

## **Editorial**

Welcome to the second edition of the Journal of Military History and Defence Studies (JMHDs). The aim of this journal is to publish original research in military history and defence studies, defined broadly to include the history of war and of militaries, and also of the impact of these on wider society, in addition to the study of war, strategy, security and military organisation today and into the future. Whilst also publishing work by established scholars, a core aim of the journal is to provide an outlet for high-quality original research by new researchers. The latter is reflected in the composition of this edition, which consists of articles submitted by graduates of the Irish Defence Forces' Command and Staff School. The articles are all based on MA theses that were submitted originally in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Command and Staff Course and of the MA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies at Maynooth University.

The Command and Staff School, situated within the Military College at the Defence Forces Training Centre, is responsible for the education of Irish and overseas officers of the rank of Commandant<sup>1</sup>/Lieutenant Commander and, as with staff colleges elsewhere, seeks to equip them with the knowledge, understanding and skills required to fulfil command and leadership positions in support of national roles and multinational missions within a constantly evolving and highly complex operating environment. The focus is on developing the students' intellectual skills, to enhance their ability to engage with challenging issues and ideas, to make appropriate decisions, and to communicate these in a convincing manner.

To meet the multidimensional challenges of a complex present, and to prepare for those of the future, military personnel need to be able to identify and react appropriately, in a timely manner, to an array of obstacles that might defeat all but the most adaptive minds. This 'raises the bar' in terms of the educational requirements of all, and particularly of officers who must, by definition, adopt leadership roles. The response of the Irish Defence Forces has been to invest in the training and education of all ranks, and this is reflected in the partnership that has evolved with Maynooth University, with the latter responsible for the provision of university accredited courses for officers and potential officers at the Cadet School (Diploma in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies), the Infantry School (Higher Diploma in Leadership, Defence and Contemporary Security) and the Command and Staff School (MA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies). The latter is embedded in the Joint Command and Staff Course, with academic engagement and support integrated into all course elements and with Maynooth academic staff based on site in the Military College.

Engagement between Maynooth and the Military College began almost twenty-years ago, when the Department of Adult and Community Education (DACE) began working with the Command and Staff School on what was then known as the Senior Command and Staff Course. Engagement initially was limited to the student dissertation, which evolved to

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<sup>1</sup> Equivalent to the rank of Major (Army), Squadron Leader (Air Force) or Lieutenant Commander (Navy) in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and many other countries.

become a 15,000-word thesis based on original research and, under the guidance of DACE, reflected advanced engagement with social science research methodologies. The success of the engagement was evident in the quality of theses produced, and in the positive student learning experience. The involvement of DACE was soon supported by engagement with the Centre for Military History and Strategic Studies (CMHSS), a multi-disciplinary research centre established under the auspices of the Department of History. In addition to providing lectures, tuition and supervision at the Command and Staff School, the CMHSS pioneered new relationships with the wider Military College and became involved in support for the cadet course, potential officer's course and the junior command and staff course, leading to the revision of those educational programmes and their accreditation as university diplomas/higher diplomas matching all relevant national and European criteria for higher education. More recently, the CMHSS has taken overall responsibility for coordinating Maynooth University's engagement with the Military College as a whole, including the Senior Command and Staff Course, and in that capacity it supported the revision of that course to become a new Joint Command and Staff Course, in 2018.

The articles presented here all originated as theses submitted to the last Senior Command and Staff Course (2018), or the first iteration of the new Joint Command and Staff Course (2019). They represent a very small proportion of the almost 400 MA theses that have been submitted as a core element of the MA in Leadership, Management and Defence Studies and of the staff course since 2002. Over the years students have presented innovative work on a bewildering variety of topics and until now most of these were left to sit on a shelf in the Defence Forces library. Publication here makes available a selection of work written by military professionals with many years of experience, covering topics of relevance both to the Irish Defence Forces and, more widely, to other armed forces and to those with an interest in contemporary defence and security.

The MA programme at the Command and Staff College concentrates on the higher conceptual thinking attributes of analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Students are asked to be "open-minded, inquisitive and comprehensive in their examination of issues, to apply systematic analysis to generate reasoned results" and "to think individually and collectively at a deeper level and to develop principled positions that reflect varied impacting influences" (MA Research Handbook, 2020). In her introduction to this edition, Angela McGinn explains the origins of this programme, discussed its evolution over the past twenty years and discusses the ideas that underpin its success. She also introduces the individual contributions included in this volume. Given that, it would be superfluous to repeat that content here, except to note that the authors are all serving military personnel, from the Irish Defence Forces and also from the Bundeswehr. Their work addresses a range of issues of relevance to all armed forces today, and to anyone interested in the activity of such forces. None are professional academics, and all completed their research under the pressure of a very full programme of training and education. In this respect their work should be judged as that of 'new researchers'. However, that label must be applied with the knowledge that all drew on many years of experience as military practitioners, and that adds both weight and interest to their conclusions. The results reflect the exceptionally high calibre of students attending the

Command and Staff School and also the depth and richness of the education provided at that school, with the support of Maynooth University.

We hope that you enjoy this edition of the journal and that you return to us for future editions. We also hope that you may be enthused to submit your own work to the journal and that, in this way, contribute to our mission to make high quality original research more widely available, and to encourage thought and debate in the fields of military history and defence studies.

Please note that these articles are academic papers designed to encourage discussion and debate. The views expressed in the articles represent those of the authors alone and do not represent the views of the Command and Staff School, the Irish Defence Forces, the Bundeswehr or any other group or organisation.

*The editor, November 2020.*