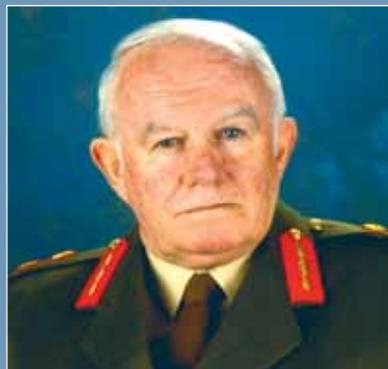


CAREER RESUME

Maj. Gen. Brennan has served overseas with UNFICYP in Cyprus, UNTSO in the Sinai, UNIMOG in Iran-Iraq and also in the Balkans. In addition he worked with the European Union Monitoring Mission in Sarajevo, with responsibility for all of the Balkans. He spent a year in Iraq in 1989 with the UN interim Iran-Iraq Disengagement Force. He also spent 14 months in Brussels in 2001-2002 helping to set up the EU military staff.



“ There is no doubt that they present an overhead which impinges on other operations and training ”

personnel. Those forces at the moment are deployed in Kosovo, Liberia and elsewhere, so they cannot be deployed under the HHG catalogue at the moment. In the development of the mission in Liberia, we did send out additional troops, engineers, communications, ordnance and transport personnel to help set up the Base and this exceeded the 850, but only on a temporary basis. The EU Rapid Response Force requirement is at present being studied. I

see this a further refinement of the forces nominated in the palette of forces to the Helsinki Headline Goal.

In terms of the Bosnia deployment, which is the first EU-led deployment, it's a very important moment for European military development. Would you like to be able to commit more troops to that?

We are happy that we are making a significant contribution to Op Althea. Bearing in mind our other commitments, our contribution will be about 55 all ranks, located in Sarajevo and Tuzla. Ireland will take the lead role in the Military Police and Verification Teams sphere of influence.

So overall, the Defence Forces has continued to play its role on the international scene, as is evidenced by the various missions we're involved in at the moment. We have been very active in support of the UN. We're active players on the European scene now as well. The White Paper supports that activity in terms of the way forward. As the EU develops, there will obviously be more demands placed upon us and each of those demands will have to be looked at when it arises.

The Good Friday agreement is 6 years old & since then the Defence Forces has been decreased in size by 25%. Do you think it is too much of a burden for the Defence Forces to maintain their Aid to the Civil Power (ATCP) commitments?

ATCP operations are carried out in support of the Gardai. There have been significant reductions in such operations in the last 18 months and these operations are constantly being reviewed. There is no doubt that they present an overhead which impinges on other operations and training. We will continue to support the Gardai as long as the requirement exists and will continue to benefit from the fallout from the Good Friday Agreement.

Is there one particular overseas mission that you could pick to illustrate the Defence Forces at their best, doing what they do best?

I think the mission in East Timor was highly significant because you must

measure these things, in a way, by what other people say about it. East Timor was the first time we operated under command of New Zealand and in the presence of Australians. All the feedback that came from both the Rangers and the Infantry platoons that were sent there was very positive. In the same vein, I think the performance of the troops in Kosovo last March was highly significant.

On a personal level I remember in 1973 at the end of the Yom Kippur war in the Sinai, marking out the Israeli and Egyptian lines and separating and surveying the area. That was one of the memorable things from my point of view.

Looking at the future, do you see a role for UN in Iraq?

It is difficult to foresee how events in Iraq will unfold. It is possible that a UN Mandated Peacekeeping Force might be deployed, in that event the Government will decide on any contribution by the Defence Forces to such a Force.

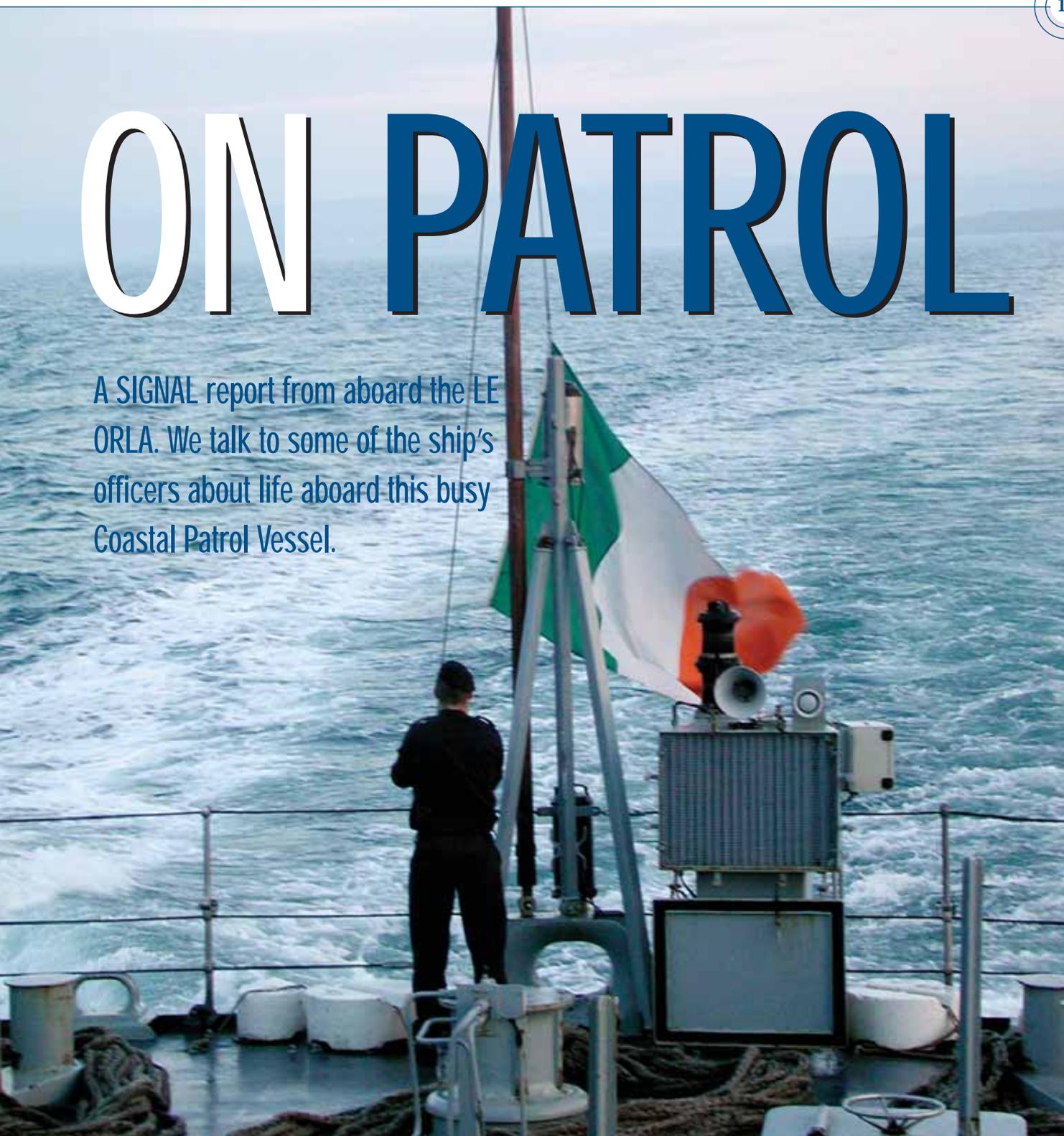
In reference to operation ALTHEA. One of the low points in European foreign policy was during the Yugoslav war in the 1990s, where legislation trapped UN troops so they weren't able to actually act the way they should have been able to. Do you think Operation Althea brings us back to a point where we can now go in there and make a difference?

The first thing is that the situation in Bosnia now is completely different to what it was. Secondly, what's happening with European Response Forces and the development of European capabilities to some extent is based upon the experience in the Balkans in the 1990s, where the Europeans and the UN were seen to be ineffective and it was only when NATO was brought in that the situation was brought under control. No doubt about it, the situation in Bosnia will be a big challenge for the EU in terms of its high profile status – they have to be seen to succeed and they can't be seen to fail. It's a very important operation from the EU's perspective, a job which they are far better equipped to do now.



ON PATROL

A SIGNAL report from aboard the LE ORLA. We talk to some of the ship's officers about life aboard this busy Coastal Patrol Vessel.



Enthusiasm abounds aboard the LE Orla. It is a Monday morning in late October and the LE Orla, one of the two smallest ships in the fleet, the other being the LE Ciara, is preparing to go to sea. Its captain, Lieutenant Commander (Lt Cdr) Declan Power and his Executive Officer (XO) Lt Brendan Heffernan are making final preparations on the bridge of the ship. The sky overhead is grey and gloomy with teeming fine rain, but as the

XO tells SIGNAL "the rain always calms the sea." The entrance to the Naval Dockyard at Haulbowline is quite narrow and navigating safely through it, even if you've done it 100 times, is a task that requires full attention. Once clear of the entrance the LE Orla weaves its way through the channel of buoys which mark a vessel's safest passage to sea. As the mouth of the harbour looms into view the full power of the ship becomes apparent

when the second engine kicks in. "It's a very powerful ship," says Marine Engineering Officer (MEO) Lt Cdr Tony Heery. "That's true," adds the XO, "she also has the largest weaponry in the navy," he says gesturing towards the 76mm Melara cannon on the foredeck. As the LE Orla crests the first of the rising waves as she departs Cork harbour into the open sea her captain Declan Power explains the vessel's tasks.



Lieutenant Commander Declan Power, captain of the LE ORLA.

Roles Of The LE Orla

"The Naval Service (NS) is the principal seagoing agency of the State and is tasked with a variety of Defence and other maritime policing roles. She is a very busy ship, with 190-200 days at sea every year. LE Orla is a Coastal Patrol Vessel (CPV) and for this patrol we are tasked with two patrolling areas, the South Coast and the South-West Coast. These areas are selected in order to maximise the coverage provided by the ships at sea on any one day.

"Our primary tasking is the conduct of a fisheries patrol." This work involves carrying out routine fisheries boardings and inspections on vessels fishing these waters. Other maritime policing taskings that can arise at short notice include armed boarding of suspect or threatening vessels. "For instance, vessels suspected of being involved in human trafficking, drugs or weapons smuggling would obviously warrant an armed boarding. Orla is one of the Navy's faster ships. She can go into shallow waters and she also has quite an effective weapons fit. It's a ship to be proud of and it's important to foster that pride. There is a friendly rivalry between ships due to the distinct identities that each ship has developed. As my first command, it'll always be a ship that I'll have a great affinity with."

LE Orla is a small ship (62.6x10x2.7m) with a crew complement of 40. Below decks the living conditions are compact. "It's a good crew," says the captain, "but it's a small vessel so we have to do our utmost to make living conditions on board as comfortable as possible."

Accommodation includes an 11 berth cabin

LE Orla is a Coastal Patrol Vessel (CPV) and for this patrol we are tasked with two patrolling areas, the South Coast and the South-West Coast

and living in such conditions can be difficult, but if it is, it doesn't show, as crew morale seem to be very high. "That's one of the good things about a small ship," adds XO Lt Bernard Heffernan, "there is a strong sense of bonding and camaraderie." Onboard there are also two younger officers

Ensign Stuart Donaldson (Officer Undergoing Training) and Sub Lieutenant Alan O'Regan. According to Ensign Stuart Donaldson, who joined LE Orla after being commissioned in September 2003, the LE Orla is the perfect place to start. He is currently studying for a degree in Nautical Science at the National Maritime College and part of his course includes time spent onboard ship as a trainee. In early 2005 he will spend several months with the Merchant Navy as part of this training. "I love being at sea, I suppose that's the reason I'm in the Navy. Starting on a ship like the Orla is perfect for someone in my position since I get a good experience of the entire workings of the vessel. I also get to do a lot of coastal navigation and this presents an opportunity that would not be available on the larger ships as they tend to focus more on off shore patrolling." Ensign Donaldson is primarily tasked with navigation, but on the Orla he is gaining experience on a variety of levels. For example, on the afternoon after we left Haulbowline he led a boarding party to carry out a fishery boarding and inspection of a French fishing vessel. "It's an exciting time to be in the Navy, the challenges are there but more importantly the structures are there to keep the organisation moving forward." The challenges of course refer to



On the bridge, Senior Staff prepare to observed a boarding.



A boarding crew preparing to disembark.

implementation of the White Paper on Defence and implementation of a restructured Naval Service. It also includes a fleet replacement programme implying that another new ship is due for delivery in 2007. The Navy's newest ship, LE Niamh, was commissioned in 2001.

The Challenges of Command

Good command requires a good crew. That's very much the ethos that Lt Cdr Power espouses. "Command is obviously a different challenge to any other jobs on board. You could perceive yourself to be distinct and alone, but you're never really alone, the best decisions you make are those that you form with the best information you obtain from your officers, your crew and from Naval command. There can be important and potentially difficult decisions to make, and that's where you will feel responsibility. You deal with that and prepare for that by years of experience and training. When something arises, hopefully you're ready to deal with the situation." Does serving as an XO before becoming a ship's captain provide a greater understanding of these two roles at the top end of command? "The XO and the MEO

(Marine Engineer Officer) are the two vital cogs in the smooth running of the ship. Personnel and machinery are two things that you can't do without. It's important to let the XO do his job of running the ship." Lt Cdr Power explains how the NS has developed its roles and continues to provide a challenging career: "I think the LE Orla will provide me and the other officers with very clear opportunities for personal development preparing us for whatever challenges we can expect to encounter in our future careers. The greatest challenge of working on a CPV is the sheer breadth of the tasks. Priorities can change at very short notice and that can be exhilarating." Taking into consideration the career prospects of his junior officers such as Ensign Stuart Donaldson or Sub Lt Alan O'Regan, Lt Cdr Power believes that where the NS is going as an organisation represents an exciting challenge for them. "There have been great advances in terms of resources and the quality of life onboard ship" says the captain. He points to the relatively new purchases of the LE Niamh and the LE Roisin. The equipment, roles and development within the NS have revolutionised the organisation. "It's all

about operational output. Without the operational capability at sea our training and logistical support would be redundant. People now realise how important a professional Navy is. When we are given funds we must use them well because to expand and develop properly we do require ongoing investment." Lt Cdr Power describes the opening of the National Maritime College as a very significant development not just for the Navy but also for the country. "It's a huge step forward. It's one of the finest facilities of its kind in Europe."

Lt Bernard Heffernan (XO 2ic) joined the Naval Service from the merchant marine. Since joining the Service he has served on the LE Emer, LE Deirdre and LE Eithne before returning to shore based duties as harbourmaster. While the sea has been in Bernard Heffernan's blood for many years, it is with the NS that he feels his true calling lies. "Without a doubt, the NS has rewarded my decision," he says. On joining the NS he completed a Direct Entry Officers course. "I'm very happy in my current appointment onboard Orla. This is my first patrol as XO of this ship.!" The XO aboard a Naval ship has a wide-ranging role

“ There can be important and potentially difficult decisions to make, and that’s where you will feel responsibility ”



Lieutenant Bernard Heffernan, Executive Officer (XO) aboard the LE Orla.

of huge importance. "The XO is the second in command of the ship, he is responsible for routine onboard and day to day running of the ship. He is also a bridge watchkeeper. He is the conduit between the crew and the captain, a two-way relationship. "If any of the crew were to have a problem or a complaint they would first bring it to me. In addition there is a multitude of housekeeping and maintenance duties. These range from training and upkeep of the ship to accounting for supplies on board." The role of the XO can be challenging as there is a fine line to walk. XO Bernard Heffernan's ambitions within the Naval Service are to command a vessel. 'It's something which I will do,' he says confidently "it's what I've been aiming towards since I joined." However, does the NS have the scope to satisfy the ambitions of officers like Bernard well into the future? "Yes, I think so. I think there are a lot of exciting developments, especially the likes of the National Maritime College of Ireland, which has just opened here beside the Naval Base. It's a great boost for the Service. There is significant investment and expansion within the NS that is actually making a difference on the

ground. We all have to remain informed and focus our initiatives on our tasks. We all need enthusiasm to develop our careers and professional expertise."

On Patrol

The Atlantic is an unpredictable beast and when the swell gets heavy the relatively small size of the Orla means that you really feel it. To carry out their full range of duties the crew of the Orla often need steel nerves and from personal experience, steel stomachs. "It's like anything else," says Sub Lt Alan O'Regan, "you just get used to it." In heavy swells later in the afternoon a French vessel has been located 40 nautical miles off the coast. "We haven't inspected him since February this year, so he's one we'd like to visit ." explains the captain. Many French trawlers operate in Irish waters and are regularly inspected by the Navy. Nevertheless, preparing to board a vessel in heavy seas is nothing to take lightly no matter how many times you do it. First the RHIB (Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat) is lowered over the side and held in position close to the side of the ship before the boarding team climb down into the RHIB. All sounds straightforward enough but

when 6-8 foot waves are heaving against the side of the ship it is a lot more difficult. Launching the boat into the swell is a task that requires experience and an adherence to safety measures, the latter paramount in everything done on board. Once launched the RHIB makes its way through the cresting waves to board the vessel. The LE Orla keeps a watchful eye, circling the trawler until the boarding party return safely. "That was a fairly routine one," says Sub Lt Alan O'Regan, "but it's quite frequent that we may spot some irregularities on board a vessel. Some may result in the issue of written warning or, ultimately, formal detention and prosecution before the courts. We detain a significant amount of them each year." In between boarding's and other routine activities, a CPV such as the LE Orla operates anywhere within the 200 mile fishing limit but, given her size, spends most of her time within a 50 mile range of the coast. Life on board is busy but organised and there is a great sense of direction and purpose. "It's important to keep people motivated on board, to maintain a sense of focus on what your job is and how you go about your day, it's part of my job to make sure everyone tows the

line” says Coxswain Chief Petty Officer Brian Dolan, the senior NCO on board, with 25 years service in the Navy. Part of the Coxswain’s duties is to compile the duty roster for the duration of the patrol, which is signed off by the XO. “I’m also responsible for administrative returns, for instance, to make sure the crew at all ranks are paid properly for seafaring service. In many ways, I’m the XO’s representative to the rest of the crew; I have to liaise with both sides of the crew. You can’t do what you think might make you popular, you have to do what’s right for the ship.” The work is hard on board the LE Orla, the conditions are tough, but the crew does what it can to make it as comfortable as possible.

There is a well-known phrase “an army marches on its stomach,” and the same is true in the Navy. Food is regular and there is plenty of it. Satellite television and DVD/Video are available and there is also a canteen for snacks.

The evening that SIGNAL was on board, the LE Orla proceeded to the sheltered waters near the Old Head of Kinsale, off which they would drop anchor.

When conducting a coastal patrol the captain may opt to anchor overnight, but with a watch being maintained on all communications and navigation sensors, thus ensuring that the ship is ready to respond to any event requiring a Naval presence.

To meet her commitment to achieving 190 patrol days in 2004, the ship is routinely tasked for patrols of two or three weeks duration. During a typical patrol the ship will return to port to replenish fuel, fresh water and other supplies. The day after SIGNAL visits, the ship is returning to Haulbowline for refuelling. Alternately the ship fuels in various ports around the country such as Castletownbere, Killybegs, Rosslare or Dublin. It will then be out to sea for a full week. Like the rest of the Naval Service ships, for the majority of the year LE ORLA is on patrol, in all types of weather conditions.

If operational output is how the Naval Service is measuring its effectiveness then the LE Orla, punching well above her weight, is evidence of the organisation’s success.



Ensign Stuart Donaldson (left) during armed boarding exercises.



“ We all have to remain informed and focus our initiatives on our tasks. We all need enthusiasm to develop our careers ”