



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



An Roinn Cosanta  
Department of Defence

# The Emergency

A Visual History of the  
Irish Defence Forces  
1939 – 1945

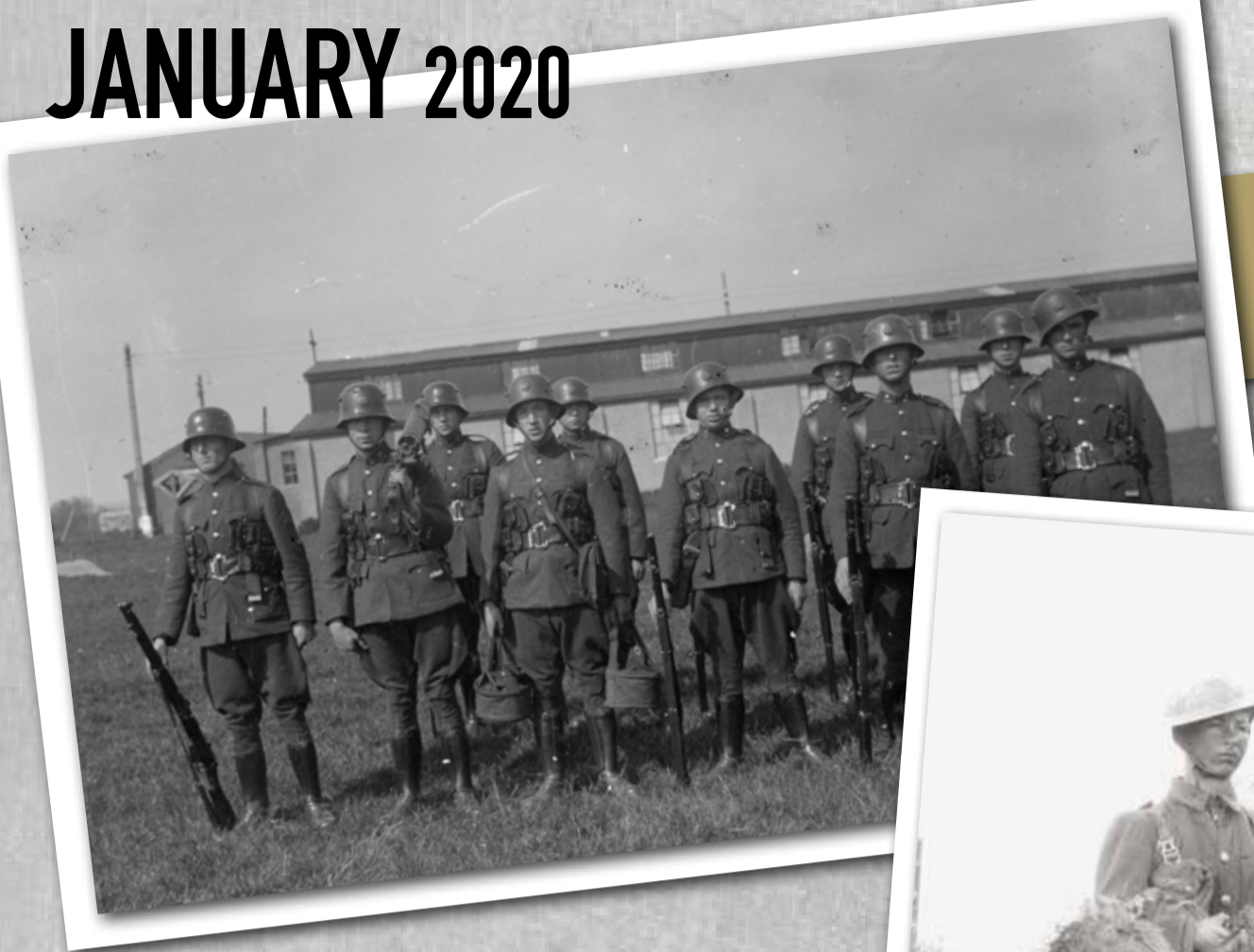
MILITARY ARCHIVES  
CALENDAR 2020



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STRENGTHEN  
THE NATION

# JANUARY 2020



The coal scuttle helmet and high collared tunics of this infantry section reinforce a more consciously European, or at least non-British, appearance of the inter-war soldier



The Boys .55 anti-tank rifle entered service in 1937 and had a mixed reputation. Eventually it was rendered ineffective due to developments in armour.



**Óglaigh na hÉireann**  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

## The Defence Forces before the Emergency

The Defence Forces had been progressively run down since the 1920s and by the 1930s could mount little more than internal security operations. By 1939, they were in no position to repel an invasion of Ireland. Because of this, obtaining additional modern weapons was an ongoing wartime concern.

MONDAY  
Dé Luain

TUESDAY  
Dé Máirt

WEDNESDAY  
Dé Céadaoin

THURSDAY  
Déardaoin

FRIDAY  
Dé hAoine

SATURDAY  
Dé Sathairn

SUNDAY  
Dé Domhnaigh

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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### DECEMBER 2019

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### FEBRUARY 2020

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# FEBRUARY 2020

Air Corps Westland Lysander Army co-operation and reconnaissance aircraft pictured at Baldonnell. These six aircraft arrived in Baldonnell on 15 June 1939 and were the last aircraft delivered to the Air Corps before the outbreak of the Second World War



Air Corps Gloucester Gladiator 1 fighters at Baldonnell. The Gladiator entered Air Corps service in 1938 and served until the introduction of the Hawker Hurricane in 1943, with No.1 Squadron as Ireland's front-line fighter defence. While manoeuvrable, the Gladiator was technologically obsolete by the start of the Second World War.



**Óglach na hÉireann**  
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MONDAY  
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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

**JANUARY 2020**

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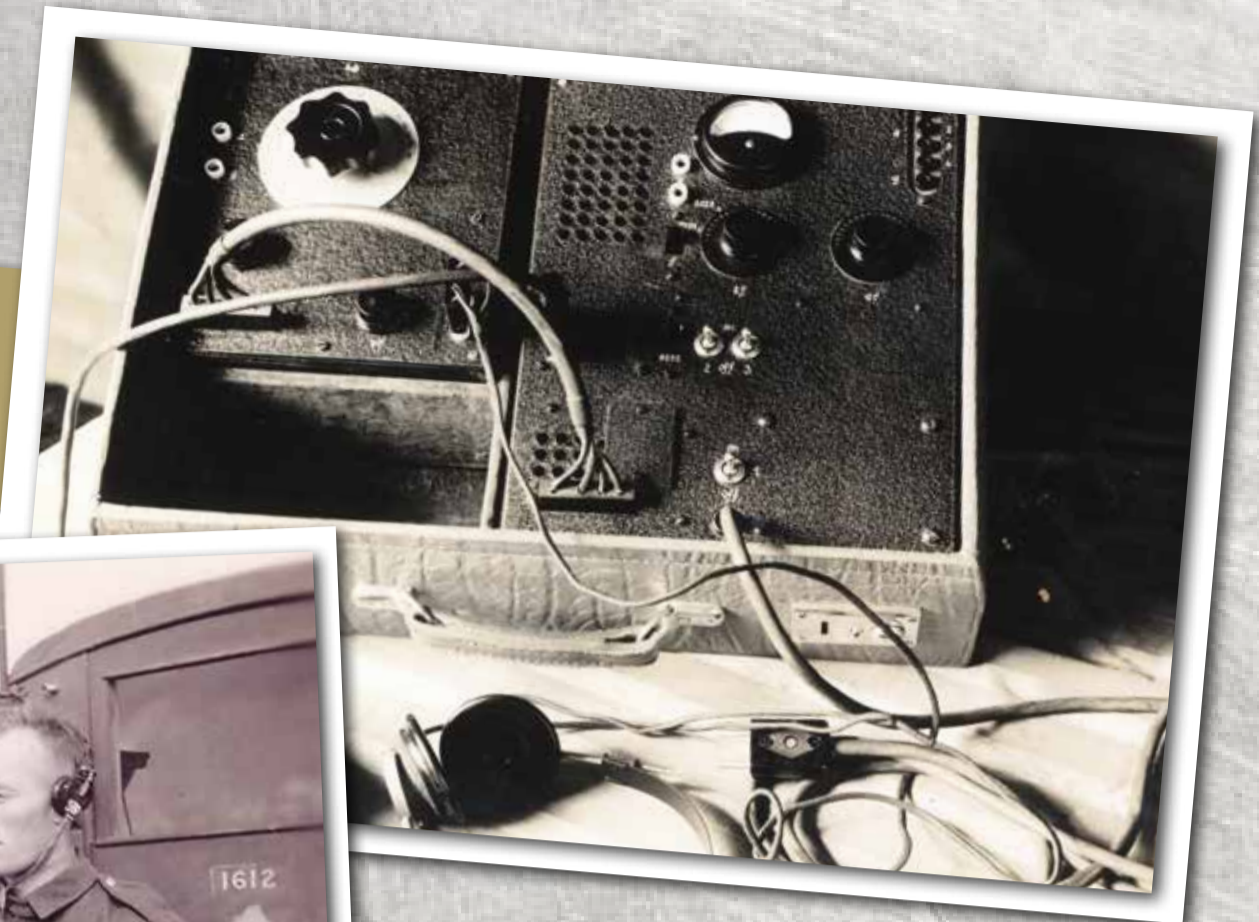
**MARCH 2020**

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# MARCH 2020

Not only was German invasion a threat, so too were the actions of German, and to a lesser extent, British intelligence agents. This photo shows one of a number of clandestine radios brought into Ireland by German spies who were captured by the Defence Forces.



The Defence Forces lacked sufficient radio equipment during the Emergency. This led to ingenious local alternatives. Here a Signals sergeant is operating one of 130 Battalion wireless sets commissioned by the Defence Forces in 1943 and manufactured by Pye Ireland Ltd.



**Óglaigh na hÉireann**  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

### The Emergency

The outbreak of the Second World War saw the Irish government declare a state of national emergency. De Valera announced that Ireland would remain neutral, and defend its neutrality as best it could. This involved considerable civilian and military contingency planning, as well as immediate tactical responses to the circumstances of the unfolding global conflict.

MONDAY  
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TUESDAY  
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WEDNESDAY  
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SUNDAY  
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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

#### FEBRUARY 2020

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#### APRIL 2020

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# APRIL 2020

The plight of the volunteer in this photograph, a member of the LSF or LDF wearing civilian clothes and armed with a wooden replica Lewis light machine gun, captures the extreme shortages of weapons faced by the Defence Forces during the Emergency.



The Emergency Scientific Research Bureau was established to examine if there were local alternatives to otherwise unobtainable material. Phosphorus was one of the substances produced. Limited gas and decontamination training was also carried out. In this image, the men wear protective suits and British-issue gas masks.



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MONDAY  
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THURSDAY  
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FRIDAY  
Dé hAoine

SATURDAY  
Dé Sathairn

SUNDAY  
Dé Domhnaigh

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 <i>Defence Forces Holiday</i>	11	12
13 <i>Easter Monday</i>	14	15	16	17	18	19
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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### MARCH 2020

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### MAY 2020

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# MAY 2020

A young soldier arriving in Dublin, perhaps as part of McKenna's recruitment drive, is directed from Ellis Quay up Blackhall Place, in the direction of McKee, or possibly Collins Barracks, Dublin.



Officers Course at the Military College, 1940. Rapid expansion presented considerable problems, including a lack of trained officers. Many of the men here are middle-aged, suggesting the class may be existing NCOs undergoing Potential Officers Course training or even a class of civilians with military experience being trained for temporary commissions.



**Óglach na hÉireann**  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

## Building the Emergency Army, 1940

The key function of the Irish Army in the early years of the Second World War was to prepare to resist a potential invader - British or German - as best it could. The first priority facing the Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Dan McKenna, was to expand the Army to a level that had not been seen since the end of the Civil War in 1923.

MONDAY Dé Luain      TUESDAY Dé Máirt      WEDNESDAY Dé Céadaoin      THURSDAY Déardaoin      FRIDAY Dé hAoine      SATURDAY Dé Sathairn      SUNDAY Dé Domhnaigh

				1	2	3
4 <i>May Day</i>	5	6 <i>Defence Forces Holiday</i>	7	8	9	10
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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

**APRIL 2020**

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**JUNE 2020**

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# JUNE 2020

An interior view of a wooden barrack hut. The photograph shows soldiers off duty, their rifles stored in racks and personal kit and equipment, including the Brodie helmet and 1937 pattern webbing, stowed ready for use.



The expansion of the Defence Forces necessitated the swift construction of accommodation barracks, particularly as temporary posts. From 1940-1941 alone, 142 wooden huts had been erected by the Corps of Engineers.



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Déardaoin

FRIDAY  
Dé hAoine

SATURDAY  
Dé Sathairn

SUNDAY  
Dé Domhnaigh

1 Public Holiday	2	3	4	5	6	7
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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

**MAY 2020**

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**JULY 2020**

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# JULY 2020

An infantry battalion on parade in Collins Barracks, Dublin. Visible are their transport, Universal 'Bren' Carriers, and hand carts used for Vickers machine guns. In the foreground the battalion band plays.



Artillerymen coming off inspection parade, 1941. Their distinctive bandoliers, lanyards and collar badges identify them as members of an artillery regiment.



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## Expanding the Emergency Army, 1941

The first step in creating a military force that could meet an invasion of Ireland was to increase the size of the Army. This proved relatively easy; however the newly expanded Irish Army had to be retrained, re-equipped, and reorganised into an effective fighting force.

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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### JUNE 2020

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### AUGUST 2020

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# AUGUST 2020

3-inch mortar team in training. This weapon joined the Brandt 60mm and 81mm mortars in the Army's armoury in 1942.



Even in respirators, the contrast between his 1939 counterpart and the Irish soldier of 1940-45 is clear. The coal scuttle helmet and 1908 pattern webbing have been replaced by the brodie helmet and 1937 pattern webbing. Post war cutbacks and non-membership of NATO meant this uniform remained unaltered until the 1960s.



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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### JULY 2020

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### SEPTEMBER 2020

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# SEPTEMBER 2020

Anti-aircraft battery at Sandycove, located in the Napoleonic-era naval battery close to Sandycove Martello tower. The 12-pounder gun, originally a naval weapon, was modified for anti-aircraft use.



The burned out wreckage of a German Heinkel HE-III medium bomber which crashed, killing the crew of five, near Carnsore Point, Wexford, on 10 June 1941. A number of men are present, including LDF and what looks like a Priest, perhaps at the scene to deliver last rites. An officer in the centre holds an unopened parachute recovered from the wreckage.



**Óglaigh na hÉireann**  
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## The Second World War around and over Ireland

While the prospect of an invasion preoccupied the Irish government and the Defence Forces, more tangible signs of the conflict were to be found around Ireland's airspace and coastal waters. Military overflights, bombing, accidental and forced landings all occurred during these years, with the Coast Watching Service playing a valuable role in gathering air and naval intelligence.

MONDAY Dé Luain      TUESDAY Dé Máirt      WEDNESDAY Dé Céadaoin      THURSDAY Déardaoin      FRIDAY Dé hAoine      SATURDAY Dé Sathairn      SUNDAY Dé Domhnaigh

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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### AUGUST 2020

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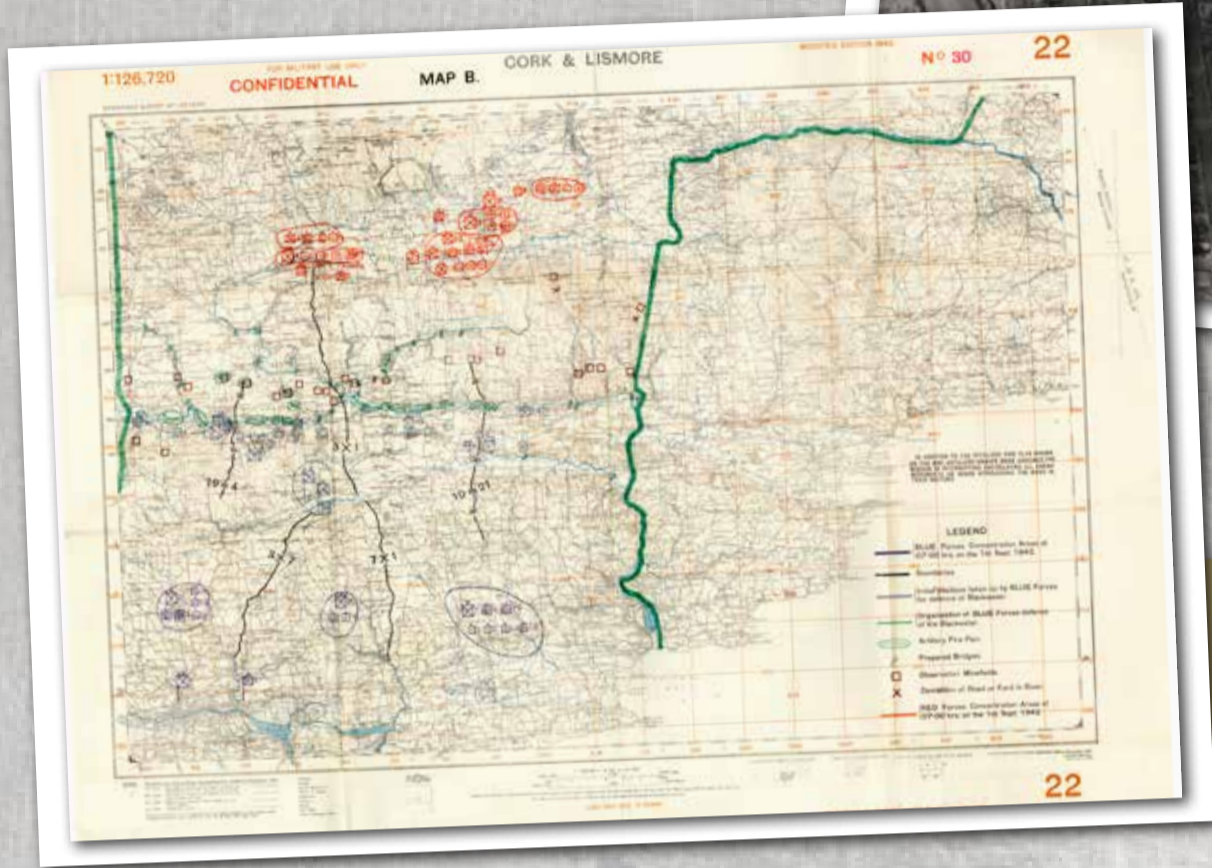
### OCTOBER 2020

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# OCTOBER 2020

Aerial shot of Defence Forces units marching along the South Mall, Cork City, following the Blackwater Exercises. No exercise on this scale was attempted after 1942, instead there was an emphasis on individual soldiers' proficiency and training.



A map showing how Maj Gen Costello's 1st Division 'Blue' force deployed as he prepared to defend against a mock attack along the line of the River Blackwater by Maj Gen McNeill's 2nd Division 'Red' force.



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## Testing the Emergency Army: The Blackwater Exercises, 1942

Throughout 1942 the Defence Forces' expansion was consolidated by the Army's reorganisation into two Divisions with two independent Brigades. To test the new Divisional structures, the largest series of military exercises ever undertaken were carried out along the valley of the River Blackwater in County Cork between 17th August and 27th September 1942. They were, and remain, the largest manoeuvres the Irish Defence Forces have ever undertaken, with over 20,000 soldiers and over 1,500 vehicles taking part.

MONDAY  
Dé Luain

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26 <span style="color: red;">●</span> <i>Public Holiday</i>	27	28	29	30	31	

● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### SEPTEMBER 2020

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### NOVEMBER 2020

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# NOVEMBER 2020

Soldiers having a scrub up and a smoke in camp.



Cycle Squadron soldiers bivouac in the ruins of the now demolished Cahir Barracks in County Tipperary.



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## Military Life, 1942-1945

By autumn of 1942 the Defence Forces had reached its maximum state of wartime preparedness. For the remainder of the war the Chief of Staff, Lt Gen Dan McKenna, had to keep approximately 45,000 men ready to engage with an invader that no longer seemed likely to land on Irish territory. Desertion, often to join the Allied forces, became an issue in the later years of the war.

MONDAY Dé Luain      TUESDAY Dé Máirt      WEDNESDAY Dé Céadaoin      THURSDAY Déardaoin      FRIDAY Dé hAoine      SATURDAY Dé Sathairn      SUNDAY Dé Domhnaigh

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● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### OCTOBER 2020

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### DECEMBER 2020

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# DECEMBER 2020

A parachutist, a Miles M.14a Magister trainer and two Hurricane fighters at the Military Tattoo. The popularity of the exhibition can be gauged by the crowds in the Main Hall of Dublin's RDS.



All Army prize giving ceremony. At the centre of the table is Éamon de Valera. To his right is Chief of Staff Lt Gen Dan McKenna and Minister for Defence Oscar Traynor. To their right left stand Maj Gens MJ Costello and Liam Egan.



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## Demobilisation and the end of the War, 1945

Demobilisation inevitably followed the end of the war. In the Dáil on 21 June 1945 the Minister for Defence, Oscar Traynor, expressed 'the Government's and the country's gratitude to all the forces and services which have helped us through the Emergency.' To mark the end of the period, the Army Tattoo and Exhibition was held in the showgrounds of the Royal Dublin Society in Ballsbridge, from 27 August to 8 September 1945.

MONDAY  
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 <span style="color:red">●</span> <i>Christmas Day</i>	26 <span style="color:red">●</span> <i>St. Stephen's Day</i>	27
28 <span style="color:red">●</span> <i>Public Holiday</i>	29	30	31			

● Public Holiday  
◆ Defence Forces Holiday

### NOVEMBER 2020

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### JANUARY 2021

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The  
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Ayiotis,  
Gibney,  
Kennedy

Eastwood

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Daniel Ayiotis, John Gibney, Michael Kennedy



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September 2019 marked the beginning of the 80th anniversary of the Second World War. This period was also referred to in Ireland as 'The Emergency,' a term chosen to denote Ireland's neutral status, derived from the Emergency Powers Act 1939, enacted to 'make provisions for securing the public safety and the preservation of the state in time of war...'

The Military Archives holds several important collections from this period. These include: the Coast Watching Service Log Books from the 83 Look Out Posts that encircled the Irish coastline and reported all air and sea activity back to Army Intelligence; G2 Intelligence Files; Emergency Defence Plans; Army HQ operational journals; and the records of the 18th Military Mission, established in 1940 to ensure proper cooperation between Ireland the UK in order to coordinate joint operations in the event of a German invasion of Ireland.

To mark the beginning of the 80th anniversary of the Emergency, the Military Archives has recently collaborated on a new publication entitled 'The Emergency: A Visual History of the Irish Defence Forces 1939-1945.' This book, a collaboration between Dr Michael Kennedy (Royal Irish Academy, Editor of Documents on Irish Foreign Policy), Dr John Gibney (Royal Irish Academy, Assistant Editor of Documents on Irish Foreign Policy) and Commandant Daniel Ayiotis (Officer-in-Charge, The Military Archives) addresses the often-overlooked fact that from 1939 onwards Ireland engaged in serious efforts to defend itself militarily. It contains many previously unseen photos and documents, accompanied by text based primarily on research conducted at the Military Archives as well as several other archives, and is an illustrated photographic and documentary history of the significant military and defensive preparations of the Irish Defence Forces during the Second World War.

The book covers a range of subjects from the expansion of the Army to the Blackwater Manoeuvres, and from life in wartime Ireland to the end of the War and demobilisation. As well as this, the project gives an insight into daily life and masculinity in 1940s Ireland, making it a book that is relevant to a broad array of scholarly interests, from sociologists to medical and public health historians.

The book is published by Eastwood Books with support from the Dublin Port Company and all royalties will be donated to the Organisation of National Ex-Service Personnel.



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