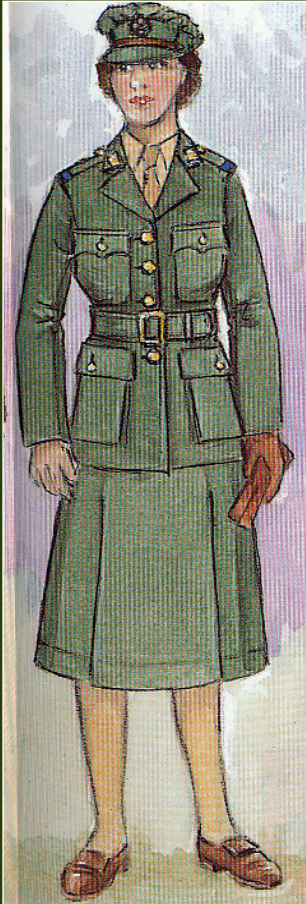




Óglaigh
na hÉireann
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND



NURSING THE FORCES

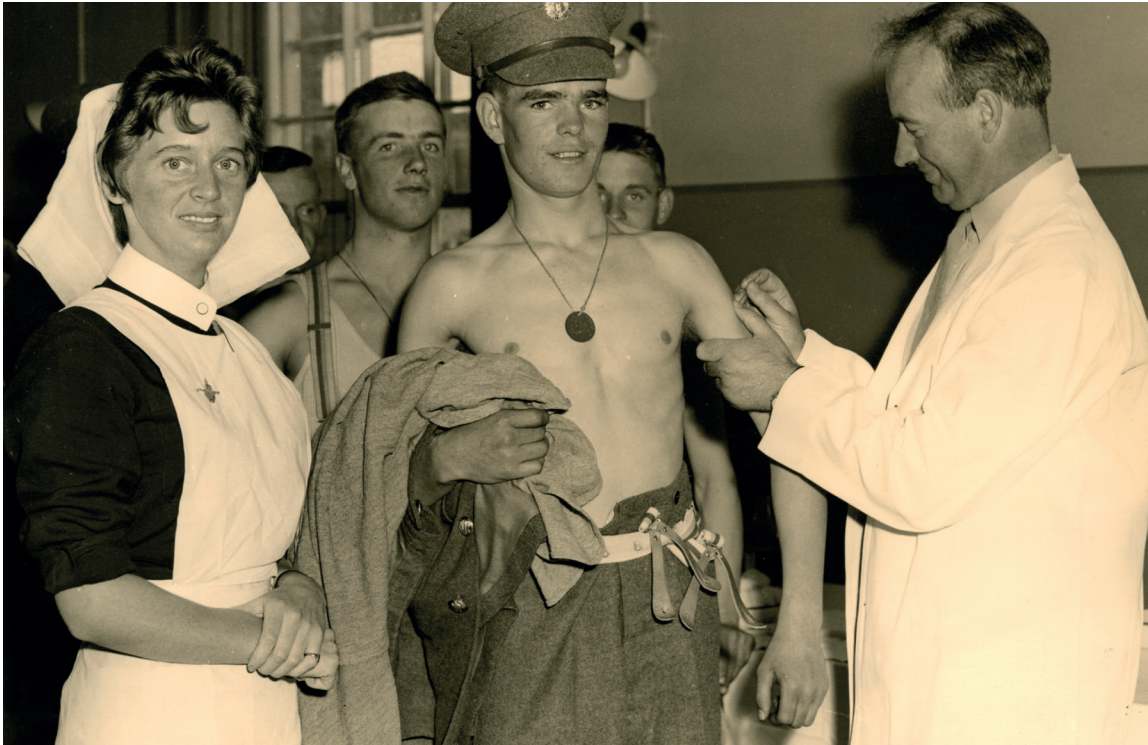
ARMY NURSING SERVICE 90TH ANNIVERSARY

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Overseas Service Inoculations - Congo

EDITORS NOTE

“When you’re a nurse you know that every day you will touch a life or a life will touch yours.”

- Author Unknown

This booklet attempts to trace the history and tell the story of the Army Nursing Service (ANS) within the Defence Forces Medical Services and Central Medical Unit from its inception to the present day. It is being published to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the formal establishment of the ANS on the 1st Oct 1924, by the then Executive Council, under the Defence Forces (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923. It does not aspire to be a definitive account but merely a pictorial and narrative representation of those elements of the ANS journey that can be deemed to be significant and about which sufficient material survives. I hope that you will find the information to be interesting and the story to be worthy of the noble institution that is the Army Nursing Service and its enormous contribution over its years of existence to individual members of the Forces, the Defence Forces in general and the State. It is hoped that this booklet may inspire people generally to enquire or read further on the subject or inspire some interested individual to further the project and produce a more definitive account. My thanks are due to numerous people who assisted with the unearthing and processing of the material relating to the subject, every stone was uncovered and storage cupboard rifled. The ANS Ninetieth Commemoration Committee made up of currently serving and retired ANS members deserve much praise for their efforts. Lt Col Browne (Rtd) must also be particularly mentioned for maintaining a historical interest and a file on the

Medical Corps and the Army Nursing Service, his wife's aunt, Sister Ward was one of the earliest members of the service. Cpl Martin Doyle who maintains Medical Archives, Mick Campion St Bricin's Barracks Service Foreman and Snr Sister Walshe deserve particular mention for their efforts and assistance. The enthusiasm, professionalism, friendliness, patience and knowledge of the staff of the Defence Forces Military Archives, An Cosantóir and the Defence Forces Printing Press cannot be praised enough, they are simply a credit to the organisation and the traditions that brought them into being. I also wish to thank Mr F. Glen Thompson for his permission to reproduce his painting of the uniforms of the Emergency, which is as far as can be ascertained the only existing painting which has as its central focus a member of the ANS in outdoor uniform.

Personally it has been an honor and a privilege to be associated with this much warranted project, to be gifted the pleasurable task of channeling the accumulated swell of respect, admiration and gratitude that prevails within the Defence Forces towards the ANS, for the contribution of past and present members of the ANS to the health, fitness, well being and operability of the Defence Forces. It must be remembered that this contribution is not and was not effected in some overarching sense, it was and still is being achieved one person to person contact at a time, each morning, each day, each week. Throughout the years, the ANS has been there where it has been needed and how it has been needed, at the coalface of military health provision, where the constraints of limited resources meet the immediate requirements of the military patients. Like all

stories or histories, the history or story of the ANS is at times complicated and contested, however the overall achievement of the ANS is neither complicated nor contested, throughout the decades the ANS has served as the medical shepherd of the military flocks, quietly but effectively protecting the forces from sickness or ill health. They have welcomed many souls into this world and nursed even more to the next, they have treated with dignity those who are at their lowest ebb and they have provided the stern words of guidance when they were warranted. They have achieved all this quietly, effectively, humbly and mainly unheralded. For a short time on the 09th December 2014 their great contribution will be in the spotlight, a contribution to the forces that has been a heroic dignified conversation of the ordinary into the extraordinary. All members of the ANS past and present can be justifiably proud of their accumulative achievement. May all we who serve, have served and have been nursed by the ANS, be thankful and appreciative.

Niall Donohoe
Commandant
Editor



Sisters Valerie Goulding and Breda Heery

FOREWORD

Officer Commanding Central Medical Unit - Colonel Peter Marron

"To know that one life has breathed easier because you have lived, that is to have success"
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Today's event, and this booklet 'Nursing the Forces', is to honour the generations of nurses who have served in the Army Nursing Service, and to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the formal establishment of An Seirbhís Banaltrachta. This booklet is not a definitive history of the Army Nursing Service; it is a snapshot of the experiences and the stories of those who served and of their service, and should be both informative and interesting. The booklet, and this gathering to mark the 90th Anniversary, will hopefully inspire others to take on the mantle to write a definitive account of the Army Nursing Service, their role and their enormous contribution to the history of the Defence Forces.

The Central Medical Unit, an infant in comparison to the 90 years of service of the Army Nursing Service, is responsible for medical service delivery to the Defence Forces. The Army Nursing Service is the backbone of that service; quietly, in a dignified and professional manner, providing primary care, and nurses will continue to do so into the future as part of the integrated primary care teams necessary to maintain the medical operational readiness of the Forces.

To all those who took the time to contribute and support the production of this excellent booklet, my thanks and, in particular to the Editor, Comdt Niall Donohoe, for his trojan work in the research, compilation and

editing the many stories. Finally, in appreciation of their exemplary service, to thank the members of the Army Nursing Service, both serving and retired, for their care, dedication, and service to Óglaigh na hÉireann over the ninety years, and I look forward to their continued service in nursing the evolving Defence Forces.

Peter Marron
Colonel
OC Central Medical Unit



Sister Teresa McMyler Rasmussen

FOREWORD

Deputy Chief of Staff (Support) - Rear Admiral Mark Mellett (DSM)

I am very pleased to introduce this short history of our Army Nursing Service, An Seirbhís Banaltrachta, on the occasion of the 90th Anniversary of the formal establishment of the great institution. I hope that you will find it both interesting and a worthy manifestation of the gratitude of the Defence Forces towards all members of the Army Nursing Service past and present, for their noble contribution towards the health, well being, and operational readiness of the Defence Forces. The Army Nursing Service has formed the backbone of the Medical Corps in the delivery and maintenance of medical services throughout the ninety years. History, in its essence, is about human experience and the story of the Army Nursing Service is a shared collection of experiences between all who have served in the Forces and the military nurses who have taken care of them. It is important to be conscious of our past, to capture the years of dedicated nursing service, from the foundation of the Defence Forces and the Army Nursing Service, to record their contribution to the sense of military ethos, culture, and the pride we share in our collective efforts and achievements.

This short history “Nursing the Forces”, aims to provide an understanding of the integral links and cooperation between the Army Nursing Service and the Defence Forces, while casting illumination upon the value and significance of those links. There is no function or mission completed by the Defence Forces that has not incorporated some significant contribution from the Army Nursing Service. I hope you will find the history and story contained within interesting and informative and that it will help to bring into sharper focus the great respect and pride that exists for our Army Nursing Service.

I am intrigued to see that Katherine Mellett from Cahernacole in Mayo joined the Army Nursing Service in 1941. Cahernacole Church is in that townland and is a landmark not far from where my own grandfather grew up. Just as Cahernacole Church has survived for many centuries since the penal times, I am sure that the principles that have defined the Army Nursing Service as a caring institution, doing good, will be with us no matter how we evolve for centuries to come.

I wish to thank all those involved in the production of this short book, and more importantly, to thank the members of the Army Nursing Service, both serving and retired, for their exemplary contribution and service to Óglaigh na hÉireann over the ninety years.

Guím rath Dé ar an obair agus tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh tairbhe agus sásamh as an leabhar beag seo.

Mark Mellett DSM
Rear Admiral
Deputy Chief of Staff (Support)

INTRODUCTION

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."
- Maya Angelou

2014 marks the 90th Anniversary of the formal establishment of the Army Nursing Service (ANS) within Óglaigh na hÉireann and constitutes an opportune juncture at which to attempt to put on record the story that is the Army Nursing Service's contribution to the health, fitness, well being and operability of the remaining elements of the Defence Forces, throughout their co-joined history. The story that is "Nursing the Forces" commenced well in advance of 1924 and involved numerous brave, patriotic, ideological and selfless Irish women who courageously made their contribution to the emancipation and birth of this state, not for reward or recognition but simply because it was the appropriate pragmatic way of dealing with the social and political circumstances that prevailed at the time. This contribution commenced with the 1916 Rising, continued through the War of Independence and was at its most voluminous, difficult and treacherous during the Civil War. The contribution also incorporates women's accommodation and encouragement of the necessary reconciliation and healing which invariable was required to occur in order to allow this state to embrace, cherish and retain democracy and the rule of law in post Civil War Ireland. It is ironic that potentially the greatest effort of contribution made by nursing and the predecessors of the Army Nursing Service to this state falls within that period which immediately precedes the ninety years of the ANS's formal existence. It is also true that due to the political, military and societal turmoil of that period

the detail of such contribution generally remains and will remain undocumented or incompletely documented. The heroic ladies who fought in the Easter Rising, nursed the injured and stood steadfastly to the end alongside the leaders: the patriotic resourceful ladies who were an integral part of the care for the wounded throughout the War of Independence: the brave ideological ladies on both sides of the Civil War who constituted the immediate predecessor to the ANS, all form a part of the story and tradition that is the ANS and must not be forgotten. The formal ANS has had over 750 members throughout its ninety years of existence, with lengths of service varying from less than four weeks from the easily disenchanting to over forty years from the steadfastly dedicated. The Story or History of the ANS is essentially a social history that shadows and is shaped by the nation's history within a national and international context, the Defence Forces record of contribution to the national requirements and aspirations, the Medical Corps/Service (Central Medical Unit) contribution to the mission of the Defence Forces and the ANS's contribution to the Medical Service's successful deliverance of its functions and goals. The Defence Forces' designated mission is: *"To contribute to the security of the State by providing for the military defence of its territorial integrity and to fulfill all roles assigned by Government, through the deployment of well-motivated and effective Defence Forces personnel."* The Defence Forces Medical Services contribution to the overall mission is to ensure maintenance of health and prevention of disease in the Defence Forces and provide appropriate timely treatment of its sick and wounded. The ANS exists and functions in support of the Medical Services and has as its roles the provision of acute trauma

and secondary care, the provision of primary care, the provision of and contribution to the health of the Forces, the provision of preventive medical care and up to 2013 the provision of medical care to the families of Defence Forces members within the Curragh Camp catchment area. These have always been the primary roles of the ANS throughout its existence with the manifestation of the achievement of these roles having gone through three distinct phases. Phase One began with the establishment of the ANS in 1924 and continued to 1939 where ANS nurses principally provided a supervisory role of military medical orderlies. Phase Two began during the Emergency and continued to the mid-Nineties where the military medical orderlies were tasked with a casualty evacuation/administrative role and an expanded ANS took over the medical orderlies traditional functions. Phase Three began in the mid-Nineties and continues to this date where the ANS adopted an occupational health basis to their functions to be assisted by military medical technicians. The ANS has traditionally been a professional select service with numbers averaging around fifty with a peak of over two hundred achieved during the Emergency years.

The ANS while emerging at its inception from a period of significant military guerilla type actions and the turmoil associated with a bitter Civil War, was established in peacetime and has never been exposed to the demands of warfare. From the beginning the ANS was incorporated into the Defence Forces together with the other Medical Services, however, while all other elements of the Medical Services were granted commissions and rank the ANS has always been a military service without rank. There

are no existing records or documents explaining why the ANS was established as a military service without rank, there may have been elaborate explanations as to why it was done or it could simply be explained like so many other issues at that time as being a continuation of the British way. This non-rank status has had significant benefits and at times disadvantages. The absence of rank within the ANS similarly to the Chaplaincy Service and its positioning outside the Command and Control structure has benefited the ANS, by allowing it unfettered access to all ranks and placing it in a position that its members retained the trust and confidence of all ranks. The disadvantages of the absence of ANS rank mainly are associated with situations where authority may be required to be established, expressed or maintained. The British Queen Alexandra Royal Army Nursing Service did eventually introduce commissions and rank, however this was deemed to be necessary during World War II and no such exposure to warfare ever visited the ANS. Army nurses have their service regulated by Defence Forces Regulation A 14 and Part IX of the Defence Acts, they are under military command of the officer commanding their hospital. They are not required to take an oath of allegiance on entry, but in the early days were required to sign a Declaration of Fidelity and are now required to sign a Form of Agreement agreeing to serve in accordance with conditions prescribed from time to time in the appropriate regulations. They are subject to the relevant provisions of the Defence Acts which forbids them to be a member of, or to subscribe to any political organisation or society, or any secret society whatsoever. They do not serve overseas but have been involved in humanitarian missions for short periods.

HISTORY OF MILITARY NURSING

"History is a Greek word that literally means Investigation"

- Arnold Toynbee

Throughout the existence of humankind, caring for and nursing of the young, sick, infirm, and injured has been an essential element in the well being, survival, evolution and stability of humanity and human society. The history of nursing traces from the beginnings of the provision of care which must have occurred by the fire in caveman society, to the modern nursing miracle that is surgical theatre nursing, incorporating all forms and manifestations of nursing care that the human condition generated and required throughout the ages. One of the earliest references in Celtic Mythology relating to the care of the wounded in battle, outlines the care provided by the Tír na nÓg Queen Niamh Cinn Oir to her Celtic warrior lover and champion of Ulster, Cuchulain. The Irish Naval Service Vessel LÉ Niamh (P52) on entering service in July 2001 was named after her.

In pre-Christian early medieval Ireland there existed a structure for the governance of the people known as Brehon Law, the law of the Brehons or Judges. Brehon Law was a volume of orally handed down judgments or rulings constituting statutes by which every day life was governed. The Brehon Laws indicted that Ireland in that period was a hierarchical combative but structured society with clear statutes in place defining the nature of social relations, the rights and duties of all members of society, rules for the Kings/Chiefs, rules for property ownership and the professional subjects, rules for non-landowning and the labouring subjects and rules for the

slaves or captives. Kings or Chiefs were responsible for ensuring the provision of appropriate hospitality and care to all subjects within the extents of the kingdom or chiefdom and this hospitality and care included the care of the young, sick, infirm and the injured particularly those wounded in the course of combat or the defence of the clan. Hospitality and care within each kingdom or chiefdom was financed by way of taxation upon the subjects with each paying according to their means. As such the hospitality and care was mainly funded by the upper to middle class elements of the caste type system and the provision of the hospitality and care was required to be done by the lower caste elements of the society. The ancient Irish held dear their love of music, poetry, oratory, sporting activities, the horse, hospitality and the care of the needy. It is no coincidence that such traits and attributes have traversed time and the generations to remain to this day the predominate attributes of the modern Irish nation and its Diaspora.

With the arrival of Christianity to Ireland in the early 5th Century, and its enthusiastic embracement by the people, the indigenous Brehon Law was inevitably influenced and intermingled with Canon Law. The convergence of the secular Brehon Law and the monastic Canon Law produced what is referred to in law texts as Fenechas Law, the law of the Feni or the free men of Gaelic Ireland. Fenechas Law as it related to the provision of hospitality and nursing care to the needy, was a perfect marriage of the old Celtic traditions and the Roman Christian ethos thus ensuring that the provision of hospitality and care continued to be given significant priority within Irish society up to the twelfth century. The Norman invasion of

1169 resulted in considerable seizing of the most fertile and productive land from the native Irish, lands that had provided the financial basis for the underpinning of the system of provision of hospitality and care. Coupled to the catastrophic loss of lands was the introduction of English Law by the new rulers and this all but eclipsed Fenechas and the associated institutional provision of hospitality and care. Fenechas Law did make a revival of sorts in the late thirteenth century and remained in some form of existence over the majority of the island up until the seventeenth century, all be it surviving in an inferior manner, in parallel with the predominant English Law.

While provision was clearly made within Brehon and Fenechas Law for the societal provision of care to the needy, there were no forms of trained or dedicated carers. The ill or injured were cared for in their homes or in the most serious cases they were brought to the monasteries for healing. Caring for the injured or sick may have been overseen by the daughters of the Chiefs or Clan leaders but the day to day provision of care was mostly done by slaves or destitute captive women. The integration of the Brehon tradition and the Christian teachings is best represented by the synchronisation of the pagan goddess Brighid with St Brigid of Kildare or Mary of the Gales, whereby the monks recognised the benefit in adapting the ancient benevolent figure of the mother goddess familiar to those they were trying to convert and grafting her name, associated folklore and reputation onto her Christian counterpart.



St Brigid of Kildare is particularly synonymous with nursing and the caring professions with her beautiful cross motif forming the basis of the Irish Nursing Association emblem. Within the religious or monastery structure of care there began to emerge a degree of respect and esteem towards those females involved in the role of tending to the sick or injured especially as the nursing and care of the sick or injured gradually began to be seen as an act of charity.

The early Christian literature of Ireland records the association of St Bricin with the earliest of military medical practice. Saint Bricin (c.590–650) was an Irish abbot of Tuaim Drecon in Breifne (modern Tomregan, County Cavan), a monastic university that flourished in the 7th Century. He is accredited with having performed successfully a skull trephine operation upon the wound of an Ulster noble of royal blood named Cenn Fáelad mac Aillila. Following the Battle of Magh Rath fought near Moira, County Down in 636 AD, the wounded Cenn Fáelad was rushed to Bricin at Tomregan for treatment. After surgery Cennfaelad remained at the university for a period of convalescence under Bricin's care. As a result, Cenn Fáelad developed an almost perfect memory and a keen interest in study at the three colleges of the university, Brehon Law, History/Poetry and Classical Learning, going on to become its most distinguished scholar and poet. A Romanesque sculpture depicting Bricin performing the operation on Cenn Fáelad still survives from the medieval church of Tomregan Following

the seventh century there is no direct reference to combat medicine for a considerable time, however its continuance in practice can be assumed to have continued as in other countries at the time. In the middle ages medicine was widely practiced in Ireland and tended to be hereditary in nature. The Dunlevys are documented to have been the physicians to the O'Donnells of Tir Chonill, the O'Callanans to the McCartys of Carbery, the O'Sheils to the MacMahons of Oriel and the MacCoghlan's of Westmeath. These ancient physicians accompanied their chiefs and attend to combat associated injuries in the field. Fr Mellon, chaplain to O'Neill's Army documents in his diary of 1646 that there was a system in place for the evacuation and treatment of casualties, "Casualties number 300, our commander arranged for their treatment in Charlemount.

The European Holy Military Crusades of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries while failing in their ultimate aim of defeating the Muslims and converting them to Christianity, none the less caused to be established and developed Military, Religious and Secular Orders that were fundamental to the establishments of hospitals under the direction of the Church, similar to those that had already been developed by the Muslims. Thus began the union of the two enduring influences, religion and military, that were to shape the development of nursing practice into its present form. The most significant of the military/religious/secular orders to have emerged from the Crusades was the Knights of St John which still exist to this present day in the form of St John's Ambulance Association. Throughout Europe, in the aftermath of the Crusades, early forms of hospital type institutions began

to be constructed adjacent to monasteries or convents where nuns or brothers were engaged in caring for the poor, sick or injured and a system of nursing began to be established.

During the Protestant Reformation which began in the sixteenth century, many monasteries and convents were destroyed and the systems of nursing which were being developed eventually disintegrated. Paradoxically, at this time while the study of medicine flourished in the universities, the training for and practice of nursing did not. The consequential decline in any progress that had been made in the provision of nursing care continued into the early part of the nineteenth century and did reach such a deplorable state that nursing was in the main being provided by women absent of means, without training or education and coerced into caring for the sick or needy through dire economic circumstances. Under such circumstances the sick, the mentally ill, the injured and the dying were seen as a burden on society and as a result were often neglected. This indifference to the nursing needs of society which prevailed during the early part of the nineteenth century throughout the British Empire, reached its lowest point when the nursing shortcomings extended to the care provided to soldiers of the Empire when injured or afflicted with illness during military campaigns. Reform in relation to the provision of nursing care throughout the British Empire was desperately needed and it was the disastrous and unacceptable nature of the Crimean Military Campaign, specifically in relation to the neglect of the injured or severely ill troops that provided the much needed impetus for reform.

William Howard Russell

William Howard Russell was born in Tallaght in 1820 and was educated in law at Trinity College Dublin but demonstrated no appetite for a career at the Bar. He preferred writing and having risen through the ranks as a journalist, John Thadeus Delane the owner of the Times in London appointed Russell as a war correspondent and in 1854 dispatched him to cover the Crimean Campaign. Russell was very unpopular with the military hierarchy in Crimea but quickly gained the respect of the lower to middle ranks many of whom were his fellow countrymen. It was estimated that of 111,000 men who fought in Britain's Crimean army, over 37,000, were Irish, of whom some 7,000 were killed. The newly introduced Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy, was awarded to 28 Irishmen in the Crimea with Sgt Luke O'Connor from Elphin, Co Roscommon, being its first ever Army recipient. Sgt O'Connor was one of the most decorated servicemen ever to have served in the British Army, throughout the course of his remarkable career he was promoted to the rank of General and bestowed a knighthood. The reports and articles penned by Russell in the Times were cutting edge. They were accurate, vivid, dramatic, interesting and convincing. They described compassionately and graphically the awful suffering endured by British Soldiers during and post combat. His reports identified with the British troops, praised their heroism but exposed without fear or favour the outrageous leadership, logistical and medical bungling that predominated throughout the campaign. In particular, when Russell documented and exposed in detail the appalling sufferings of the British Army during the winter

of 1854-55 and contrasted the conditions and treatment that they were forced to experience with that of the French allies who had competent and diligent Sisters of Charity nurses accompanying each regiment for the purpose of attending the sick and wounded soldiers, he touched upon a public nerve and triggered a public outcry. Russell's articles upset establishment and Queen Victoria was incensed. She described the articles as "Infamous attacks against the army which have disgraced our newspapers" and her husband Prince Albert stated "the pen and ink of one miserable scribbler is despoiling the country". Consequently Russell was blacklisted, and quite predictably the British Military Commander in Crimea Lord Raglan, ordered his officers to desist from speaking with the reporter, accused Russell of revealing strategic information potentially useful to the enemy and petitioned politicians in England to effect the removal of Russell from the campaign theatre. Despite the vilification of his reputation at the highest levels, Russell's articles proved to be hugely significant and set in motion a chain of events that would forever impact upon and change standards by which the Military were to be nursed and taken care of. The British public's shock and outrage resulting from the reports, forced the government to re-evaluate the treatment in general of troops at war and in particular their medical care and nursing. The political re-evaluation and plan to deal with the Crimean problem brought Florence Nightingale into the picture and led to Nightingale's revolutionizing of battlefield nursing, military nursing and nursing in general. Russell was an eye witness to the infamous Charge of the Light Brigade during the Battle of Balaclava on 25 October 1854 and his graphic critical reporting of the debacle where he

eulogised the bravery of the Cavalrymen and criticised the tactical ineptitude of the military leadership helped to ensure that the event went down in history. The report which was published in the Times on the 14 Nov 1854, inspired Alfred Lord Tennyson to compose the famous poem which contained the indelibly chilling lines:

*"Into the valley of Death rode the 600."
"Theirs was not to reason why
Theirs was just to do or die"*



Charge of the Light Brigade

There were in fact 673 men in the Light Brigade, of whom 114, or nearly 20%, were Irish. During the charge 118 (including 21 Irish) were killed, 127 (including 16 Irish) were wounded and 45 (including 7 Irish) were taken prisoner by the Russians. Russell's dispatches from the campaign theatre, the first to be completed via telegraph, remain as his indelible legacy. He brought the realities and atrocities of war into the homes of the readers,

diminishing and eroding forever the distance between the home front and the remote battle fields. Russell is now revered as the father of war reporting and as one of the Times greatest ever reporters. He was knighted by Victoria's son, Edward VII for services to the nation and ironically he was awarded the title of Commander of the Royal Victorian Order.

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale was born in Florence in 1820. In her teenage years she dedicated herself to becoming a nurse but waited until she was twenty-four before announcing her decision, out of respect for her parents' opposition to her chosen calling. Despite the intense opposition and anger of her mother and sister, she rebelled against the pressure being applied to her to marry and set up home. In 1844 she chose instead to apply herself to educate herself in the art and science of nursing, which was no easy task at the time. As part of her education she travelled throughout continental Europe and while in Rome in 1847 she met with Sidney Herbert who was honeymooning there at the time. Sydney Herbert was a British politician who had been Secretary at War in 1845-46 and thus commenced a life long friendship with Herbert and his wife which was to have profound influence on Nightingale realising her nursing vocation. In 1853 Florence Nightingale took up an offer of an unpaid post of superintendent at the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in London, a position she held until October 1854. As a consequence of the public outcry created by W. H. Russell's articles in the Times, regarding the appalling conditions for British and Irish troops in the Crimea, Sidney Herbert who was again filling the appointment of Secretary at War needed

to find an immediate solution to the problem and following encouragement from his wife, he called upon his friend Florence Nightingale and requested her to apply her considerable talents to addressing and dealing with the embarrassing situation. She enthusiastically embraced the opportunity and hurriedly but with extraordinary effectiveness she assembled her “crack” team of nurses. In October 1854, the initial nursing team consisting of 14 lay nurses, 14 nurses from Anglican sisterhoods and 10 Irish Catholic Sisters of Mercy nuns (that included Sister Mary Clare Moore and eight other nuns that travelled from Kinsale under Mother Jane Frances Joanna Bridgeman), embarked for the Crimea. The nursing group was deployed about 295 miles across the Black Sea from Balaklava in the Scutari Hospitals.



Mary Clare Moore

There is a strong association between Florence Nightingale and Irish nursing in the person of Mother Mary Clare Moore. Georgina Clare Moore was born in Dublin in 1814 into Protestantism but converted with her mother to Catholicism in 1823. In 1837 she became

the first superior of the Sisters of Mercy in Cork. In 1839 she became the first superior of the Convent of Our Lady of Mercy, Bermondsey, London. The work of the Bermondsey community was multifaceted and under Clare Moore's leadership, they visited the sick poor in their homes and in Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals, instructed adults, prepared hundreds of children for their first Communion and Confirmation, conducted poor schools for female children and an infant school for toddlers, visited the poor in their homes, providing material help and spiritual consolation. Clare was, for almost thirty-five years, the chief organizer of all these ministries. The Bermondsey Annals says of her: "Her governing powers were extraordinary; she was fit to rule a kingdom". On October 17, 1854, Clare with four other Bermondsey sisters went, on three days' notice, to the Crimea to nurse the sick and wounded British, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish soldiers who were involved in the war with Russia. In early 1856 three more sisters from Bermondsey joined them. Clare was assigned to the Barracks Hospital in Scutari, Turkey, and worked there until peace was declared. But having become dangerously ill, she left Scutari before all the wounded returned home, arriving back in Bermondsey on May 16, 1856. In the Crimea, the Bermondsey sisters served under the superintendence of Florence Nightingale. On April 29, 1856, the day after Clare left Scutari, Miss Nightingale wrote to her from Balaclava:

"Your going home is the greatest blow I have yet had, you are far above me in fitness for the general superintendence both in worldly talent of administration and spiritual qualifications."

Florence Nightingale, Mary Clare, Mother Joanna Bridgeman and the nursing team arrived early in November at Selimiye Barracks in Scutari, now modern-day Uskudar in Istanbul. The team found that the inadequate care for the sick and wounded soldiers was being delivered by overworked military medical orderlies in the face of Military Hierarchy's indifference. Medicines were in short supply, hygiene and sanitation was desperate, basic care was neglected with mass infection rife and in the majority of occurrences proving fatal. The death rate in the hospitals on arrival of the nursing team was 42% with the primary cause of fatalities being illnesses such as typhus, typhoid, cholera, and dysentery, rather than death caused by the effects of battle wounds. Remarkably, at the end of the first year, Nightingale's nursing team had managed to reduce the death rate to below 10%. The reduction was achieved by greatly improving hygiene and sanitation, regularising the supply of medicines, standardising basic care, eradicating mass infections and revolutionising the nutritional standard of the food. Florence Nightingale with her nursing team cared for the wounded and sick during the year long siege of Sevastopol, the battle of Inkerman and the battle of Balaclava. For the duration of the nursing teams' deployment in the Crimea the total Irish element grew to thirty-three Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of Charity. The Irish element of the team were significantly involved in assisting Florence in developing a scheme and method for the efficient care and nursing of military patients, and this scheme/method was submitted by Florence to the War office for approval and general adoption. The scheme and method became the basis for the formal scheme of training that was consequently

universally adopted for the training of nurses for the nursing profession. Florence Nightingale became known as "The Lady of the Lamp" a name that was derived from a phrase that first appeared in one of W. H. Russell's articles in the Times. The nursing mission in the Crimea was an astounding unprecedented success, in that apart from the improvement of conditions and the saving of numerous lives, there also was an everlasting legacy which totally and irrevocably established the reform and reorganising of the British Military medical services and in so doing established an indelible standardised system of nursing procedure which remains the bedrock of the establishment and formal legitimisation of the profession of nursing. Furthermore Florence Nightingale forever remains one of the most capable person that England has ever produced. According to Matron Nuala Buggle of the Army Nursing Service, in her most impressive April 1981 article which appeared in An Cosantoir titled "The Evolution of Military Nursing".

"The Crimean War represented the birth pangs of cataclysmic hospital and nursing reform and Florence Nightingale was the midwife who safely delivered this nascent body into the arms of a grateful world"

Florence Nightingale remains forever a very special world historical figure and the key individual in the founding of modern nursing. She clearly demonstrated on the world stage the potential women had to engage with and effectively address complex and substantial sociopolitical issues, she also showed what female nurses could do for and contribute to their country if given an opportunity.

PREDECESSORS OF THE ARMY NURSING SERVICE

"History has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own"
- Michele Obama

Religious Nursing and Training Tradition

The history of nursing and care of the needy in an Irish context clearly indicates a societal predisposition towards prioritising the protection of the vulnerable, with such a predisposition derived from a secular and religious tradition that throughout the ages became engraved in the national psyche. The intelligence of Irish women, their energetic demeanor, their independent nature, their willingness to take charge, combined with their blend of humor, firmness, persistence, empathy and professionalism meant that they constituted a potentially outstanding resource, particular in the field of nursing. It was the Religious Orders in the nineteenth century, who first moved to harness this resource.

The ascent of James VI of Scotland to both the English and Irish thrones as James I in 1603 saw a series of discriminative coercive new laws put into force. These laws were known as the Penal Laws or Code. They were a series of laws imposed in an attempt to force the Irish Catholics and some Protestant dissenters such as the Presbyterians, to accept the reformed Anglican Church. Under the Code, Catholics were barred from holding public office or serving in the army, Catholic churches were transferred to the Anglican Church of Ireland and Catholics were required to pay 'recusant fines' for non-attendance at Anglican services. Catholic masses were however tacitly tolerated as long as they were conducted in private. Catholic priests were also tolerated, but

bishops were forced to operate clandestinely. Penal Law began to be repealed in 1791 and was not fully completed until 1926. With the Code being repealed in the early nineteenth century, the Catholic Church in Ireland became active in re-establishing education, health and nursing services, relief for the poor, care for the elderly and the insane. Since nuns were cloistered, and therefore forbidden from active community service, these services were initially provided by lay women. Religious involvement in public nursing focused in the main on home visitation of the sick or needy by active female orders such as the Daughters of Charity and the Sisters of Mercy. Building on home-based nursing services, in the 1860's female religious orders made a concerted advance into public nursing, staffing and managing public and private hospitals, workhouse hospitals, hospices and dispensaries. The experiences of Irish orders which had practiced overseas was formative in the advance of the religious within nursing in Ireland. In 1813 Irish nuns travelled to the French Vincent de Paul's Daughters of Charity order to learn their system of service to the poor. Within two decades after setting up an Irish congregation in 1816, the Irish Daughters of Charity had not only instituted nursing services for the poor but had also founded, in 1834, and were running the first hospital in Ireland for the Catholic population, Dublin's St Vincents. The Mercy Sisters who returned from the Crimea in 1856 having been significantly involved in the Florence Nightingale project, were keen to build on their outstanding nursing successes there and began working in workhouse hospitals, heralding the way for nuns to provide nursing labour for workhouses run by Poor Law Unions from

1861. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the number of workhouse hospitals under the care of female religious orders increased from eight in 1873 to 75 in 1898 and 84 in 1903.

It is true that the involvement of female religious orders in nursing was part of a wider European trend, however in Ireland it grew to exceptional proportions. The religious orders eventually entered into various forms of partnership with the state in jointly providing much needed services. While the Daughters of Charity stood out in the nursing field, they were not alone. Various French nursing orders arrived in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century, amongst these were the Bons Secours (1861) and the Little Sisters of the Assumption (1891), both of which initially concentrated on home nursing. English nursing orders came to Ireland too, such as the Little Company of Mary which arrived in 1888 to provide home and hospital nursing. In addition, overseas congregations which were not established originally as nursing congregations also set up in Ireland and undertook nursing work in workhouse hospitals, these included the French Congregation of Mary and the English Poor Servants of the Mother of God who arrived in Ireland in the 1870's. These orders were instrumental in the establishment of a religious nursing labour force in Ireland and they paved the way for the Catholic capture of the emergent system of hospital and health-related poor relief and public nursing. Religious orders came to form the central nucleus of the administrative and supervisory nursing service that emerged, with general nursing care in Catholic hospitals being provided by a considerable number of lay Catholic women.

Influenced by the system of training being established by Florence Nightingale in the middle to late nineteenth century, an emphasis began to be placed on the need for nursing training and the nursing sisters themselves to be formally trained. The Catholic Church, and female orders in particular, thus became a key force in the development of Nursing Training and their domination of this area became so complete that it provided them with an absolute degree of influence and control over nurse training and practice. The initial form of Nurse training took place through apprenticeship with learning occurring on the job, and Catholic hospitals and workhouse hospitals were where intending young ladies aspiring to be nurses, acquired their training. The Religious orders system of nursing training in Ireland developed into a World leading system, and produced an abundance of excellently trained nurses to meet requirements within Ireland and also for export all over the world. Little was it known at that time, that international events in the form of The Great War and national events in the shape of the Easter Rising/War of Independence/Civil war would place an inordinate demand on the this emerging nursing resource.

Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS)

After she left the Crimea in 1856, Florence Nightingale was retained by the War Office as the General Superintendent of the Female Nursing Establishment of the Military Hospitals of the Army. In 1860 Florence Nightingale then established the Nightingale Training School for Nurses at St Thomas's Hospital, London. From 1866 nurses were formally appointed to Military

General Hospitals in accordance with the handbook *The Introduction of Female Nursing into Military Hospitals* written by Florence. She was retained by the War Office as a consultant on army welfare until 1872. Nursing personnel within the British Forces came under the direction of The Army Nursing Service (ANS) from 1881 and in 1883 further Army Orders were published



*Cork Victoria Military Hospital
1895*

ensuring that Nursing Sisters were to be employed in all Army Hospitals of 100 beds or more throughout the Empire. As a result Curragh Hospital became the first hospital in Ireland to be staffed by members of the new Army Nursing Service to be soon followed by Cork Victoria Military Hospital and Dublin's George V (Bricins) Military Hospital.

Included in the picture is Nursing Sister Eleanor Gordon who had an extraordinary career based in Cork Military Hospital, where during her time she cared for the sick and wounded associated with general routine and military life, survivors of the sinking of the Lusitania, returning wounded from the First World War, British soldiers wounded during the War of Independence, and IRA Prisoners wounded and taken captive during the War of Independence, some of whom were executed after they had been nursed to recovery.



The loss of nurses on the Lusitania was used by the War Office in a propaganda campaign to encourage additional volunteering for the War effort.

On the 23 June 1898 the Royal Army Medical Corps was formed by Royal Warrant. The Director General of the Army Medical Services was Alfred Keogh and in 1901 he placed army nursing sisters of the

Army Nursing Services onto the war establishment of the Medical Services. The War Office officially formed the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) on the 27 March 1902 under a Royal Warrant to replace the Army Nursing Service, named after Alexandra of Denmark, the queen consort of Edward VII of the United Kingdom, who due to her genuine and exceptional interest in troop welfare became President of QAIMNS and remained President until her death in 1925. By 1902 general training consisting of three years experience in an approved training hospital was a necessary qualification for entry into QAIMNS and under the patronage of Queen Alexandra the ground breaking principle of a pension on retirement was introduced to the service. At the outbreak of the 1914-18 Great War QAIMNS had a complement of 293

nurses, of whom 34 or 12% were from Ireland and were serving in Ireland. This total number of QAIMNS nurses is very small in relation to the number of hospital beds that existed in the various barracks or stations at the time, which amounted to 34 for officers, 2051 for other ranks and 50 for families of the military, however it should be understood that the additional required medical care was provided by medical officers and medical orderlies who were members of the Royal Army Medical Corp (RAMC). By the end of World War I the number of QAIMNS had swollen to 10,404, all under the control of a Matron-in-Chief who was responsible for their recruitment, welfare and administration. One third of the total were Irish nurses and in addition, Britain also drew substantially on Ireland for nurse labour to sustain its civilian populations, with Irish nurses also making up a significant proportion of the Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and American civilian and military nurse population.

Of the many Irish nurses who served in the Great War, Emily Primrose MacManus, from Mayo had a most distinguished career. In 1908, aged 22, she entered Guy's Hospital in London as a trainee nurse and in the Spring of 1915, as the carnage of World War I began to disgorge its litany of maimed, she headed for Northern France as a Nursing Reserve Sister and spent the next three and a half years nursing behind the trenches. The base medical post at Etaples where she was stationed grew during her time there, into a sprawling giant hospital city. On returning to England, Emily rose up the nursing ranks and following a spell as Matron of the Bristol Royal Infirmary she became Matron of Guy's in

1927. Her reputation as a pioneering leader in nursing resulted in her receiving an OBE in 1930 and following her stewardship of that famous hospital during World War II she was further honored with the award of a CBE to mark her retirement in 1947.

At the time of the handover of Barracks in 1922, the Military Hospitals ran by the British Forces, George V Hospital in Dublin, Victoria Hospital in Cork and the Curragh Camp Hospital continued to be staffed by nurses of the QAIMNS and some of those nurses remained within the hospitals to become founding pioneer members of the Army Nursing Service, during its informal phase between 1922/23 and when it was formally established in 1924.

Cumann na mBan

The Irish Volunteers, Óglaigh na hÉireann were founded on 25th Nov 1913, at a public meeting held in the Rotunda Rooms in Dublin. The founders included O'Rahilly a member of the governing body of the Gaelic League, Eoin MacNeill Professor of Early and Mediaeval Irish History at UCD and Patrick Pearse also a prominent member of the Gaelic League. The movement connected with public opinion to such an extent that by July of 1914 180,000 had "volunteered" as members of an Irish Army which had three complementary aims. Firstly, to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland. Secondly, to train for this end, discipline, arm and equip a body of Irish Volunteers. Thirdly, to unite for this purpose all Irishmen without distinction of creed, class or politics. The surge in volunteerism occurred against a backdrop of rising

militancy throughout Ireland as a result of the vehement opposition to the Irish Home Rule Bill by the Ulster Unionists. A number of women at a meeting on 2 April 1914 in Wynn's Hotel Dublin, led by Kathleen Lane-O'Kelly founded Cumann na mBan for the purpose of activating an organisation for women who would work in conjunction with the recently formed Irish Volunteers. Cumann na mBan branches pledged to the constitution of the organisation were formed throughout the country and were directed by a Provisional Committee. The first branch was named the Ard Chraobh and its meetings were held in Brunswick Street, Dublin. The Great War interceded and some 318,000 Irishmen joined the British Forces and departed for the killing fields of France, many of whom had been members of the Irish Volunteers. The mass enlistment for the War and associated exodus from the Irish Volunteers formed the basis of discord which resulted in a split over whether its members should enlist in the British Forces or not. About 11,000 of the original membership vehemently opposed supporting enlistment into the British Forces and insisted in retaining the movement's original name of Irish Volunteers. The remainder became known as the National Volunteers. A secretive revolutionary element within the Irish Volunteers effectively took control of the movement and planned to use it to effect a rebellion in 1916. On 23 April 1916, when the Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood finalised arrangements for the Easter Rising, it integrated Cumann na mBan, along with the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army, into the 'Army of the Irish Republic'. Patrick Pearse was appointed overall Commandant-General and James Connolly Commandant-General of the Dublin Division.

The Rising on Easter Monday 24th April was virtually confined to Dublin and the Volunteers occupied a number of strategic buildings within the city that commanded the main routes into the capital. On the day of the Rising, Cumann na mBan members, including Elizabeth O'Farrell, Julia Grenan and Winnie Carney, entered the General Post Office on O'Connell Street in Dublin with their male counterparts. By nightfall, women insurgents were established in all the major rebel strongholds throughout the city – bar two, Boland's Mill and the South Dublin Union held by Éamon de Valera and Eamonn Ceannt respectively.

The majority of the women worked as Red Cross workers, were couriers, or procured rations for the men. Members also gathered intelligence on scouting expeditions, carried dispatches and transferred arms from dumps across the city to insurgent strongholds. Helena Moloney was amongst the soldiers who attacked Dublin Castle where she also rendered first aid and care to the wounded. As the week progressed fighting became intense and was characterised by prolonged fiercely contested urban warfare exchanges. On Saturday, the insurgent leaders based mainly in the GPO were forced to agree to surrender. Elizabeth O'Farrell had acted with distinction as a dispatcher before and during the Rising, delivering bulletins and instructions to the rebel outposts around Dublin. She was one of the three women who remained in the GPO until the end of the Rising. Along with her lifelong friend and fellow nurse, Julia Grenan she cared for the wounded including James Connolly. At 12.45 pm on Saturday 29 April Elizabeth, wearing a Red Cross insignia and carrying a white flag

proceeded on Pearse's request to deliver the surrender to the British military. She emerged into heavy fire on Moore



1916 Easter Rising Surrender

Street which eventually abated when her white flag was recognised. She was taken to Brigadier General W. H. M. Lowe Commander of the British Forces who sent her back to Pearse at number 16 Moore Street with a demand for unconditional surrender.

Pearse had no option but to agree and accompanied by O'Farrell, surrendered in person to General Lowe. Though partly obscured by Pearse, she can be seen in the press photograph taken at the moment of the surrender.

Accompanied by a priest and three soldiers she was further tasked with delivering the order to surrender to all the insurgent positions throughout the city. Elizabeth spent some time in confinement after the Rising but General Lowe petitioned that clemency be shown towards her for the "great assistance" she had given in managing the final hours of the Rising.

The Easter Rising may have been a military failure, but it proclaimed in arms the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State. The subsequent execution of fifteen of the Rising Leaders by the British between the third and the twelfth of May 1916 and the consequential bestowing of martyrdom, ultimately proved to be a



Nurse O'Farrell

counter productive act by British authority, because it angered and engaged many of the general public who previously had held little interest or respect for the insurgent leaders. Over 70 of the leading figures in Cumann na mBan, were arrested after the insurrection, and many of the women who had been captured fighting were imprisoned in Kilmainham, however all but twelve had been released by 8 May 1916. Elizabeth O'Farrell trained as a midwife at the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street and later worked as a district nurse.

Revitalized after the Rising and led by Countess Markievicz, Cumann na mBan took a leading role in popularising the memory of the 1916 leaders, organising prisoner relief agencies, opposing conscription and canvassing for Sinn Féin in the 1918 general election, in which Countess Markievicz was elected Teachta Dála. Jailed at the time, she became the Minister for Labour of the Irish Republic from 1919 to 1922. The Religious Orders nursing and training tradition both Catholic and Protestant, the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) involvement in nursing in the Military Hospitals in association with Irish nurses involvement in QAIMNS and the Great War, and Cumann na mBan's Red Cross casualty assisting role during the rising to be followed by a similar but more extensive role in the War of Independence and the Civil War, constitutes the three pillars of predecession that underpinned the formation of the Army Nursing Service (ANS).

FORMATION AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANS

“Caring is the essence of Nursing”

- Jean Watson

Whereas the numbers of QAIMNS nurses in British Military Hospitals in Ireland was only 34 at the commencement of the first World War, the numbers rapidly increased during the war when both military and civilian hospital facilities in Ireland were used for the long-term treatment and rehabilitation of Irish casualties who had been evacuated from France with horrific physical and mental injuries. In the aftermath of the rising the Irish Volunteers remained actively in existence and in the elections of 1918 many were elected standing on a platform of abstention from Westminster along with the establishment of an independent Irish parliament. The Irish Volunteers on election reiterated their allegiance to an Irish Dáil and as a result claimed legitimate justification to be an Army of lawfully constituted Governance elected by the people, this Army assumed the title of the Irish Republican Army. The War of Independence commenced in January 1919, initiated by a number of young idealist Volunteer leaders who were convinced that their dream of an Irish republic could only be realised through the use of armed force. Borne out of pragmatism and by way of necessity any such use of force was required to be a guerrilla campaign and this campaign manifested itself in the form of small autonomous units launching frequent low level surprise attacks with no attempt ever made to form units on an established regular army type basis.

Michael Collins master-minded and perfected this type of a campaign and was the mainstay behind providing



Limerick City Volunteers and Cumann na mBan

the Volunteers with arms, equipment and funding, along with the establishment of an exceptionally effective “intelligence” network. It was the quality of this “intelligence” along with the bravery of the individuals involved, which guaranteed the effectiveness of the Volunteer units. There were estimated to be around sixteen Flying Column or Active Service Units in existence, all of which even though they were operating under guerrilla tactics still required significant logistical backup and assistance and a significant element of this backup was provided by members of Cumann na mBan. During the War of Independence fifteen thousand Volunteers were actively involved, with three thousand being the number in service at any given time. By 1920 the Volunteer force had come to be organised into mobile units, some of which numbered about one hundred men who were based in remote camps or a collection of safe houses. Two of the most effective of these Flying Columns were based in Cork under Tom Barry and in Longford under Sean MacEoin. Between December 1920 and the Truce of July 1921, there

was a spiraling of the death toll in the conflict, with over 1,000 people including the RIC Police, Army, IRA Volunteers and civilians, being killed in those seven months alone. This death toll represented about 70% of the total casualties for the entire three-year conflict and in addition, four and a half thousand IRA personnel (or suspected sympathisers) were interned by the British during the War of Independence. Throughout the entirety of the war it is estimated that around eight hundred Irish men and women were killed with half of these being Volunteers and the other half civilians. Approximately one thousand Volunteers were seriously wounded and again Cumann na mBan members were actively involved in the care and nursing of the injured. Up to 1921, the Brigade was the largest unit in the Volunteer force and amongst the earliest staff appointments was the Brigade Medical Officer (BMO). The BMO was generally a doctor in practice in the district who had demonstrated sympathies with and support for the Volunteers. The BMO was responsible



Cumann na mBan members

for organising a medical service in his area and it was he who recommended appointments of doctor Volunteers as Battalion Medical Officers. The BMO also organised a nursing service from the ranks of Cumann na mBan members, who were either formally trained nurses or had been trained in first aid with emphasis on war wounds, especially the control of hemorrhage and the treatment for shock. These Cumann na mBan nurse/ medic volunteer women were very capable and efficient, they acquired significant experience and rendered valiant service during the fighting associated with the War of Independence and remained in place to provide a similar service during the Civil War. The evacuation of the wounded during the War of Independence resulting from guerrilla operations presented a difficult problem that demanded serious consideration and when an ambush position was selected, it was necessary to consult with the active service Unit Commander to plan for the evacuation of the wounded. This planning usually entailed putting in place pre-arrangements for the clandestine admission to the local hospital of casualties as expeditiously as possible and required the assistance and co-operation of hospital staff. Where hospitalisation could not be achieved then the goodwill of sympathetic householders in the area of operation had to be prevailed upon to hide and care for the injured, within a safe house. Such arrangements took a significant amount of organising, its achievement usually involved Cumann na mBan members and involved considerable risk to all involved.

The War of Independence ended with a truce on 11 July 1921 mainly due to the fact that the conflict had

reached a form of bloody stalemate with neither side likely to achieve any form of immediate outright success. Talks that had looked promising the previous year had petered out in December when David Lloyd George insisted that the IRA first surrender their arms. Fresh talks, after the Prime Minister had come under pressure from Herbert Henry Asquith and the Liberal opposition, the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress, resumed in the spring and eventually resulted in the Truce. From the point of view of the British government, it appeared as if the IRA's guerrilla campaign would continue indefinitely, with spiraling costs in British casualties and to the public purse. More significantly, the British government was facing severe criticism at home and abroad as a result of unacceptable actions of British forces in Ireland. On 6 June 1921, the British made their first conciliatory gesture by suspending the inhumane policy of house burnings as an act of reprisal. On the other side, IRA leaders and in particular Michael Collins, felt that the IRA as it was then organised could not continue indefinitely. It had been hard pressed by the deployment of more regular British soldiers to Ireland and by the lack of arms and ammunition.

The Truce brought active hostilities to an end and the process of the Anglo-Irish negotiations began which resulted in the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 6 December 1921. When the Truce was enacted in July 1921, intensified training courses in which large numbers of Volunteers participated, were held in camps established throughout the country. Specially selected personnel received training in first aid and these formed the nucleus of the NCO's and men of the future Army

Medical Corps. Training in the camps continued up to the time of the evacuation of the British Forces.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty brought into being on 14 January 1922 the Irish Provisional Government to administer the twenty-six counties of southern Ireland with the six counties of northern Ireland remaining under British Rule. As a consequence the British Forces began an



*First Aid Unit of the 4th Battalion, Mid Clare Brigade,
Irish Republican Army*

orderly withdrawal from southern Ireland. The Beggars Bush barracks was handed over to Michael Collins and the Free State Army on 31 January 1922, and in so doing became the first British barracks to be handed to the new Provisional Government. Almost immediately the Irish Republican Medical Corps was initially established in Beggars Bush and this was the beginning of the Army Medical Services, with the first Director of the Medical Corps being a Commandant

General Ahern. Prior to becoming Medical Director, Ahern had established a fine record as a Volunteer Officer and was entrusted with some dangerous and strategically important missions by Michael Collins, which he successfully carried out with great daring and competency. There was a medical aid post established in Beggars Bush which was affiliated with the Red Cross, it came under the command of Dr/Captain King and employed two nurses named Sister Marrinan and Sister Clancy. Both Sister Marrinan and Sister Clancy appear to have been a product of the Red Cross medical training tradition and were both credited with providing devoted care and attention to their military patients. However they are not listed or documented as members of the ANS and this maybe explained firstly because they may not have had the level of training that was required for entry into the ANS and secondly they both appear to have married soon after 1922. In any case while they were never formal members of the ANS they certainly do form an element of the predecessors of the ANS and therefore it is appropriate that they be recognised as the first two documented nurses who provided military nursing services to members of the Irish Republican Army.

In February 1922, the Department of Defence under the new Provisional Government began to organise individual members of the Volunteers into a regular or National Army. They tentatively estimated that four thousand was probably the most suitable strength for this force and a report dated 9th April records 3,500 NCO's and men as having been enlisted. On the 28 Feb 1922 Victoria (Custume) Barracks, Athlone

was the first British Barracks to be handed over which contained a hospital facility. As part of the hand over Comdt Mark Cooney the Brigade Medical Officer, took over the Military Hospital personally from the Lt Col of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) on February 28th 1922. The hospital was fully equipped and in first-class condition, with an operating theatre. There was an isolation wing in the grounds also and within a short time the whole establishment was functioning for the benefit of the Republican Army troops. Comdt Cooney's most important task was to secure appropriate hospital staff as soon as possible. In this regard he received sanction from the General Officer Commanding, Gen Sean Mac Eoin, to appoint three nurses who had been working in Athlone. One of these nurses, Sister Martin had been a member of the QAIMNS and because of her experience she was posted as Matron. Sister Martin had along and distinguished career as a member of the ANS and became a well known personality in the senior ranks of the ANS. Comdt Cooney described Sister Martin as a tower of strength and one of the most capable nurses he ever met, he described her as performing wonderful work in the hospital and especially in training the military orderlies and nursing staff. The other two nurses whose names unfortunately are not recorded are also documented as giving great service until their marriages brought about their compulsory resignation. Sister Martin is also accredited with assisting with the first surgical operation that was performed in an Irish Military Hospital when within the first few weeks of the take over of the hospital, she assisted Comdt Cooney in operation on a Co. Sligo Volunteer who had sustained terribly injuries to both his

hands as a result of a grenade accident. The journey by ambulance to Athlone from Sligo was delayed by broken bridges and damaged roads, resulting in the patient being in a comatose and desperate condition on arrival into Athlone Military Hospital. The operating room in Athlone was prepared for the emergency amputation of both arms, but despite the best of care the patient was too far gone and did not survive the procedure.

The Curragh Camp with its General Military Hospital was handed over by the British on the 16 May 1922 with this handover including the Military Hospital, the Families Hospital and a Mid-Wife School. Sister Kelly was appointed the first Matron in the Curragh and she was described as a nurse of many years experience, excellent standards and most suitable for an office of such responsibility, she also had experience with the QAIMNS. The following day Cork Victoria Barracks with its Military Hospital was taken over by Free State troops. The Curragh Hospital was designated the Chief Military Hospital and despite their being a hospital in Cork the decision was made to transfer all casualties who could reasonably be moved from the southern area of operations to the Curragh Military Hospital. It is not clear why this was done but it may have had to do with availability of nursing staff in the Curragh Military Hospital due to QAIMNS nurses remaining on in both the military and family hospitals and as opposed to no nurses staying on in Cork. The Curragh Military Hospital remained the Chief Military Hospital until the end of the year when St Bricins assumed the role. The significance of this designation in the context of the army nurses is that the Matron of the Chief hospital assume the



Sister S. E. Martin was to become the first member of the ANS and the second Chief Matron at St Bricin's Military Hospital, Dublin, holding that post from 1930 to 1943

mantle of senior matron in the service. Throughout the remainder of 1922 the British Army continued to occupy most of the barracks in Dublin City and the King George V Military Hospital (St Bricins) until December. All remaining British military patients were evacuated, by sea, to Great Britain on the 13 December 1922 and those QAIMNS nursing sisters who elected to remain in British employment transferred to Britain by rail, through Northern Ireland, on the 15 December. King George V Military Hospital was handed over on 17 December 1922, the final day of the British evacuation and before the hospital was reopened in February 1923 it was renamed Saint Bricin's Military Hospital after Bricin the famous sixth century saint, scholar and pioneer surgeon famous in the annals of Irish history for his treatment of injured Irish warriors. A Director General of the Army Medical Services report of August 1922 recommended that in similar fashion to the British system, the Nursing

Staff of the Irish Army should be under the control of a Matron in Chief who would be responsible to the Director and be in charge of recruitment, staff allocation, duties, control and discipline of members of the Army Nursing Service. The appointment of a Matron in Chief was approved by the General Staff at a meeting with the Director of the Army Medical Services on 29 September 1922. The first Matron in Chief and Matron of St Bricins was Miss V. McLoughlin who held that post from 1923 until 1930 when she was succeeded by Miss S.E. Martin. A Johanna Murphy, who was a QAIMNS nurse



Matron in Chief McLoughlin

and whose address was given as 36 Casualty Clearing Station, British Army of the Rhine, Cologne applied on 25 January 1923 for the post of Matron in Chief, but did not prove to be successful.

Marlborough Hall, (Colaiste Caoimhin) Glasnevin, which had been used as a convalescent home for wounded British Army personnel, was taken over in late 1922 and the December 1922 Army Census showed that all the staff at the Hall at the time of the take over were all male orderlies. Later the convalescent home was used for the treatment and rehabilitation of Army casualties in the Civil War and the facility was placed under the management of a senior staff sister with two other staff sisters and ten nurses to assist.

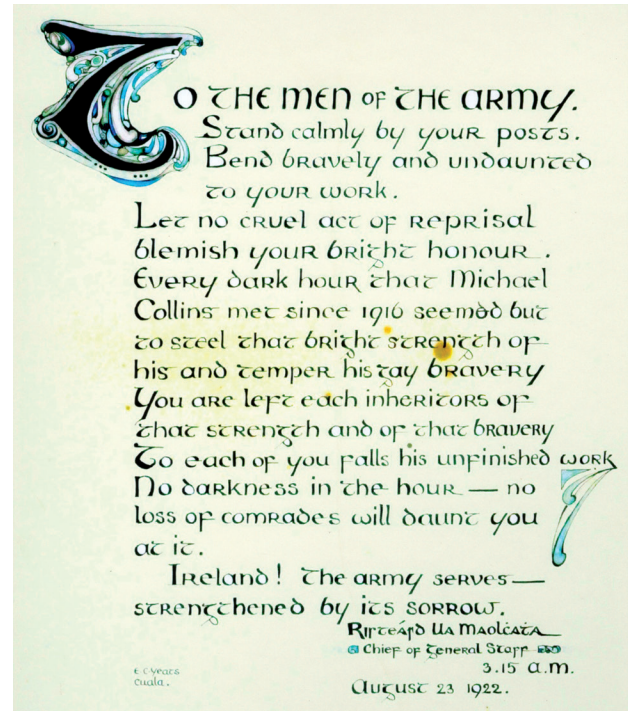
The Anglo-Irish Treaty caused deep divisions within the nationalist community where those who favoured acceptance argued that the powers it granted made it worthy of support with the only alternative being a renewal of war with Britain. The Treaty's opponents criticised it most for its failure to achieve the status of a republic for the entire island of Ireland. Debates in the Dáil on the Treaty became bitter and personal, eventually degenerating into the Anti-treaty IRA faction resorting to seizing the smaller Barracks and public buildings, as the British troops and civil servants departed. What eventually brought about civil war was the split in the ranks of the IRA, resulting in Michael Collins moving to build a new National Army from Pro-Treaty IRA units and in March 1922 the Anti-Treaty IRA called a convention and the majority repudiated the right of the Dail to dissolve the Republic. Both sides drifted towards irreconcilable differences with the question of who would occupy Limerick barracks being an issue of particular contention. In April a hardline Anti-Treaty IRA group under Rory O'Connor occupied the Four Courts, the centre of the courts system in Dublin, in defiance of the Provisional Government and the conditions of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Michael Collins managed to avert bloodshed in the short term by organising a pact with Eamon de Valera that some renegotiation of the Treaty would occur. In June 1922, the first elections in the Free State were held, Michael Collins' Pro-Treaty Sinn Fein won a majority of seats but just ten days later, continuing tensions over the Treaty sparked civil war into being. The Civil War began with a period of conventional type warfare in which the Pro-Treaty forces took Dublin after weeks of fighting and then proceeded

to secure the other towns and cities held by the Anti-Treaty forces, with the Anti-Treaty strongholds in Cork and Kerry being taken by sea in a series of landings in July and August 1922. The Civil war appeared as if it may have a reasonably swift ending but the Anti-treaty side reverted to the guerrilla tactics they had perfected during the War of Independence, tactics that included assassinations and the destruction of key buildings, bridges and other installations. On the 22nd August 1922, the Anti-treaty campaign claimed its most prominent victim when Michael Collins, head of the Provisional Government and Commander in Chief of the National Army was killed in an ambush in his native Cork. Arthur Griffith had also died of a stroke not long before so W. T. Cosgrave became President of the



Gen Richard Mulcahy

Provisional Government and Richard Mulcahy the Army Commander in Chief. He issued a message of restraint to the army in the early hours of 23 August 1922, when he was informed of Collins' death. By the autumn of 1922, the assassination of Collins, the continuance of the Anti-Treaty IRA's successful guerrilla campaign, the accumulation of losses within the National Army and the associated disruption to the establishment of a new government, resulted



in a build up of frustration and a loss of patience by the leaders of the National Army. In an effort to crush the Anti-Treaty IRA's campaign, the provisional government embarked upon a twin policy of interning the lesser of the Anti-Treaty players and in a more ruthless policy than Collins had adopted, the official and unofficial execution of the more significant Anti-Treaty fighters. This course of action in turn resulted in retaliation executions of the National Army troops by the Anti-Treaty forces. The first execution enacted by the National Army in

Dublin took place in November 1922 and resulted in the senior Anti-Treaty propagandist Erskine Childers being killed. In reprisal the IRA assassinated Pro-Treaty TD (member of parliament) Sean Hailes and in revenge for that, the National Army summarily executed the four IRA leaders who had occupied the Four Courts – Rory O'Connor, Liam Mellows, Joe McKelvey and Richard Barrett. In all approximately eighty republicans were officially executed and another one hundred and fifty assassinated or summarily killed in the field. The worst instance of the breakdown of the rule of law, occurred in Kerry, where in reprisal for a bomb attack in March 1923 that killed 5 National Army soldiers, seventeen IRA prisoners were killed in three separate incidents by way of being tied to landmines which were then detonated.

By the spring of 1923 due to a great deal of their numbers having been interned in the Curragh by the National Army, the republicans' campaign had been reduced mainly to destruction of property such as the railway lines and the houses of the old landed elite. Following the killing in action in April 1923 of Liam Lynch, the Anti-Treaty IRA leader, his successor Frank Aiken, at the urging of civilian republicans under Eamon de Valera, called a ceasefire and then in May 1923 ordered their remaining fighters to 'dump arms' and return home. There was no official ending to the civil war, no surrender was ever called and no formal end to the war was ever negotiated. The statement by Eamon de Valera on 27 April 1923 to Anti-Treaty forces to cease hostilities against the forces of the Free State was the nearest that came to an official ending. More Anti-Treaty activists were executed by the National

Army during the Civil War than had been executed by the British Forces, during the War of Independence.

The strength of the National Army grew to thirty-four thousand in September 1922 and fifty-six thousand in April 1923. During the first few months of the civil war the national army was run on an 'ad hoc' basis with Commanding Officers enlisting personnel as required and units being dispatched around the country as the operational situation demanded. By October 1922 the process of centralisation had begun with the issuing of the first Defence Order. This was followed in November by the first General Routine Order (GRO) which laid down weekly reporting procedures and centralised recruiting under the control of the Director of Organisation. In January 1923, GRO's were issued which divided the country into nine commands and established the organisation, location and strengths of the fifty-eight front line battalions as well as seven reserve battalions. The establishment also included many of the Corps which included the Medical Corps. The Adjutant General's was the Branch responsible for the recruitment and discipline of this young and improvised army. The great majority of the officers and many of the men had never seen service in any regular army but had a basic knowledge of military duties and discipline, by reason of their graduation into the Army from the old Volunteer units. The weekly reports of the Army Medical Corps of this time documented the strength, grades and locations of the Military nurses in situ to take care of the fledgling Army. Elections were held in August 1923 which were won by the Pro-Treaty party now organised as Cumman na nGaedheal. Many Anti-Treaty republican candidates were allowed to

participate in the election even though some were still imprisoned. Some of the Anti-Treaty internees went on hunger-strike in November 1923 and three died as

Location	Matron	Asst Matron	Staff Sister	Sister	Total
St Bricins	1	1	1	23	26
Curragh	1	1	1	10	13
Marlboro			3	10	13
Cork				3	3
Kerry				3	3
Athlone			1	3	4
Waterford				3	3
Total	2	2	6	55	65

part of the hunger strike, yet they were not released until mid 1924. Cumann na mBan had continued to exist after the Treaty, forming alongside Sinn Féin, the Irish Republican Army, Fianna Éireann and other groups, part of the Irish republican milieu. The government of the Irish Free State banned the organisation in January 1923 and opened up Kilmainham Jail as a detention prison for suspected women. Some of the prisoners who went on hunger-strike included in November 1923, members of Cumann na mBan and Military Hospital Army Nurses in particular nurses from St Bricins were required to nurse these women when they became seriously ill. In relation to the hunger-strike of republican prisoners in the Curragh, at its height six hundred and fifty prisoners were on hunger-strike and twenty medical officers, three dentists, one hundred medical orderlies and three nurses, were available to provide medical care. The Civil War left many damaging legacies and remained taboo in Ireland for many years, it left the Irish nationalist parties highly polarised and embittered and while the

total casualty list has never been definitively determined, the best estimates document fifteen hundred dead with some thousands more injured.

From a Military Nursing perspective the Civil War marked the progression towards the establishment of an exceptionally dedicated and experienced Army Nursing Service. During 1923 alone the number of admissions to St Bricins Hospital totaled 4,422, at a time when the number of admissions to the larger civilian hospital the Mater, totaled 1,500. In addition there were 2,943 admissions to the Curragh Military Hospital for the same period. The amount of medical and nursing work performed in both hospitals and throughout the military medical structure was herculean, where the smaller military hospitals, medical aid posts and clearing stations, processed assessed and immediately evacuated to the Curragh or St Bricins any case that required special or advanced treatment. The achievement was all the greater in the context of the fact that only about seventy-five percent of the nurses at the time were professionally trained. It was not just a case of the volume of admissions but also a high percentage of the wounded presented with injuries and complications which were at the highest end of the scale of difficulty.

In the Autumn of 1923 it was decided to reduce the strength of the army and to reorganise it for peacetime needs. Between 1923 and 1924 the Army strength was reduced by thirty thousand from 48,000 to 16,500 and the ANS did not escape the reductions. In April 1923 the ANS was reported to have a strength of eighty-two nurses and by the end of April 1924 this number had

been reduced to forty-five. The first significant task of the Matron in Chief in 1923, was to oversee the reduction process and this task was not made any easier by the prevailing circumstances of the time where numerous Military Nursing staff had been selected in accordance with their political connections and influence rather than upon their qualifications or competencies. In early November 1923 the addressing of this situation was commenced with the laying down of rules for the soon to be established Army Nursing Service, whereby all Army Nursing appointments were to be terminated on 1 April 1924 and those desiring to remain in their appointments were required to submit an application outlining their qualifications, agree to making themselves available for examination and to the requirement that they be of a medical standard that renders them fit for service. Details of the examination were circulated indicating that it would consist of a written paper followed by an oral element based upon Medical Nursing, Surgical Nursing and Hygiene, where special focus would be on Military aspects of nursing. At the end of November 1923 the Matron in Chief issued a circular to all serving nurses informing them that all intending applicants for posts within the soon to be formed Army Nursing Service would be required to reapply for their positions. The plan was to have the process completed by the commencement of the next financial year, with the financial year at the time running from 1 April to the 31 March. This process of demobbing also involved the Matron in Chief investigating the conduct and standard of performance of those who held appointments and as a result of the entire process, 37 nurses were demobilized. Reflecting the prevailing political and social tensions

of the time resultant from the Civil War, one reason given for the demobilisation of a nurse was that “she was seen wearing a Sinn Fein badge in her cap” and another documented reason was that “... she refused to tend the sick and wounded members of the National Army.” Of course such a reduction in numbers could not occur without some controversy and records show many instances of political and religious representations on behalf of those who were demobilised.

In a similar vein relating to demobilization, a small group of Officers lead mainly by former members of Collins’ intelligence unit, caused what was known as the Army Crisis, which was basically a protest by those officers objecting against demobilisation of the Army and the lack of progress towards a united Ireland, this protest evolved into what was given the grandiose title of the “Army Mutiny”. Without too much trouble, however, the official view was made to prevail and about 250 officers resigned or were discharged as a consequence of the crisis and then in the next twelve months 2,200 additional Officers were demobilized. The lasting significance of the “Mutiny” does not attach to the actual events associated with the protest but to the fact that in times of much tension, the situation was peacefully and amicably resolved, thus establishing the supremacy of democratic control over the Defence Forces. On 1 October 1924 the Executive Council of the new state, evoking the terms of the Defence Forces (Temporary Provisions) Act 1923, formally established the legal basis for Óglaigh na hÉireann and with it the formal establishment of the Army Nursing Service.

BETWEEN THE WARS

“Nurses are the heart of Medical Care”.
- Donna Candillo

The ANS was established so that all persons employed as female nurses with the Forces could be formed into a unit or service of the Defence Forces titled The Army Nursing Service, with this service to be administered by the Director of the Medical Corps, who may delegate authority for such administration to such persons as he may see fit. The service was established with fifty appointments, with grades and numbers associated with each grade as shown in the table.

Appointment	Total
Matron in Chief	1
Matrons	2
Staff Sisters	4
Masseuses	3
Sisters	40
Total	50

The de-mobbing process which had commenced in 1923 and was completed in 1924 had reduced the number of full time nurses to forty-five and in accordance with the process of establishment five additional nurses were taken on, to complete the numbers. The nurses contribution to the Forces during the Rising, War of Independence and the Civil War had been much regarded, so that the rates of pay for the ANS were set at a generous levels well above the rates being paid to their civilian counterparts. A nursing sisters annual pay was set at ninety pounds, whereas in comparisons the military medical orderlies who worked alongside the nurses, or to be more accurate, under nurse supervision, was sixty ponds.

In addition to the rates of pay, members of the ANS were also entitled to a uniform replenishment allowance and

Appointment	Total £'s
Matron in Chief	200
Matrons	150
Staff Sisters	110
Masseuses	100
Sisters	90

a laundry allowance, with furnished quarters, fuel, light and messing provided as part of conditions other than pay. Many of the nurses that had been de-mobbed and missed out on the permanent appointments were bitterly disappointed and this disappointment was accentuated by the fact that most of them had provided their services without payment or having received nominal payment. They approached the newly elected TD's to intervene on their behalf. One of the most interesting representations was made by Mr. Joseph McGinley, a Sinn Fein TD for Donegal, who wrote to ex General Richard Mulcahy who was then Minister for Defence in the third Dáil and complained that senior members of the nursing staff who had rendered service with good records were being paid off. He specifically referred to a sister of Count John McCormack the world renowned tenor and pointed out that it would seem desirable as a policy matter that a girl with such connections would be retained in the service. Despite the representations Miss McCormack was not retained in the service. The ANS commenced its formal existence providing nursing services to the forces from five locations. Even though a fine Military Hospital had been taken over from the British in Cork could not be used because access to

Appointment	Total
Curragh Military Hospital	23
St Bricins Military Hospital	17
Haulbowline Military Hospital	4
Athlone Military Hospital	5
Templemore Medical Post	1
Total	50

Cork Barracks was restricted by Anti Treaty Forces, Haulbowline Hospital was utilised by the Free State Army instead. For this reason also Templemore was required to be utilised by the Medical authorities. However the situation did not last long because within a few years both these establishments were denuded of their medical elements and the Military Hospital in Cork was reopened as the Primary Military Hospital for the Southern Region.

In 1924 it was reported that illness within the Nursing Service was at times alarming and that the issue was of such seriousness that nurses in the service had become permanently disabled. St Bricin's was identified as the location with the biggest problem, with records in relation to December 1923 showing that only thirteen of twenty nurses were ever available for duty at any given period. The causes of such a high and consistent level of absenteeism were deemed to be multiple, including - deplorable living conditions unfit for animals, extremely excessive work load, primitive dining conditions, anxiety and worry due to the political circumstances of the time. One of the first priorities of the Director of the Medical Corps and the Matron in Chief Angela McLaughlin was to rectify the conditions of work and this appears to have been achieved in a relatively short period. All of

the initial members of the ANS were required to sign a Declaration of Fidelity in which they did solemnly and sincerely swear that they would at all times bear full allegiance to the Irish State and its Constitution as by law established. It is probable that such a signing and declaration requirement was a legacy issue from the Civil War and the post Civil War tensions that still existed. In a particularly enlightened manner for the time and in a spirit of reconciliation, in late 1924 the Free State government passed the General Amnesty Act which covered all prisoners and all actions committed during the Civil War.

The Eucharistic Congress was held in Dublin in 1932 and this was an enormous event for a fledgling state, the numbers attending were extraordinary where it is estimated that one in three of the adult population attended the events of the congress. The Defence Forces were tasked heavily with ceremonial and administrative commitments. As part of the administrative commitments the Medical Corps and the Nursing Service were involved in the provision of medical cover and assistance for the events.

The final public mass of the congress was held in Phoenix Park before an altar designed by the eminent Irish Architect John J. Robinson of Robinson & Keefe Architects, and was celebrated by Michael Joseph Curley, Archbishop of Baltimore. John McCormack, the world famous Irish Tenor whose sister was a member of the nursing service prior to its formal establishment, sang beautifully and inspirationally at the mass. Approximately one in four of the adult population of

Ireland attended this mass alone and afterwards four processions left the Park to parade to O'Connell Street where approximately half a million people gathered on O'Connell Bridge for the concluding blessing given by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Lorenzo Lauri.

A feature of service within the ANS during this period was the frequent changes of station. An example being that Sister Sarah McPhillips nursed in St Bricins from April to December in 1924, December 1924 to September 1925 in the Curragh, September 1924 to July 1927 in Haulbowline and July 1927 to May 1930 back in the Curragh.

Tuberculosis remained a national scourge throughout the period and the ANS was actively involved in the early identification of any symptoms among members of the Forces and the treatment of those inflicted with the disease. Any newly appointed members of the ANS were required to have fever qualifications and received an additional allowance if they were involved in the care of TB patients. A feature of ANS service during this period was the frequent transfer of members between Military Hospitals. The availability of opportunities in civilian life for highly trained experienced nurses and the requirement for compulsory retirement in the event of marriage, led to a high instances of retirement from the service. In line with the marked reduction of numbers within the Permanent Defence Forces there appeared to be a policy to fill very few of the vacancies and as a result the numbers within the ANS gradually reduced down to the point where there were only twelve members of the service at the outbreak of WW II.



The picture is of members of the nursing staff in the Curragh Military Hospital at the time of the establishment of the ANS, with Sister Mary Ward (back row centre) the only person that can be identified.

Throughout this period the Matron in Chief from 1923 to 1930 was Angela McLaughlin and she was succeeded in the appointment by Matron in Chief Martin who filled the appointment until 1943 and was the last Matron to be given the title of Matron in Chief.

THE EMERGENCY

"Let us pray that peace be now restored to the world, and that God will preserve it always"
- General Douglas MacArthur

The Emergency or An Éigeandáil was an official euphemism used in the 1940's to refer to the Government's adopted position during the Second World War. The country remained neutral during the whole of the war, with the Government declaring a state of emergency on 2 September 1939, and the Oireachtas enacting the Emergency Powers Act the following day and at this time, the Defence Forces mobilised at a strength of less than 20,000. The Act gave sweeping new powers to the government for the duration of the Emergency, including internment, censorship of the press and correspondence, government control of the economy and expansion of the Defence Forces. On the 7 June 1940 following the German invasion of Europe, the Dáil amended the Defence Forces Act to authorise the enlistment of personnel on a temporary basis for the duration of the Emergency. Thus creating a new class of soldier and nurse, known as the Emergency Durationist or the E-Man and E-Nurse.



In 1939 the Defence Forces had the capacity to mobilise at a strength of less than 20,000. A recruiting campaign was immediately commenced to facilitate the rapid development of an effective fighting force.

In May of 1941 the strength of the Emergency Army reached a high point almost forty-one thousand with the Local Defence Force having a strength in 1943 of one hundred and six thousand. The Medical Corps and the ANS had to significantly increase its strength in order to meet the medical and nursing needs of such an expanded force. Mobilisation saw the formation of two divisions and two independent brigades. The First Division, under Major General M. J. Costello, had its headquarters in Cork while the Second Division, under Major General Hugo McNeill, had its headquarters in Carton House, Maynooth. The independent 5 and 8 Brigades were based in the Curragh and in Rineanna (now Shannon Airport) respectively. The traditional area based Commands that existed at the commencement of the Emergency, relinquished responsibility for field operations and assumed the roles of continuing to undertake all garrison duties, all training including recruit training and the organisation of the Local Defence Force. The Army Medical Services entered the period of the Emergency under the directorship of Col T.J. McKinney who describe the medical services in existence at the time, as a set up and strength that presented as little more than a cadre. The total strength of the ANS was twelve nurses and the remainder of the Medical Services reflected similar inadequate strengths. Plans were effected to significantly bolster the ANS numbers deployed in the existing Military

Hospitals in St Bricins, Curragh, Cork and Athlone, with additional Auxiliary Hospitals opened in St Mobhi's in the Phoenix Park, St Enda's in Galway, Mallow General Hospital and Ballinasloe General Hospital. These hospitals were to provide for possible active service casualties should hostilities break out. The Emergency establishment of the ANS eventually was determined and the table outlines it in detail.

Hospital	No. of beds	Total Apps
Curragh	260	26
St Bricins	130	13
Cork	115	13
Athlone	40	3
Mallow	240	3
Galway	210	4
Ballinasloe	200	
St Mobhi	310	
Blood Serv		3
Total	1,405	248

The total strength of 248 in the ANS included a Matron in Chief who was tasked with the following functions: Maintenance of Discipline. Reporting upon all members of the ANS. Distribution and deployment of all members of the ANS. Periodic inspections of Sisters quarters, all



The nursing staff of the St Mobhi's Military Hospital pictured during the Emergency on the occasion of having completed a religious retreat



The nursing staff of St Bricins Military hospital pictured outside the main entrance to the hospital during the Emergency, with the Matron in Chief S. E. Martin



The nursing staff of the Curragh Military Hospital pictured in front of the hospital during the Emergency

members of the ANS and identify/report any matter that may be detrimental to the efficiency of the service. Men and nurses enlisting under the Emergency recruiting program were subject to and benefitted from the same conditions of service as regulars except that applicants were eligible for enlistment up to 40 years of age.

There was a national call to arms and the reservists were soon to become the bulk of the Armed Forces and the ANS. The ANS shared in the vast expansion in manpower in order to provide nursing capacity for the hugely increased numbers of personnel, to man the additional Auxiliary Hospitals deemed to be required if hostilities broke out and free up the military medical hospital orderlies to leave the hospitals and adopt a new role in training and casualty clearing. In February 1941 the ANS experienced its largest ever intake of nurses into the service. Following interview, x-raying, and medical examinations, one hundred and thirty-eight were appointed on the same day.

The table below gives a breakdown of the geographical deployment of these temporary appointees.

County	Numbers	County	Numbers
Carlow	3	Limerick	5
Cavan	4	Longford	3
Cork	20	Mayo	5
Clare	6	Meath	1
Derry	1	Monaghan	3
Donegal	2	Roscommon	7
Dublin	4	Sligo	4
Cork	20	Waterford	6
Galway	13	Wexford	1
Kerry	3	Wicklow	1
Kildare	2	Westmeath	3
Laois	1	Total	138
Leitrim	2		

Two of these nurses were sisters Mary and Kathleen Condon from Mallow, Co. Cork. On joining the ANS these two sisters were to experience the major change in role and operability within the ANS which the Emergency effected. The ANS was no longer to be a pseudo-supervisory service, supervising medical orderlies otherwise known as male nurses, but were to embrace the full gambit of medical and nursing functions. The mass influx of young, enthusiastic, highly trained and confident doctors and nurses revitalised Military Medicine at a time when new procedures such as blood transfusions and chemotherapy were becoming standard practice in civilian hospitals. It must have made for a very interesting situation when the new recent arrivals to the service were procedurally more advanced than the old sweats, however all records show that the merger of the experienced and newly advanced was in the main seamless with morale very high and behavior impeccable. The religious order training would have provided the new entrants with an engrained respect for experience and authority. One of the new roles that



Blood Transfusion

was taken on by the ANS was to assist the Blood Transfusion Service to increase blood reserves in anticipation of casualties, one staff sister and ten sisters were assigned on a continuous basis to this task.

Another role which the ANS acquired during the emergency was to perform the function of independent assessors at Irish Red Cross first aid examinations.



This role was retained until the late seventies. Pictured below is the Ballinrobe Red Cross during the emergency, stepping lightly.

An additional role which the ANS were required to perform during the emergency was to provide nursing care to the internees in the Curragh. There were three categories of internees in three different camps in the Curragh K Lines. IRA internees occupied one camp, captured Allied Air Force personnel occupied a second camp and captured Axis airmen and seamen occupied a third. Approximately 170 aircraft crashed or force landed on Irish territory during the Emergency with the first occurrence on 20 May 1940.



The story of the rescue, care for and internment of the 164 German seamen rescued by the MV Kerlogue in the Bay of Biscay is one of the great heroic humanitarian stories of not just the Emergency but also WWII. On December 29, 1943, while sailing to Dublin from Lisbon, the Kerlogue's crew spotted a German long-range reconnaissance aircraft circling it, signalling 'SOS.' She altered her course at the plane's request and came upon 700 men in the sea on rafts or clinging to wreckage, having abandoned ship following attack. Chief officer Valencie of the Kerlogue described the scene in an interview with writer Frank Forde for the book 'The Long Watch':

'As rafts rose into view on the crests of the giant waves, we could see men on them and others clinging to their sides. At first we did not know whether they were Allied or Axis until somebody noticed the long ribbons trailing downward from behind a seaman's cap, which denoted they were German Navy men.'

Lt Commander Joachim Quedenfelt, the highest-ranking German rescued, later wrote of:

'the little ship bravely moving through the enormous waves to pick up more and more of my comrades.'

For at least 10 hours, until well after sunset, the Kerlogue's crew pulled 168 men unto their boat. There was no doctor on board, but the Kerlogue's crew treated the Germans as best they could, cabins, storerooms, and alleyways were soon packed with

shivering, soaked and sodden men, others were placed in the engine room where it became so crowded that Chief Engineer Eric Giggins could not move around to attend his machinery, and so by signs as none spoke English – he got the survivors to move the instruments he could not reach. Lt Commander Quedenfelt asked that the ship travel to German controlled La Rochelle in France to land his men, but Tom Donohue, Captain of the Kerlogue, refused and headed the ship back to Ireland and also ignored British instructions to go to Fishguard, on the Welsh coast. The ship was carrying a cargo of oranges and they had to be distributed to the rescued seamen to keep them sustained. The vessel arrived in Cork Harbour on New Year's Day at 0230 hrs with three of the sailors dead, another barely alive and eighteen requiring hospitalisation. Helmuth Weiss a twenty-six year old German navy seaman was transferred to Cork Military Hospital along with some of his colleagues while the remainder were admitted to Cork Fever Hospital. Helmuth Weiss was admitted to the hospital at 0415 hrs on New Years Day 1944, he was examined by a Comdt Hogan, placed in the care of and made comfortable by Matron Joy but he passed away at 1540 hrs on the same day. A Cork City Coroner's report recorded the following:

'Helmuth Weiss deceased, late of Breslau Germany, seaman in the Imperial German Navy, aged 26, unmarried, died at Collins Barracks Cork, on 1st Jan 1944, and his death was caused, as we believe, from toxæmia as a result of gas gangrene the result of belligerent action on the high seas.'

Leading Seaman Weiss was buried with full military honours in the German War Cemetery at Glencree, Co. Wicklow.

The rescued Germans were transported to the Curragh Internment Camp and were later joined by their injured colleagues who were still being cared for in March of 1944. The rescued sailors all remained in the Curragh



until the war was over. Another of the seamen who perished, a Lieutenant Braatz is also buried in the German War Cemetery at Glencree. Matron Joy subsequently received a letter of thanks from

the German Ambassador to Ireland, for all the medical assistance rendered to the injured sailors. All foreign servicemen who died in Ireland during the Emergency were rendered full military honours throughout the repatriation or the internment of the bodies.

In late 1941 while arrangements were made to design and procure a uniform for the LDF the realisation descended upon the relevant military authorities that since its establishment in 1924 the ANS had never been supplied with a uniform. Conditions of their service required ANS members to provide their own indoor uniform and be reimbursed by way of a uniform allowance. Because it was planned for and envisaged that ANS were to be tasked with roles outside of the hospital environment with some possible

operational element, an outdoor uniform was deemed to be essential. Outdoor and indoor uniforms were designed and procured post haste and were supplied and distributed in May of 1943. In June 1943 a photo shoot and press release was arranged to launch the new uniforms. The picture below appeared in the Irish Independent in June 1943.



The press release was to prepare and familiarise the public with the new uniforms. Until June 1943, the general population had been almost unaware that Army Nurses were a separate organisation distinct from their sisters in civilian hospitals.

On 18 May 1943 the then Officer Commanding St Bricins Hospital Comdt Peter Fahy made a detailed case in writing to the Director of Medical Services, indicating the necessity for a radiographer and a theatre nurse to be added to the establishment of the ANS, his principle argument was that it was no longer acceptable to be running a hospital without such expertise and that the establishing and filling of the appointments would be cost effective in that it would help to reduce the risk of

possible claims. The submission proved to be successful and by the end of the year the appointments had been filled. In addition in 1944 physiotherapists were appointed to the ANS replacing the old appointments of masseuses. The Emergency brought rapid advancement for the older members of the ANS who up to 1940 could see no prospect of advancement, in 1943 Matron Mullen took over as Senior Matron of the ANS and the Matron in Chief designation was discontinued, she was the third head matron in the ANS. The influx of numerous attractive, social and energetic nurses to St Bricins, Curragh and Cork added greatly to the social scene. There was a marked increase in young officers going sick for the flimsiest of reasons for introductions to be effected and for several years there was a high marriage rate in the ANS to members of the Forces. At the commencement of the Emergency a ninety-six hour fortnight was successfully put in place for nursing duties and one of the reasons cited for the successful introduction of this scheme was the low instances of sickness or absenteeism in the ANS due to the extremely high morale. Overall the experience of the temporary emergency nurses was a positive one where they benefitted from and enjoyed their service and the organisation and the provision of military health care greatly improved as a direct result of their temporary service. In addition the Emergency was responsible for a marked expansion of voluntary aid activity throughout Ireland and increased membership of the Irish Red Cross Society. The Emergency Powers Act lapsed on 2 September 1946 and the country began its return to normal.

At approximately 1400 hrs on Monday 12 August 1946 a French military style Junkers 52 aircraft on route from Le Bourget to Dublin, having encountered bad weather crashed into Djouce Mountain in Wicklow. There were 30 French Girl Guides aged from 14 to 22 on board, who had been invited by their Irish counterparts on a holiday to assist their recovery from the trauma of the war. Capitain Habez an experienced ex-military pilot could not prevent the sudden impact as the aircraft struck the side of the mountain. All the passengers in the cabin were thrown around like rag dolls, as most



of them were not strapped in and some were sitting on the floor. After the initial impact the aircraft bounced back into the air and hit the ground a second time before it slewed violently for another 150 yards ripping off the undercarriage and the engines. The pilot and two of the older girl guides set out to raise the alarm. Four hours later they reached Enniskerry and a massive rescue operation commenced. Due to the horrendous weather the crash site was not located until midnight. Human chains had to be formed for support as the 50 mph winds and driving mist hampered the search and rescue. Carrying the injured down the mountain to the waiting ambulances was dangerous due to lodging water and steep incline. Eventually despite the worst of the elements the injured crew and girl guides were transported by a fleet of ambulances to St Michael's in Dun Laoghaire and St Bricin's Military Hospital. St Bricin's at the time was still staffed and operating to the standards

established for the Emergency. Lt Col Laffan OC of the Hospital was called in early on Tuesday morning and he recorded the follow in his diary, regarding the incident:

"Found great commotion as seven French girls have been admitted during the night after they were involved in a plane crash in Wicklow. Some of them are severely injured. They were all suffering from shock and hypothermia. Six were operated upon immediately."

Their injuries were very severe including broken bones, lacerations and a fractured skull. Their condition was described as seriously ill and concern existed as to whether some would survive. Ward One was dedicated to their care so as to keep them all together. They all



eventually made a full recovery and were discharged from the hospital on 10th Sept after a 28 day stay. Fifty two years later five of the group returned to Ward One where they were greeted by Lt Col Browne, Col Laffan, Lt Col

McCarty and Matron Crowley on behalf of the ANS who cared for them so well. The five returnees received a great welcome with the Le Tricolore flying and were all presented with a copy of their medical files as a souvenir. The five senior girl guides were photographed in Ward One to mark the occasion. All five commented upon the memorable standard of care and attention they received from the nurses in Bricin's during their admittance.

POST EMERGENCY

"Writing about the 1950's has given me a tremendous respect for my mother's generation"
- Sara Sheridan

At the end of the Emergency the strength of the Defence Forces was reduced to an establishment of 12,500. The Regular Army was then composed of three Brigades and by March 1947 the strength had dropped further to 8,803. The end of the Emergency saw the ANS going through a second demobbing process, however on this occasion it did not prove to be as acrimonious as the 1923/24 demobbing. Most of the emergency temporary appointees to the ANS were young, had just completed their training and joined the Forces for the duration of the Emergency in a patriotic sense of adventure. They were happy to return to their intended civilian careers at the end of the Emergency. A post emergency permanent ANS establishment was approved which allowed for one hundred members. An Interview Board was convened for the purpose of assessing the temporary members of the ANS who applied for permanent status. Following the interviews the majority, one hundred and twelve were recommended as suitable for appointment. With effect from the 31 Dec 1947, eighty-two were taken on permanently, three Theatre nurses, five Radiographers, two Physiotherapists and seventy-four sisters and in addition a further thirteen sisters were retained temporarily on a month to month basis to meet the immediate needs of the Forces. Also effective from the 31 Dec 1947 were retiring ages for members of the ANS, they were fixed at: Matrons, Physiotherapists, Radiographers retiring age of sixty-five, Staff sisters and Theatre Sisters retiring age of sixty and Sisters retiring



Recruits being tested for TB

age of fifty-five. Throughout this period Tuberculosis or Consumption continued to be the primary health issue within the State and the Forces. In 1944 the construction of a Military TB Hospital in the grounds of St Brigid's commenced, or as the plans of the time reflect, a TB Clearing Station. The Defence Force Printing Press, Central Medical Unit and Directorate of Medical Branch now occupy the buildings. At the end of the Emergency the Military TB Clearing Station went into service staffed by members of the ANS and was in situ when TB was at its most virulent, in the 1950's. Prior to the availability of penicillin the nature of TB treatment was such that it required long periods of convalescence and as a result there was a requirement for DFR A 12 to be amended in respect of the duration of Sick Leave that was tolerated before the commencement of Medical Boards procedures.



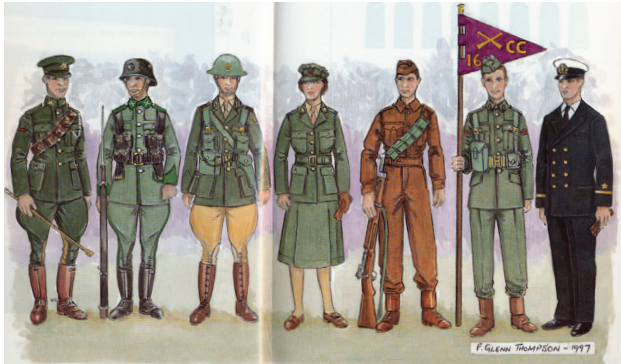
In 1946, the development of the miracle antibiotic streptomycin made effective treatment and cure of TB a reality. Prior to the introduction of this drug, the only treatment (except confinement to and compliance with the sanatoria regime) was surgical intervention, which involved collapsing an infected lung to “rest” it and allow tuberculosis lesions to heal. The Medical Corps was the first medial institution within the State to be certified to administer streptomycin, its general use turned the tide against the epidemic and eventually TB cases declined progressively to the point where the TB Clearing Station was no longer needed. From the mid 1960's onwards it was used as a home for the care of retired disability pensioners who had earned a pension by way of military service.

In 1948 the Auxiliary Military Hospitals in Galway and Ballinasloe were closed and the nursing resources were redeployed to Athlone where the existing facility was developed into a fifty bed hospital to cater for the needs of the Western Command. An Bord Altranais (Irish Nursing Board) was established by the Nurses Act 1950 to take over the functions of two bodies,

the Central Midwives Board and the General Nursing Council, which had been established in 1918. It is the statutory body that regulates the nursing and midwifery profession in Ireland, providing for the registration, control and education of nurses. It maintains the national register of nurses and midwives who having undergone the appropriate education and may practice as nurses, it can also remove nurses and midwives from the register if they are proven to be unfit to practice. From its inception all members of the ANS were registered with the Nursing Board and were represented by the Irish Nursing Organisation and Matron Margaret Kilduff served as an executive officer with the INO. Thus the ANS became the first members of the Defence Forces to have officially recognised representation, it was not until 1991 that PDFORRA and RACO came into being to provide representation for the remainder of the Forces.



In 1949 Mr Glen Thompson who worked with the Automobile Association of Ireland and had a lifelong interest in military uniforms decided to complete a painting of the ANS outdoor uniform. He photographed Sister Lynch, who later became Senior Matron in 1965, in outdoor uniform and used the photographs as the basis of his ANS sisters uniform sketch. In



1999, Donal McCarron published his book about the Emergency called *Step Together*, a book based upon the recollections of Emergency veterans and in preparing the book he commissioned Glen Thompson to produce a painting of the uniforms in use in Ireland during the Emergency. Glen Thompson incorporated his original sketch of the ANS uniform into the series of uniforms painting and McCarron included it in his book as a double page, featuring uniforms in use during the Emergency.

In 1952 members of ANS were offered a commission by the Minister for Defence but they declined the offer and the reason for such a decision is unclear. Probably fear of unknown and maintenance of the status quo may explain what appears to be an unusual collective decision but it is strongly maintained in the oral history of the service that the reason for the refusal of the commission was that such a move would have altered the trusting sister-patient relationship which had been painstakingly developed by the ANS throughout its

existence and which was an invaluable element of the nursing service.

In 1954 the ANS was incorporated in Part 9 of the Defence Act, where it was provided for in sections 288 to 292 and as a consequence DFR A14 came into being. Ireland became a member of the United Nations in 1955 and in 1958 sent military observers on a UN mission to the Middle East (UNOGIL). This was the beginning of the Defence Forces' involvement in overseas service, which continues to this day. Between 1947 and 1956 Matron Joy and Matron Mullen interchanged as Senior Matron of the ANS and in 1956 Matron Philips became the fifth head Matron, she was the last of the pioneer 1924 members, in fact she commenced service on April Fool's day 1924 and reached her retirement age of 65 in January 1962, following thirty-eight years of service.



Curragh Military Hospital

OVERSEAS MISSIONS AND REFUGEES

"Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved by understanding"

- Albert Einstein

Since joining the United Nations in 1958, the Irish Defence Forces have built a reputation as the source of some of the world's finest peacekeepers. For nearly seventy-five years, generations of Irish Defence Forces personnel have served in some of the most troubled areas in the world in the service of peace. Apart from improving the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people all over the world, the accumulative achievement of all the overseas service is that it has become one of the most important expressions of Irish Foreign Policy, resulting in an immense amount of goodwill towards Ireland from the international community. Wherever our troops have gone, they have left a lasting impression as peacekeepers and humanitarians of the highest standard. What has distinguished them over the years is a unique combination of professional excellence with an overriding respect for the dignity of all whom they encounter regardless of race, colour, creed or circumstance. The Irish Defence Forces in tandem with Irish Foreign affairs and its policy has managed to establish such a reputation by clearly recognising that the difficult job of maintaining peace stands hollow if it is not combined with the provision of humanitarian support and assistance to the local communities in their attempts to rebuild their lives and societies. Such a military and humanitarian effort that is the entirety of the Defence Forces overseas missions cannot be achieved without logistical and medical backup and in this regard the ANS has played its part with all the pre-deployment

medicals and inoculation programs. In June 1958 fifty officers were deployed to the first ever mission, an observer mission in the Lebanon, United Nations Observer Group in Lebanon (UNOGIL). At the end of that year the mission became United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO). In July 1960, the first ever Irish unit to be deployed overseas arrived in its area of operations in the CONGO as part of the Organisation des Nations du Congo (ONUC), it was the 32 Infantry Battalion, was commanded by Lt Col Buckley and consisted of 689 all ranks. They were joined in August by the 33 Infantry Battalion commanded by Lt Col Bunworth and consisting of 706 all ranks. The medical preparation and inoculation of 1395 troops in a limited time frame constituted an enormous effort by the Medical Corps and the ANS.



The photograph above shows Sisters Joan Moriarty, Eileen Graham, Celine Kelly and Kay Grommell inoculating members of the 32 Battalion in the Curragh

Military Hospital. From 1960 to the present date the ANS has been involved with every single member of the Defence Forces prior to deployment overseas and subsequent to deployment where necessary. The interest and pride in those troops going to the Congo and the associated beneficial impact upon the national moral and national esteem



804536 Pte Matthew Farrell,
Age: 22, Killed in Action
Unit: No 2 Hospital Company
Military Service: 4 Years
Address: Swords, Co. Dublin

was palatable at the time and the crowds that turned out in O'Connell Street for the parade of the overseas Battalions was St Patrick's Day-esque, only to be exceeded by the display of national mourning that occurred just three months later for the burial cortege of the nine Irish troops killed in the Niamba Ambush. The ambush and massacre occurred on 8 November 1960, when a patrol in the Congo was ambushed and decimated by native Baluba Tribesmen, the dead included Pte Matthew Farrell of the 2 Hospital Company.

The picture opposite shows the military funeral of Pte Farrell and his comrades in Glasnevin Cemetery. In 1960 a song titled The Irish Patrol was written by an RTE program producer Dick O'Donovan as a tribute to the Irish Soldiers who lost their lives in the ambush. The singer of the song was Patrick O'Hagan, father of Johnny Logan (who served in the FCA prior to his Eurovision



wins). The song was released in Ireland, UK, Australia, and New Zealand and is believed to be the only tribute song recorded to honour Irish Troops killed on Peace Keeping duties. Sadly 85 members of the Defence Forces have paid the ultimate price in the name of peace throughout the years, their sacrifice and the void that their passing left in the lives of their spouses, children, families, friends and colleagues must never be forgotten.

Ireland's contribution to World peace and stability is a reflection of a nation that cares about their fellow human beings and possess a fundamental obligation to do what is possible to defend the fundamental rights of others, not out of colonial, economic or self interest but because it is the right thing to do as part of a vigilant and caring international community.

The Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes is held annually in May under the auspices of the Head Chaplain and is a gathering of Military and Civil Defence personnel from around the globe. It began at the end of World

War II being started by the French and German armies following the cessation of hostilities. The Irish Defence Forces commenced attendance in 1958 and have travelled on an annual basis since that time. The Military Pilgrimage to Lourdes is attended by military contingents from forty countries involving approximately twenty thousand personnel. The ANS has always had an affinity with the pilgrimage, while in Lourdes the ANS have an opportunity to interact with their colleagues from around the world and remember deceased members of the service. The ANS also nursed and cared for the invalid military pilgrims. The 1962 Pilgrimage had one of the biggest ANS elements and the picture below shows fifteen ANS members in the second row, outside the entrance to the Basilica of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Sisters Breda Scannell and Veronica Shortall were the stalwarts of the ANS in respect of the Lourdes trips.



In 1968 Athlone Military Hospital was closed as part of economy measures picture at the entrance of Athlone Military Hospital is the staff of the Hospital on the day of the closure.



In August 1969, Northern Ireland exploded into violence and civil turmoil resulting in families being displaced and crossing the border to seek refuge in the South. The Defence Forces were tasked by the Government to affect an immediate response to cater for the refugees' immediate needs such as food, shelter, sanitary and medical requirements. The ANS was incorporated in the plan to set up Reception Centres along the Border. From the 14 August 1969 members of the ANS were deployed along the border in the biggest operational commitment in the history of the service. Sisters Kelleher, O'Connell, O'Keefe, Burke, Hardiman, O'Donnell, Phelan, O'Brien, Briody, and Harbisson were initially stationed in Dundalk. Sisters Ferguson, Murray, Scannell, Crowley, Lenihan were initially stationed in Castleblaney. Sisters Nally, Ward, McDonagh and McCarty were initially stationed in Cavan. Sisters O'Hagan and Cafferty were initially stationed in Finner. The reception centres eventually directed the refugees to Gormanston Camp which was set up as the main accommodation centre and when numbers were at their maximum. The Glen of Imaal, Kilworth and Templemore were also incorporated in the plans. Sisters Farrell, Winston, Callaghan, Dillon, Lynch, Casey, Macken,

Murray, Fitzpatrick, Hegarty, Macken, Casey and Buggle were stationed in Gormanston. By the end of 1969, the military authorities were satisfied that the army with the unprecedented contribution of the ANS had acted with speed and effectiveness in dealing with the initial influx of refugees. It was also believed that in the months after the arrival of the first refugees, substantial



Sisters O'Hagan and Cafferty with Medial Officers Sean Dunne and Michael Walshe in Finner Camp during August 1969.

improvements in the accommodation, comfort, catering and well being of the refugees had been achieved and the billets in Gormanston had been improved with additional amenities.

The ANS commitment continued until August 1971 when eventually responsibility for the situation was taken over by the local authorities. With this almost total commitment to the Belfast Refugee operation, the Military Hospitals were denuded of their staff, medical orderlies provided some of the cover that was needed but the majority was provided by retired ANS members returning on short term contracts. The ANS contribution to the refugee operation clearly demonstrated what they and women were capable of in a military environment, when given the opportunity and was instrumental in reopening the debate of allowing women into the Defence Forces.

In the mid 1960's the Military TB Hospital was no longer required for that purpose and it became a home for those patriots who had served during the Rising, War of Independence and the Civil War who had received disability pensions. Each Saturday a special sick parade was held in St Bricins to cater for their needs. The most notable of those who benefited from these services was General Sean MacEoin who had lived an extraordinary life.

He came to prominence in the War of Independence as leader of an Irish Republican Army (IRA) flying column. In November 1920, he led the local column in attacking British Forces in Granard during one of the periodic government reprisals, forcing them to retreat to their barracks. The next day, he held the village of Ballinalee against superior British forces, forcing them to retreat and abandon their ammunition. At an ambush at Clonfin he ordered his men to care for the wounded British, at the expense of captured weaponry.



General Sean MacEoin

This earned him both praise and criticism, but became a big propaganda boost for the war effort, especially in the United States. He was admired by many within the IRA for leading practically the only effective column in the midlands. He was wounded during capture by the British at Mullingar railway station in March 1921, imprisoned and sentenced to death for the murder of

an RIC Inspector. His wounds were treated and nursed in George V Hospital (St Bricins) under guard. Michael Collins sought the aid of Dr. Brigid Lyons Thornton, heroine of the Easter Rising to attempt to spring him from custody. In 1922, Dr Brigid Lyons Thornton became the first commissioned woman in the Irish Army serving as a Medical Officer. She was demobilised in 1924, suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis, the rescue attempt never materialised because he was moved to Mountjoy Prison.

Sean Mac Eoin was eventually released from prison, along with all other members of the Dáil, after Collins threatened to break off treaty negotiations with London unless he and others were freed. It was rumoured that he was to be the best man at Collins' wedding. In the debate on the Anglo-Irish Treaty MacEoin seconded Arthur Griffith's motion that it should be accepted. MacEoin joined the National Army and was appointed GOC Western Command in June 1922. In the Irish Civil War, he pacified the west of Ireland for the new Free State, marching overland to Castlebar and linking up with a seaborne expedition that landed at Westport. For the rest of the 1920s his military career was a steady upward curve: he was appointed GOC Curragh Training Camp in August 1925, Quartermaster General in March 1927, and Chief of Staff in February 1929. From 1929 he pursued a political career, was elected at a by-election to Dáil Éireann for the Leitrim/Sligo constituency. At the 1932 general election he moved to the constituency of Longford/Westmeath and served the Longford area as TD in either Longford/Westmeath (1932–37, 1948–65) or Athlone/Longford (1937–48) until he was defeated at the 1965 general election.

During a long and distinguished political career he served as Minister for Justice (February 1948 – March 1951) and Minister for Defence (March–June 1951) in the First Inter-Party Government, and again as Minister for Defence (June 1954 – March 1957) in the Second Inter-Party Government. He unsuccessfully stood twice as candidate for the office of President of Ireland, against Seán T. O'Kelly in 1945, and Éamon de Valera in 1959. It was he who was instrumental in arranging for the ANS to be offered Commissions in the 1950's. He has the distinction of being among the few who was nursed by the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service and the Army Nursing Service. He was nursed by the ANS for a number of years in the old TB Hospital and on 7 July 1973, he passed away peacefully in St Bricins Military Hospital. When his funeral cortege left the hospital the road from St Bricins to Infirmary Road was lined with a Guard of Honour made of up surviving Old IRA colleagues and friends. Sean MacEoin was an outstanding patriot, soldier, public representative and human being, he did not forget those who had earned his gratitude, he held the ANS in the highest of regard and paid the service the ultimate compliment by allowing the ANS the privilege and honour of caring for him in his final months. In July 1973 the Civil Service (Employment of Married Women) Bill was passed paving the way for the then Government to removed the marriage ban for nurses. In 1962 Matron McGloin took over as Senior Matron, she was followed in 1965 by Matron Lynch who was the first of the Emergency appointed members to hold the appointment, in 1968 Matron Malone took over and in 1974 Matron Phelan was appointed.

CHANGING TIMES

"The Trained Nurse has become one of the great blessings of humanity"

- William Osler MD

In November 1975, An Cosantoir ran a series of articles on the subject of Women in the Defence Forces, obviously the ANS was focused upon and an excellent article was written by Lt Col Laffan on the history of the ANS. A photo shoot was planned to incorporate the medical evacuation or hospital flights capacity of the Irish Air Corps Alouette III. Sister Mary Crowley was selected to represent the ANS and what resulted was an iconic series of photographs (involving the expertise of the Photographic Section in Baldonnel).

A beautiful photograph of Sister Crowley appeared on the cover of the issue, which captured succinctly the caring and friendly nature of the service and was the one and only occasion when a member of the ANS adorned the cover of An Cosantoir. Sister Crowley was affectionately known as the Poster Girl of the ANS and later went on to be Senior Matron from 1997 to 2003.



On the 26 May 1977, a terrible training accident occurred in the Glen of Imaal that resulted in five soldiers from Cork losing their lives Cpl Gerald O'Donovan, Privates Donal Nugent, Cornelius Buckley, Daniel O'Connell and Anthony Hourihan. Two soldiers M. Sheehan and F. Haugh were seriously injured, but survived and required an extended period of care medical attention and convalescence under the care of the ANS, Curragh Military Hospital. The immediate emergency response to the tragic incident, the care rendered in the Curragh Military Hospital and the heart rendering memorial service held in Ward 8 of the hospital prior to the Funeral Services remains indelible in the minds of those involved.



The picture above shows the service held in Ward 8, with the relatives of the deceased praying before the coffins of their loved ones, President of Ireland Patrick Hillary, Carl O'Sullivan COS and ANS members Nora O'Shaughnessy, Kathleen O'Connell, Mary Nancy Corrigan, Bella Kilmartin, Kay Crowley and Margaret Kilduff.

In 1981 Sister Marlena Healy nee Voigt became a member of the ANS. Her joining completed an amazing family story which began fifty years previously. Her father Arthur Voigt was a navigator in the German Luftwaffe during WW II. On 03 March 1941 while part-taking in a reconnaissance flight over the Irish Sea his plane took a hit and necessitated a forced landing on neutral Irish soil. The Heinkel 1-11 crashed landed on Rosstoontown beach on the Wexford coast not far from where Marlena's great grandmother was buried. Marlena's Mother Shelia McElroy and her mother's sister Mona had lived in the Wexford area but prior to the commencement of the Emergency they moved with their father (their mother had died when they were young) to Kildare when his work with the Great Southern Railway Company required a transfer. Subsequent to the forced landing Arthur and the other three surviving crew members, including the wireless operator Rudi Hengst, were treated for their injuries by members of the ANS and were interned in the K Lines Internment Camp opened during the Emergency in the Curragh for Allied and Axis troops captured on Irish soil.

The regime in the Internment Camp for the Allied and Axis troops was reasonably laissez faire and among other activities, the internees were permitted to attend the Curragh races on the basis that they gave their word that they would return to the camp. On one such occasion Arthur Voigt and Rudi Hengst were introduced to Marlena's mother and aunt. They became good friends and before the end of the Emergency Marlena's Aunt Mona married Rudi Hengst. In 1952 Marlena's Mother Shelia and Arthur Voigt were married.

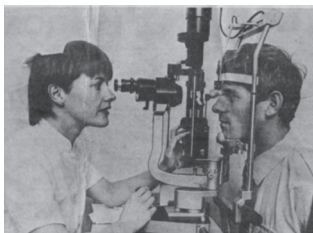
Of the fifty-nine Axis aviator internees in the Curragh, seven subsequently married Irish women and two married German women who were living in Ireland during the Emergency. There are detailed records surviving of the injuries to the internees and the associated treatment by the Medical Corps and the ANS. Marlena's parents lived in the Kildare area and were happily married for forty-two years. Marlena's mother Shelia died in 1994 and her father Arthur only



Arthur Voigt

survived her for five months, the source of light that brightened his days in this world had been extinguished with the passing of the love of his life and he did not delay for long his joining of her in the next. Arthur's life story particularly his WWII experiences prior to his crash landing and after his repatriation in 1945 is a fascinating tale of adventure and survival. Marlena penned, a beautiful account of her father's and his colleagues experiences in the Internment Camp, which was published in *The Curragh Revisited* (2002) and Marlena was responsible for donating and coordinating the items included in the exquisite Internment Camp exhibit which is on permanent display in the DFTC museum. Marlena inherited the beauty and charm of her mother which had captivated Arthur, she married Comdt Pat Healy and served in the Curragh Hospital for thirty years.

In September 1984 Joan Tighe the eminent Evening Herald and Irish Independent journalist who held the position of the Woman's Page editor visited St Bricins Hospital and penned a detailed article which appeared in the issue dated the fifth of the month. Joan Tighe was an immaculate Miss Marple



type and was particularly impressed by the ANS members she encountered and their ways. With her eye for a story she focused upon the specialists skills of the sisters. She noted Sister Heather Walshe testing Pte James Dunphy's eye sight. Also focused upon was physiotherapist Maureen Owens working on Pte Brendan Noctor who broke his leg while on an overseas trip in the Lebanon and was undergoing rehabilitative treatment.



The first ANS member documented to have worked in the Curragh Military Families Hospital was Sister Katherine McMichael in 1927 and those who served mainly in the families were Sister Gromwell (Matron) Sister Gillmartin (Matron) and Sisters Ward, Bonfield, Windle, White, McNamara, Sherry, Cleary, Egan, Treacy, Graham, Haverty, Briody, Foley, Rowley, Doran, Corrigan, Wolfe, Kilduff, Dunne, Parsons, Cotter and Kildoran. The hospital had a Maternity Unit and provided the full gambit of medical centre and hospital services to the families

of serving personnel. One of the best known of the thousands of babies that were delivered in the Maternity Ward, is Ray Darcy television and radio presenter, who was born in the Families Hospital on 01 September 1964. The family hospital was closed in 1984 and was demolished the early 1990's, all those adults and children who were treated or nursed there have fond memories of the hospital and the services that were provided, currently there is a campaign to erect a monument by the Curragh Local History Group in the memorial garden opposite St Bridget's Garrison Church, to commemorate the Hospital and its associated Curragh community. The military family service was continued in the main General Military Hospital until 2013. A beautiful statue of Our Lady resided in the main entrance to the Families and is now in the General hospital building.



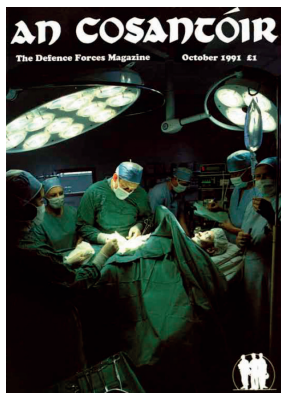
On the 9 May 1986 the Kildare Nationalist published an article on the family ward in the General Military Hospital which included the gorgeous photo of Sister Myra Sheery and her satisfied charge, Maresa O'Brien. In 1979 Matron O'Connell was appointed Senior Matron, she was followed in 1983 by Matron Buggle and in 1988 Matron O'Keefe.

OCCUPATIONAL NURSING

"Nurses are not angels they are the next best thing"

- Unknown

The 1990's saw a new phase in the development of the Defence Forces with the onset of a major reconfiguration of the structure of the organisation. Command Headquarters were dispensed with, Garrison units were disestablished and Barracks were closed in association with the development of a three Brigade structure, funding made available as a result of the reduction in the overall personnel and sale of property was invested in programs of re-equipment



and infrastructure improvement. Within the Medical Services the ANS's role began to move in the direction of Occupational Nursing.

In 1991 in its October issue An Cosantóir again focused on the Medical Services and its cover carried a photograph scene from the Operating Theatre in St Bricins. Sister Heeran penned an article for the issue titled Nursing in the 90's in which she pointed out that one of the unique features of military nursing was that while some contact with patients was associated with acute illness or injury, the majority of contact was with fit and healthy patients undergoing annual medicals. She identified the distribution of members in the ANS at that time.

Hospital	Matron	Asst. Matron	Staff Sister	Theatre Sister	Nursing Sister	Temps	Radio grapher	Physio	Total
St Bricins	1	1	3	2	19	1	2	1	30
Curragh	1	1	2	2	13	2	0	0	21
Cork	1	1	1	1	11	1	0	0	16
Total	3	3	6	5	43	4	2	1	67

Comdt McCarty also included an article in the issue relating to Radiology in the Defence Forces. A new wing was opened in St, Bricins in 1990 and this wing included an X-ray Department which was equipped to carry out a full range of procedures including general radiography, screening and ultrasound.

In the summer of 1992 members of the ANS were invited to visit the Naval Service in Haulbowline and went aboard LÉ Eithne (P31) while a training exercise was being conducted. The Naval Service did have its own dedicated Military Hospital and ANS staff at the foundation of the ANS but the hospital was closed and the Navy availed of the Nursing element in Collins Barracks Cork.



To mark the occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of the formal establishment of the ANS the editor of An Cosantóir conducted an interview with Senior Matron Kilduff and the interview was published as an article in the November issue of 1994. In the article Matron



Kilduff outlined the history and role of the ANS, in addition she pointed out that the Soldiers, Seamen and Airmen of the Defence Forces were quite unique in having a dedicated nursing service and no other organisation had a similar nursing backup.

The ANS have always being supporters of the An Cosantóir 10K fun/serious run held in The Phoenix Park annually in October. In 1982 Sister Francis Daly was the winner of the female category when it was first introduced. In 1995 Sister English based in the Cork Military Hospital represented the Irish Defence



Forces at the World Military Games in Rome and in the CISM World Cross Country Championships in 1996 that were held in on the Curragh. Sr. English also represented Ireland at the Fourth International Congress on Occupational Health

held Sept 2007. Sister English is pictured below prior to carrying the National Flag at the opening ceremony in Rome.



Sister Rosarii Lenihan has the unique distinction of being the only member of the ANS to have been selected for and completed an overseas mission for which a

medal was awarded. She formed part of the Medical element of the European Community Monitor Mission (ECMM) in former Yugoslavia and was responsible for the provision of medical cover for the entirety of the vast mission.



The Medals Presented to the ANS

This cover was achieved through a system of tele-medicine where each monitoring team on the ground would be advised and guided through any medical emergency that may occur. Sister Lenihan was presented with the ECMM medal. The other Medals that have been presented to members of the ANS over the year are the Service Medal and the Emergency Medal.



In 1999 Sister English served as part of the First Irish Honduran Support Group (1IHSG) that operated near Santa Rosa D'Aguan and she is pictured opposite while in Honduras. The mission involved the provision of a clinic that was built by Irish Defence Forces Engineers

and the necessary medical training for those operating the clinic. In 2001 three ANS members Sisters Emily McDonagh, Margaret Grealish and Joan O'Carroll formed part of the second Irish Honduran Support Group (2IHSG) that operated near Palacios and had a similar mission of providing a clinic and the necessary skills to operate it, in addition emergency surgical and dental procedures were carried out. Both support group missions were conducted under the aegis of APSO the Agency for Personal Service Overseas.



In 1964 the ANS Golfing Society held its first annual Golf outing at the Curragh Golf Club where the event was won by Sister Ferguson and she retained her crown the following

year. Her achievement as a multiple winner was soon to be utterly eclipsed when Sister Doran arrived on



Sisters Farrell, McNamara and Sherry

the scene, where between 1973 and 1993 she won seventeen of the events with fourteen of them in a row from 1980 to 1993. The event was not held between 1994 and 2003 but was revived in 2004 as

a result of stellar work by Sister Kay McNamara and her committee. The principle reason for its revival was to provide an annual opportunity for all retired members of the ANS, serving members of the ANS and all friends of the ANS to meet socially and stay in touch. It was the passing of Sister Helen Farrell that inspired the revival and it was at her



funeral that a commitment was made that her memory would be honored by recommencing the Annual Golf outing. The turnout in 2004 was extraordinary as can be seen from the group photograph opposite and has continued to be strongly supported.

The eleventh anniversary of the events revival took place in 2014 in the Curragh Golf Club where the event marked the commencement of the 90th Anniversary of the ANS Celebrations. The picture above shows Sister McNamara Honorary President of the ANS Golfing Society, Sister Edwina Hanley 2014 Society Captain and Sister Francis Daly 2014 winner.



In 2006 Sister Patricia Costello and Sister Antoinette O'Flaherty travelled to Liberia to provide humanitarian aid mainly to children who were suffering from HIV Aids in an orphanage in

Monrovia. An Irish contingent had been part of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) which commenced in 2003 to implement a ceasefire agreement, support humanitarian and human rights activities and in national reform. The two ANS sisters were based with the Irish contingent for the duration of their mission and with them in the photo is Lt Col Tobin MO.

In 2009 the Minister for Defence contracted PA Consulting Group to complete an independent review of the Medical Services for the Defence Forces. The purpose of the review was to derive a future model of medical service provision and designing a structure that delivers medical expertise in an efficient, effective and economic manner to the PDF. The report was submitted in June 2009 and included a model for the future of medical service provision and administration

for the Defence Forces. Resulting from the report, the Central Medical Unit (CMU) came into being in 2010. The ANS through the Brigade MO's or Hospital CO's are administered by the OC CMU with the Director of Medical Branch overseeing clinical direction. The report recommended very little in relation to the ANS except that nursing and similar services should be provided through a combination of ANS and Medical technicians.

In 2010 St Bricins Hospital Medical Corps personnel became involved in a Calendar project for charity and below are the images of those who appeared in the calendar. The advance orders for the calendar were through the roof but seemingly there were a lot of disappointed customers when they realised that the images were did not turn out to be of a similar vein than those in the film Calendar Girls.



Some of the Staff of St Bricins Military Hospital 2010

In 2012 an article appeared in An Cosantóir written by the Editor Sgt Wayne Fitzgerald with the subject of the article being the ANS members in the Curragh Military Hospital. The picture below formed part of the article



and was noteworthy by including the remaining four members of the ANS in the Curragh, Sisters Margaret Grelish, Merriam Hyland, Shelia Deasy and Marion Cleary.

On the 31 Dec 2013 the Families ward in the Curragh closed its doors for the last time, bringing to an end a community service of significant proportions that had been provided to military families of the Curragh Camp for over one hundred years. The occasion of its closure was not without much nostalgia and sadness, the last ANS member to oversee the running of the Families Ward was Sister Shelia Deasy.

Currently there are three ANS members in Cork: Snr Sister Mary Rose who spearheads the provision of advanced Occupation Health for the Cork based military and the Naval Service, Sister Antoinette O'Flaherty who is a qualified Counselor and Sister Patricia English who holds a Degree in Occupational Health. There are also three ANS members in the Curragh: Snr Sister Merriam Hyland who is currently the senior member of the ANS, Sister Margaret Grelish whose specialty is Inoculations and Primary Care and Sister Shelia Deasy who

specialises in Diabetic, Asthma and Womens Health clinics. There are two ANS members in St Bricins: Snr Sister Walsh who oversees Out Patient services and Sister Kennedy who is a qualified Audiologist and provides occupational health services. There are seven retired ANS members who are currently assisting the service on a part time agency basis: Sisters Cleary, Healy, McGoldrick, Bond, Carroll, Sherry and Sister Gahan who is the Day Case Theatre Nurse.



Families Ward, Curragh Military Hospital

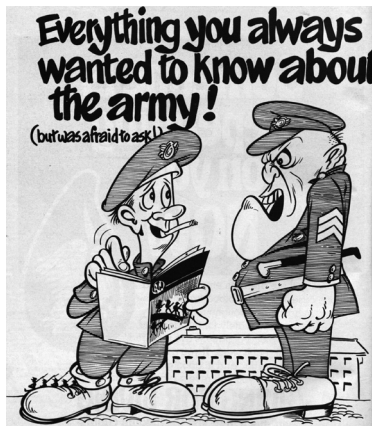
In 1990 Matron Kilduff was appointed Senior Matron, she was followed in 1997 by Matron Crowley, in 2003 by Matron Burke and in 2004 by Matron McDonagh who filled the appointment until 2009. Due to the Government's 2009 recruitment and moratorium no senior Matron as been appointed since Matron McDonagh's retirement.

AN ARMY NURSES LIFE

"After two days in the hospital I took a turn for the Nurse".

- W. C. Fields

All members of the ANS are professionally qualified trained nurses and therefore would have completed their training in a Training Hospital either at home or abroad. On qualification they would either have entered the ANS directly, have been employed in an Irish hospital for a period of time or worked in a hospital abroad. Having spotted the advertisement in the papers or their mothers



spotted the ad for them, they would have submitted their application. Qualification for interview followed the satisfactory demonstration to Authorities that they were Irish Citizens, under the maximum age, of good character, sufficiently qualified and medically fit. The interview would have had its associated concerns, but those that were pursuing an added advantage did conduct their interview in Irish and acquire the extra 6%. All awaited the outcome of their endeavours and eventually experienced the exquisite feeling of contentment, achievement and satisfaction on having received the official Ministerial letter bearing to them the joyous news that they had been successful

in their application for a place in the ANS. The prospect of a permanent pensionable job in mother Ireland when so many in the profession had to emigrate to procure full time employment was like winning the lottery. All received joining instructions containing the veiled threat that they were initially being appointed for a probationary period of three months, after which if they proved themselves to be satisfactorily suited to the role, they would be ratified for permanent status. When the initial excitement of the "Winning Feeling" abated it was replaced with the practicality of having to make the arrangements for travelling to the identified Military Hospital to take up the appointment. Eventually the initial excitement dissipated to be replaced by the anticipatory nerves and the obvious questioning - "What were you getting yourself into?" All members had to experience their first day. Arriving at the military Barracks/Camp, gaining access, asking for instructions to where they were required to present, seeing and sensing for the first time the military environment, the military atmosphere, wondering was this for them or more importantly were they going to be suited to this. Alighting from their modes of transport, gazing upward at the imposing Military Hospital, leaving behind those who had travelled with them for comfort and support and summoning all the courage within their being to suppress the urge to flee while the opportunity still existed, they soldiered on.

Most found the imposing green world within, the uniforms, the ranks, the saluting, the military routine and the sheep with their eerie calmness and familiarity, to be an environment foreign to the civilian counterpart

in which they had been trained. People, soldiers, officers coming and going in a whirlwind of activity, some distantly aloof, some condescending and some delightfully friendly. All manifested itself into a concoction of intimidatory newness. The friendly face with the kind word presented as a stepping stone to survival. The initial shock to the system proved too much for some but the great majority possessed the fortitude and coping skills necessary to fake it till they made it. It did not take long for them to acquire the realisation and awareness that the accumulation of the new experiences heralded the beginning of a very different lifestyle. More so with the pioneering nurses in the early days of the service but also throughout the ninety years, all ANS members entered a military male dominated world. As a result they had to quickly acquire and apply the necessary survival/coping skills and strategy, that included: confidence in their capabilities derived from their training and professionalism, appreciation of their feminine advantage, establishment of their own mentor system based on esprit de corps and comradeship, maintenance of an optimistic outlook, energetic engagement with the challenging work environment and self recognition of a job well done.

All had to experience the first day on the Military Ward where all of their previous training left them utterly ill equipped. The first day on the ward for most turned out to be a memorable one. All ANS members first realise that they are referred to as Sister and the title nurse was to be no more. The larger wards were divided into a main area and a smaller annex to the rear, known as the “six counties”. It had been used in earlier times as an

isolation area for contractible diseases, civilian nursing had no equivalent. The term was a derivative of typical Irish wit, which never was in short supply. Such wit and good humour was necessary and invaluable on the rare occasions when military belligerence hurtled headlong into nursing obstreperousness. All new members never failed to be amazed by the fact that patients who could, exercised their hard acquired and cherished skill of bed making with straight lines and even proportions of architectural achievement. Locker husbandry presented to the uninitiated sister as a possible symptom of obsessive compulsive disorder, but once an appreciation of the skill and tidiness was acquired it never ceased to impress. Shaving gear and all necessary accoutrements for patients ablutions were lined up in a display of beautiful sequence and symmetry. Trouser Press manufacturers never made any sales inroads in the Military Hospital environment as patients had developed the technique of “under the mattress at night trick” to acquire an effort free regulation crease. Sisters soon came to realise that within the Military Ward there prevailed an unofficial status or pseudo rank structure. The senior NCO took charge in the ward and kept everyone in check ensuring that appropriate respect and appreciation be shown to the sisters at all times. The junior in the ward had the task of making tea mid morning and late evening. The tea making prevails of an unfortunate patient who had suffered shell shock while in the Congo, became legendary. He had a bad tremor but was a willing, friendly and kind soul who always aspired to assisting his fellow patients. When he was on Tea Duty all would proceed swimmingly until he had to convey the cups of tea to the individual bedsides. By the time he made it to the

side lockers very little product survived in the cup for consumption. Most of the tea was either in the saucer or trailed all over the floor much to the annoyance of the domestic staff who had it gleaming only minutes before. The camaraderie and etiquette of the ward required that negative comment was never made towards the shellshock patient only gratitude for his kindness was expressed. One of the initial methods of coping used by novice members of the ANS to deal with the intricacies of rank recognition was to apply the blunt axiom that brown shoes equated to officers, which worked fine until the General Officer Commanding was confused with the Barrack Quartermaster.

Every ANS member experienced the joyous event of receiving the first pay cheque with the exquisite thrilling realisation that you were on the way to financial independence. Feeling flush, chomping on the bit to succumb to the fanciful irresponsible urge to 'invest' in all the things that have been financially out of reach but desperately wanted for years, However when mature consideration brings realisation that there are new expenses existing hand in hand with the supposed financial independence, the euphoria did not last long. The world is divided into two genetically predisposed subgroups, those who can manage their funds competently and thread through this world like the proverbial serene swan and those who cannot, who are never far away from the next chaotic episode. Of course sooner or later the golden rule has to be fully understood and complied with, habitual spending must not exceed the number on the pay check.

Open fires existed in the "Bunks" which were the sisters work stations, with a laid down ritual that had to be adhered to. The fire picket on duty would draw sufficient turf on a daily basis for the heating needs. The fire had to be cleaned every morning and every evening. Woe be tied if a sister failed to ask the domestic staff to have the ashes taken away. Facing the night sister with a full ash pan leading to no draw on the fire was a mortal sin punishable with awkward silence and condescension for the night. If the junior sister was a "goodie two shoe" type and was seeking brownie points, she made efforts to get briquettes or better again coal. The turf bin was placed in the corridor outside the bunk door but for some strange reason during CO's inspection the bin was always hidden in the "six county" annex, presumably to maintain the illusion that the sisters did not need any source of external heating their inner glow would prove to be sufficient. The open fire regime all came to its abrupt end when a roof caught fire and the resultant inferno raged unbeknownst to the busy night sister who was on her rounds dispensing the night time medications. Some resemblance of panic and questioning of her future did set in when a patient innocently asked "What the fire brigade was doing out there". As swift as military efficiency would allow the fireplaces were all sealed off and the cosiness of the bunks became a distant memory, to be recalled when the vista from the hospital window was a winter wonderland.

The regular Commanding Officers Inspections was an affair of considerable pomp and ceremony depending on the personality of the principle. Best bib and tucker for all including the patients was the order of the day.

In a scene that would have changed little throughout the years all sisters stood to attention slightly intimidated, amused and militarised. In 1969 as part of the Belfast Refugee situation and an associated rapid deployment by ANS members, two nurses found themselves occupying Fort Dunree, which was built in Napoleonic times by the Royal Navy in the Inishowen Peninsula. Despite the operational immediacy of the circumstances the nurses endeavoured to make the situation as comfortable as possible. The two quickly transformed the Spartan lodgings and ensured that all accoutrements for the necessary beauty regimes were in place and easily assessable. Uniforms were an obvious necessity but lipstick and perfumes could not be neglected. On the occasion of the first inspection of facilities by the well rounded Commanding Officer, when he gazed upon the array of beauty products laid out on the dresser he uttered the immortal words. “ Well Ladies, you may have had to hurry to the war zone but I see that you did not forget to bring your ammunition!”

Military wards had their “male nurses” orderlies or ward masters. The nurses by necessity had to have a good relationship with them. In a pre-Emergency 1938 recommendation of a sister to be promoted to a senior sister position, the Recommending Officer stated “That the sister had a fine manner and got on very well with the orderlies, a much needed attribute in a Military Nurse”. The orderlies or ward masters where all fledgling cooks, they had one and one only house special, steak and onions. If the sister on duty was in good stead with the “male nurses” she could look forward to her

portion of the fare. In the early hours of the morning, the wafting smell of steak & onions would meander its way up the long semi dark corridors from the kitchen, silently beckoning the duty sister to proceed to the duty room for her just reward. The diet sheet system of ration allocation to patients depending on their individual dietary needs was required to be completed daily. Fruit, chocolate, biscuits and even Guinness was available by way of this system. The more exotic goods were used to improve the early hours feasts but the Guinness was usually hoarded until sufficient quantity existed to underpin a substantial patient “Session”, usually scheduled for a Saturday night, when movement of the contraband could be achieved under less scrutiny. Having the Oratory beside the medical ward didn’t always help either, as the easily available supply of altar wine sometimes proved to much of a temptation, much to the dismay of the Padre. The daily rosary at 3 pm led by the matron of the day was an absolute fixture, nothing got in its way. Senior Sisters conceivably could devise a ruse for escape but junior sisters had no prospects of avoidance and had to apply the pious bearing, reciting their answering chants with sufficient enthusiasm so as to keep the right side of the matron. ANS sisters came from all parts of the country, different accents, different traditions and different personalities but all with the same goals, to do their job as professionally as possible and have an element of work rest and play. The Curragh had its own Cinema, Race Course, Drama Society, Choral Society, Rugby Club, Messes and in many ways its own social scene. Some found romance, some husbands and others were only passing through.



A working day for the modern Army Nurse starts at 0800 hrs with a handover from the night staff, to include a detailed report on the condition, care and treatment of the inpatient admissions and outpatients attending overnight. Throughout the day Army Nurses work on the ward caring for

day cases, admissions, and patients requiring monitoring following outpatient procedures. A comprehensive outpatient's service is provided in St Bricin's and the medical facilities in Cork and the DFTC. Both civilian and military doctors attend these facilities daily. In St Bricin's outside ENT, Optomologist and specialist Medical Consultants attend on a rostered basis. A daily sick parade takes place each morning. Typical presenting cases include flu, sports injuries or acute conditions requiring stabilisation and transfer to centres of excellence providing specialised care. A daily phlebotomy clinic carries out bloods screening for routine and overseas medicals and bloods ordered by the doctors on the sick parade. Daily dressings, removal of sutures and injections are all part of the daily work load working in the Accident and Emergency, or patients referred back from civilian hospitals. An important aspect of the ANS workload is health promotion. This is the process of enabling people to improve their health by making healthy lifestyle choices. The ANS plans, implements and documents the vaccination programs to meet Defence

Forces requirements. This includes initial vaccinations for recruits and cadets, updating vaccinations for personnel following annual medicals, administration and documentation of specific vaccinations required for overseas missions and the annual flu vaccinations for targeted personnel. Post graduate education has greatly developed the role of the ANS enabling the provision of nurse led services in areas such as women's health, diabetic assessment and treatment, asthma and lung related management and counselling. ANS employment constitutes a busy, demanding, and fulfilling job.

To survive and thrive in a military nursing environment requires more than just putting in the shift, there has to be the feeling that a positive difference is being made in the lives of the patients. ANS sisters endeavour to ensure that the military medical workplace is a pleasant and nurturing environment in which all support each other when necessary and maintain a positive attitude. ANS sisters see their patients as recruits or cadets and track them throughout their careers. They see them prepare for overseas, administer their vaccines, listened to concerns and worries, talk to them about their loved ones, their ups and their downs, their successes and their setbacks. ANS sisters maintain the operability of the forces sending the troops to their duties in a fit a healthy state. On most if not all occasions they return safely from their duties but there are the rarest and saddest of occasions when they do not, when they lose their lives in the service of the State. On these occasions the ANS grieves profoundly and shares with the bereaved families their utter sense of loss. The ANS watches over the full cycle of all that serve ending with the pre-retirement medical and the good-byes.

There is a rank structure of sorts in the ANS but the unofficial progression is from greenhorn to getting by, to knowing the score, to becoming an old sweat, to eventually being a keeper of the tradition, to mentoring the next generation and finally to retirement. For all ANS members as sure as there is a first day, inevitably there must be a last. Retirement visits all, their own pre-retirement medicals and their own goodbyes. Finally like for all who lay their shadow upon this earth arrives the day when the next world calls. Members of the ANS despite their lifetime of watching over the sick have acquired no immunity. They are remembered in the hearts of those they cared for and commemorated by the memorial for the deceased members of the ANS in St Brigid's Garrison Church, Curragh Camp. The memorial came into being as a result of Sister Breda Tracey's efforts. The ANS's history, ethos and camaraderie its is best epitomised by

" From this day till the ending, we in it shall be remembered - we lucky few, we band of sisters"



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*Nursing is an art
and if it is to be made an art
it requires as exclusive a devotion
as hard a preparation
as any painter's or sculptor's work*

*for what is the having to do with
dead canvas or cold marble
compared with having to do with the
living body - the temple of God's spirit*

*It is one of the Fine Arts
I had almost said
the finest of the Fine Arts*

- Florence Nightingale