). A very gregarious individual Kevin Nunan, who had early service in both Depot Cavalry and the 1 Tank Sqn, attributed the phrase to his Latin teacher back in Kerry. Over time this phrase has been absorbed into Cavalry Corps and Cavalry Club lore as being indicative of a Cavalry Corps philosophy. It is often used as the final salutation in Corps and Club correspondence.

**Irish Shield.** This highly ornate large silver shield now hangs in the office of the Commandant of the Cavalry School. It was the trophy for an athletic / gymnastic completion organised in the 1920’s, 30’s & 40’s on all-Ireland basis, and was competed for by organised teams reflecting major athletic/ gymnastic clubs including those from the police and army i.e. RUC, DMP, GS & DF. Based on information provided by the late Art Magennis, it seems the trophy ended up in the care of the Cavalry Corps because the mainstay of the Army’s Athletic / Gymnastic Team of the day was drawn

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<sup>1</sup> Info provided by the late John Chadwick and the late Art Magennis.

<sup>2</sup> Written in copper letters about 2” x ½” was on a black timber cut in an arc and suspended from a short chain.

from the Cavalry units on the Curragh. In particular, the Corps had a famous gymnast, Sgt Cleary of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armd Sqn, and a famous boxer in Sgt Gallagher (also a Golden Gloves contender in USA)

**Cavalry Corps Crest, Plunkett Ante Room.** The carved marble Cavalry Corps Crest, which overhangs the fireplace in what was the Anteroom of Plunkett Barracks Officers Mess<sup>3</sup>, was presented to the Mess by Lt Jack Harrison who served in Plunkett Barracks during the Emergency. Lt Harrison was a member of a family of stone masons / monumental sculptors who were in business in Pearse Street Dublin. The marble crest was provided at no cost to the Officers Mess, and was in fact a presentation by the Harrison Family.

**Mountjoy Prison Break Commemorative Shield.** Currently located in the Cav School this plaque, made by Paddy Lynch commemorates the historic attempt to release / break-out the Blacksmith of Ballinalee (Sean Mac Eoin) from Mountjoy Prison during the War of Independence. In this action a captured British Army “Peerless” Armoured Car was used by an IRA party dressed in BA uniforms led by Emmet Dalton to enter Mountjoy Prison. The members of the party each are commemorated in the signed disks attached to the shield.

**Rolls Royce Royce Shield.** Hangs in the Anteroom. This magnificent piece was designed primarily to display the manufacturer’s badges and the names given to the thirteen (13) Rolls Royce Armoured Cars which, along with the seven (7) Peerless Armoured Cars and an unspecified number of Lancia Armoured trucks (not less than 64), were the first armoured vehicles to be used by the Cavalry Corps. The Shield was designed and fabricated by the late Coy Sgt Paddy Lynch, who drove one of these vehicles during the Civil War and subsequently served as Foreman, Cavalry Workshops from 1948-1972. He was also responsible for preserving the ‘Sliabh na mBan’, when all the remaining Rols Royce vehicles were sold in 1954.

**Katanga Cross. Bonze Cross.** Currently hanging in the corridor of Cav Sch.

**Rommels Map.** Currently hanging in the Anteroom. Was provided by Capt Sean Cleary.

**Cavalry Corps Table.** Currently located in the Anteroom. Has been known as the Armoured Sqns Table, Plunkett Officers Mess Table, Cavalry Corps Table / Commissioning Table. According to the late Art Magennis its original manifestation was the brain child of Major P.C. (Pakie) Byrne who instituted it for the Armoured Sqn Officers then resident in Plunkett Barracks in 1943.

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<sup>3</sup> Now called the Col A.T Lawlor Room after the first Director of Cavalry

Originally the Cavalry Corps included a wide range of varying units from Horse, Cyclist, Motor and Armoured Squadrons.

Major Byrne was of the view that the real Cavalry were the Armoured Squadrons! His idea was to have a special table to commemorate those who served in the Armoured Squadron<sup>4</sup>. The table was made in Cavalry Workshops by the Carpenter McNally. He was originally from NI and had come south to help build Tintown<sup>5</sup>. This concept was later expanded to include all officers who served in Plunkett Barracks and were members of Plunkett Officers Mess. Later it evolved as a “right of passage” for newly commissioned officers into the Cavalry Corps to put their plate on the table, either when they were posted to Plunkett or when they undertook their Cavalry Young Officers Course. Given that the table was given a variety of titles over the years, perhaps the time has come to finally settle on one. The original inscribing process was for the individual officer to inscribe his name on the oval nickel silver plates which were part of the spare parts and stores associated with the Rolls Royce Armoured Cars kit. The process was to coat the plate with a covering of heavy wax and then to inscribe [name in capitals, the year and the signature of the officer] on to the plate through the wax using a fine pointed metal inscribing tool / or bradawl. When this was completed, the plate was dipped in wax and then rinsed which had the effect of leaving the inscription. This process was done under the strict supervision of CS Paddy Lynch in Cavalry Workshops and the practice continued under his stewardship as Foreman Cavalry Workshops and subsequently that of his son until the late 1980’s when problems arose regarding the process, the supply of plates and the H&S issues in respect to the use of acid.

*Thank you to all contributors*

Issue Date: 09 JUL 24

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<sup>4</sup> Info provided by the late John Chadwick

<sup>5</sup> According to the late Pat Lynch, he was the nephew of Col McNally who was GOC Curragh. PL also states that the work to strengthen and add to the table was done by the same carpenter.