

Re-Organisation of the Defence Forces

Press Release by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Defence

Mr. Alan Shatter T.D.

17 July 2012

"I am pleased to announce the details of the re-organisation of the Permanent Defence Force, which will enhance operational capabilities within a reduced resource envelope. It will consolidate the current three Army Brigades into two larger Brigades and ensure an appropriate balance between infantry and support elements.

In December 2011 I announced a revised ceiling of 9,500 personnel for the Permanent Defence Force (PDF) and a re-organisation of the Defence Forces encompassing a move from a three Brigade structure to a two Brigade structure. The Cabinet agreed to stabilise the PDF at 9,500 and recognised that a three Brigade structure was no longer viable.

The purpose of the re-organisation is to retain the capacity of the PDF to fulfil the roles assigned to the greatest extent possible within the strength ceiling of 9,500 and the significantly reduced resource envelope resulting from the fiscal difficulties of the State. No reduction in the strength of the Permanent Defence Force will result from today's announcement.

A central element of the re-organisation is to reduce the number of personnel engaged in headquarters, administrative and allied support tasks and to re-deploy posts to "front line" operational Units. The report received from the Chief of Staff and the Secretary General confirms that, with this re-organisation, the Permanent Defence Force can continue to fully meet operational requirements within the revised strength ceiling of 9,500 personnel.

In June of this year, the location of the headquarters for the two new Brigades in Cork and Dublin was announced. This was to dispel an ongoing campaign of misleading speculation about Custume Barracks, Athlone. This campaign continues to raise unnecessary concerns locally about the future of the barracks and the number of personnel that would remain in the barracks.

With 9,500 serving personnel, the PDF numbers in locations throughout the country will not change significantly. However, functions will move between locations. The present and future location of the main functions are set out in the attached maps and supporting material.

Discussions will take place with the representative associations. I look forward to their engagement during the implementation of the re-organisation.

Four (4) barracks were closed in March 2012 following announcement of the proposed closures in November 2011. At that time, I also announced that there would be no further barrack closures during the lifetime of this Government. I have consistently stated that no further barrack closures are being considered in the context of this re-organisation and no such closures are proposed.

Suggestions have been made that the re-organisation should be considered as part of the Green Paper on Defence being prepared for publication by end 2012. The Green Paper will address longer term defence policy whereas the re-organisation is driven by the immediate realities of retaining operational effectiveness within a strength of 9,500 and an austere resource provision.

While the re-organisation impacts on the administration and support for the Reserve Defence Force (RDF), the organisation of the RDF itself has not been addressed. The recommendations of the Value for Money Review of the Reserve Defence Force, which is due to be completed by the end of September, will have due regard to the revised PDF structures.

The implementation of this re-organisation, which will start immediately, will ensure that the Defence Organisation remains at the vanguard of modernisation and reform. I have requested the Chief of Staff and Secretary General to progress this quickly and I look forward to receiving regular progress reports”.

The Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces, Lieutenant General Sean McCann added “this is the single most serious and far reaching re-organisation of the Defence Forces in a generation and I fully recognise that the task of implementing this plan will rest on the shoulders of the men and women of Óglaigh na hÉireann.

Over recent years, the Defence Forces have set an example in terms of public service reform. Through careful management of resources, we have continued to deliver the full range of tasks at home and overseas while implementing a reduction in strength from 11,500 to 9,500 and consolidating from 34 barracks into 14 modernised locations. To get the best out of our organisation, a further re-organisation is now a necessity.

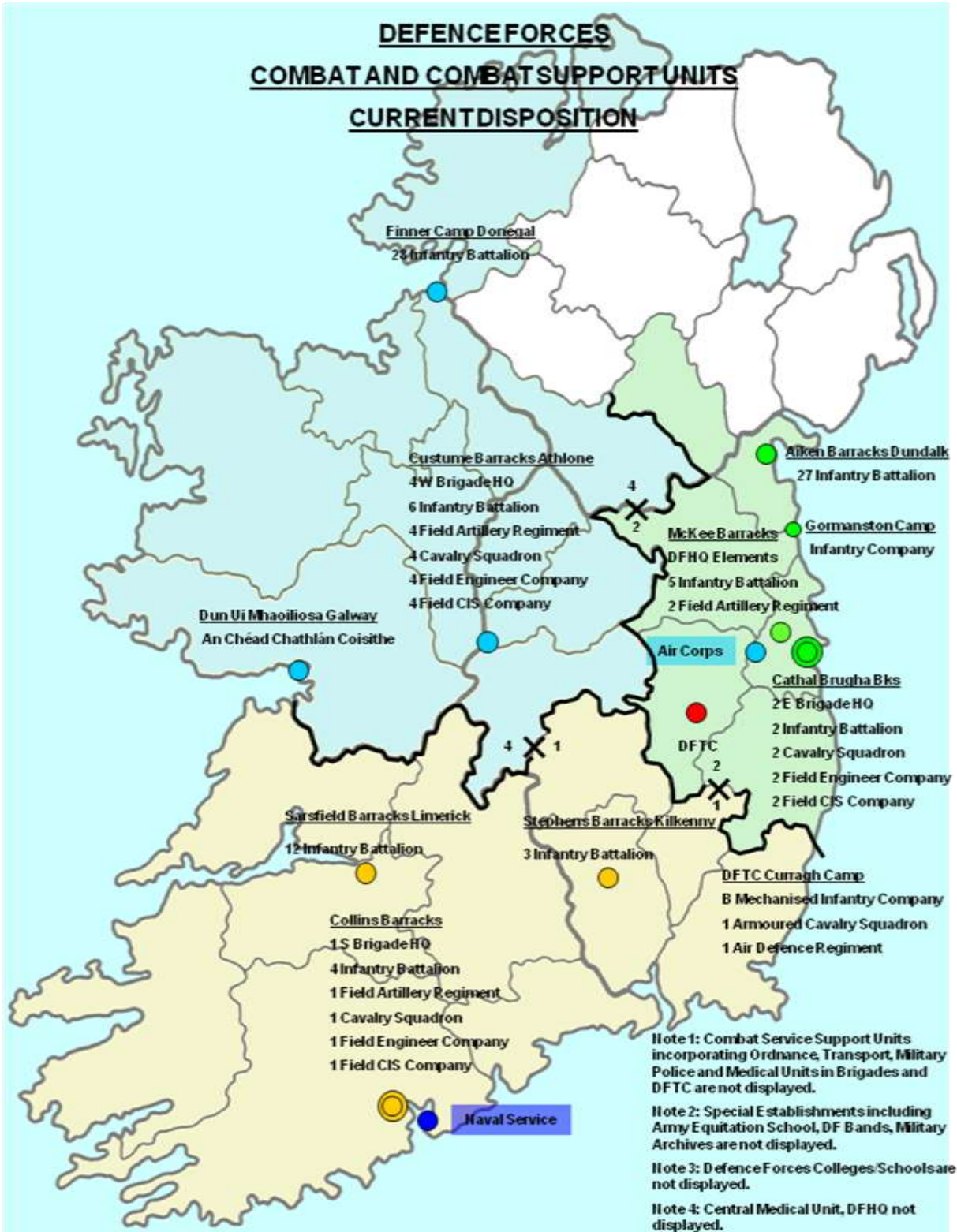
The greatest asset of Óglaigh na hÉireann is its people. We’ve overcome a myriad of challenges in the history of this organisation I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and respect for their continuing duty, honour and loyalty to the state”.

ENDS

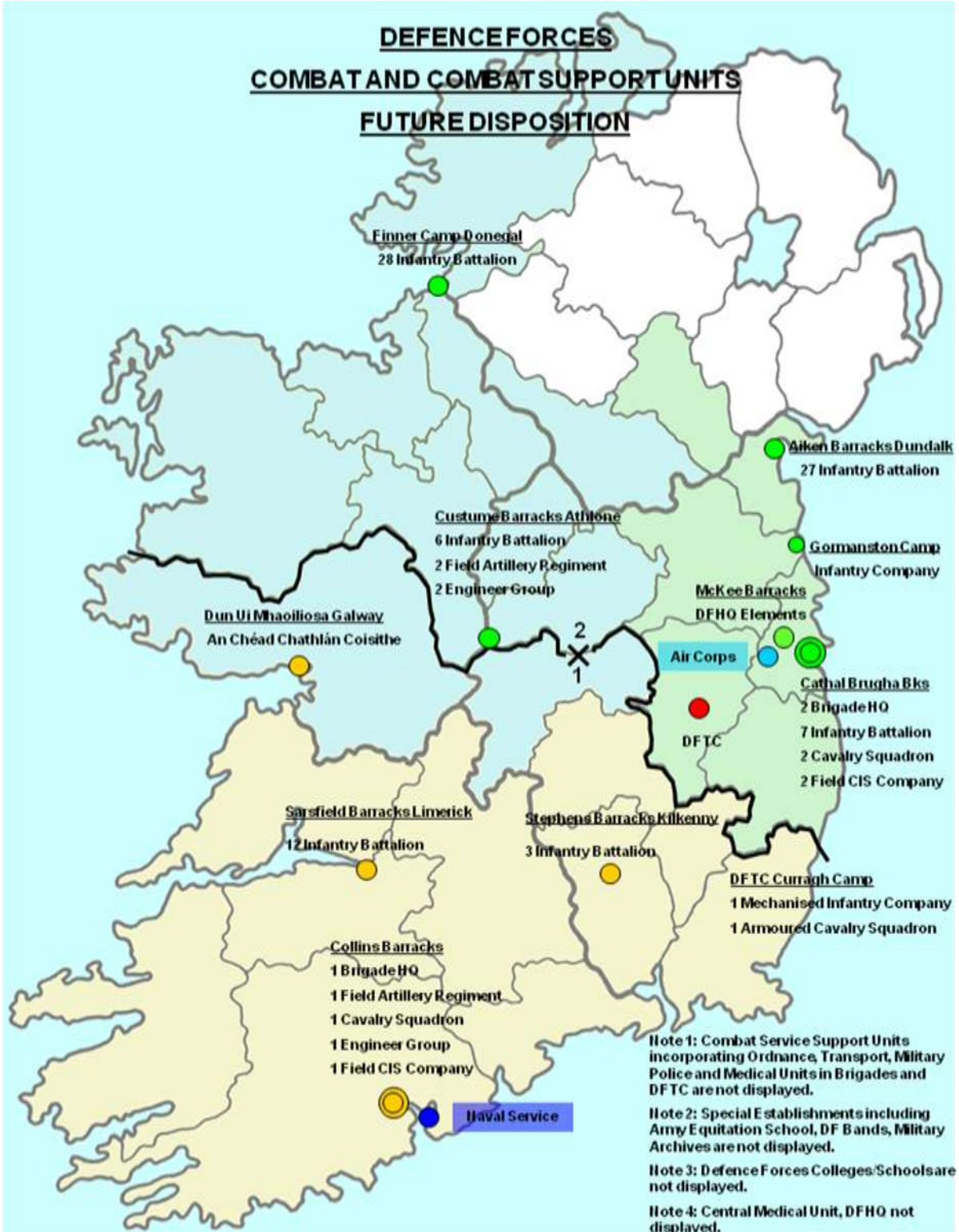
Note for the Editor

A Value for Money review of the Reserve Defence Force (RDF) is progressing and is due to be completed by the end of September. The recommendation of the VFM will inform future plans for the Reserve. As part of the prioritisation of the operational units of the PDF, it has been decided to reduce the number of PDF personnel working full time with the Reserve. In future, RDF units that are co-located with PDF units will have their administrative and support requirements met by those PDF Units. Where this is not feasible due to geographic dispersion, sufficient PDF Cadre staff will be retained to provide for the training and administrative requirements of such Units.

DEFENCE FORCES
COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS
CURRENT DISPOSITION



DEFENCE FORCES
COMBAT AND COMBAT SUPPORT UNITS
FUTURE DISPOSITION



DEFENCE FORCES REORGANISATION 9,500

ARMY LOCATIONS - PROJECTED STRENGTH

Formation	Loction	27 Mar 2012 - Strength	Projected Strength at 9,500
DFHQ		275	274
2 Bde	Cathal Brugha Bks* (Dublin)	760	1045
	McKee* (Dublin)	663	346
	Bricins (Dublin)	59	82
	Gormanston Camp (Meath)	140	148
	Aiken Bks (Louth)	355	358
	Custume Bks (Westmeath)	1067	971
	Finner Camp (Donegal)	404	491
1 Bde	Collins Bks	1020	956

	(Cork)		
	Kilworth (Cork)	12	29
	Sarsfields Bks (Limerick)	288	488
	Stephens Bks (Kilkenny)	351	496
	Dún Uí Mhaoilíosa (Galway)	318	496
DFTC*	(Kildare)	1417	1371

Notes:

1. Civilian employees are employed in Defence Forces installations. They are not included in these numbers.
2. Exercises and training activities will impact on the numbers in locations, particularly those with training centres – Dublin, Cork and Athlone.
3. * Includes DFHQ & Special Establishments.