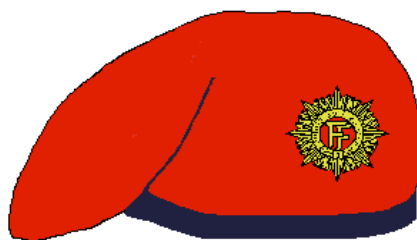


# Curragh History Archives



## The Military Police Through the Years



The Military Police is the law enforcement agency within the Defence Forces, deriving its authority from the Provost Marshal (PM).

During the period in 1922 before the outbreak of civil war when barracks were being taken over from the British Forces, suitable men were enrolled as Military Policemen, in Dublin (20) and the Curragh Camp (30). Their duties consisted mainly town patrols and special escort duties (Still being performed today). By the end of 1922, due to the increased strength of the Defence Forces, the number of Military Policemen was increased to 300.

**Cpl. Martin Joseph Delaney**  
**Military Policeman Curragh Camp 1922 – 1929**

With the general reorganisation of the Defence Forces in February 1923, the Military Police Corps was formed and men were selected from all units and transferred into the Corps. The reorganisation saw the establishment of Military Commands throughout the country and Military Police Companies known as Command Companies of Military Police were allocated to each command under the authority of an Assistant Provost Marshal (APM). The strength of each of these Military Police Companies varied with the size of the command area it was to police.

By May 1923 the strength of the Corps had increased to 1,300 and varied between 1,300 and 1,500 until April 1924 when the general demobilisation began. 1,000 Military Policemen were demobilised at this time reducing the Corp's strength to 385.



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In 1924 there was another Defence Force reorganisation and the new Military Police Corps establishment permitted a strength of 564 all ranks and provided for

- Headquarters
- Five Companies
- Military Barracks (Arbour Hill, Curragh Camp, Cork & Athlone)
- Training Depot (McKee Barracks, Dublin)

This new establishment saw the appointment of Major Roger Edmund McCorley as PM.

On 31 March 1929 a new establishment reduced the corps strength to permit 210 all ranks and provided for a Headquarters and Two Companies, No 1 Grn Coy MPC with its HQ in the Curragh responsible for the Curragh with detachments in Cork Athlone and No 2 Grn Coy MPC responsible for the Dublin area.

On 01 September 1931 the Military Police Corps was changed, by regulation, to an administrative service and was then to be called the Military Police Service.

**Military Policeman armed with a Carl Gustaf Sub-Machine Gun in the Military Detention Barracks, "The Glasshouse"**



With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the government declared an Emergency and Reserves were called up. All personnel with previous Military Police experience were posted to the Military Police Service. The 'Emergency' years brought vast reorganisation to the Defence Forces. New Field MP Units were established to aid the newly formed Brigades and this expansion continued until 1944 when a total of eight Field MP Companies and four Garrison Companies were in operation. The Military Police were at their greatest strength since 1924.

# Curragh History Archives

In addition to the normal police functions in a larger Defence Forces, the Military Police were responsible for the internment of nationals and non-nationals during the war. Through out the Second World War airman from both the axis and allied forces were forced to land in Eire. This was as result of being shot down, mistaking Eire for Britain, running out of fuel or as in the case of axis pilots, unable to return to axis controlled soil and thus opting to land in Eire in order to escape internment as POW's in Britain. As Ireland was a neutral country these soldiers would be detained in order to prevent them from rejoining the war effort. For this purpose an Internment Camp was established at K-Lines beside the Curragh Golf Course. An Internment Camp was also set up in the Curragh Camp and members of the IRA were imprisoned there. These Internment Camps utilised a vast of Military Police manpower.

The post war years saw a drastic reduction in the Defence Forces and the Military Police. In 1964 the title "Military Police Service" changed back to the "Military Police Corps". The Field MP Coys were disbanded and the Depot MPC was set up in the Curragh.



The late 1950's saw a period of unrest along the border and on 08 June 1957 a new internment camp was opened at Hare Park, remaining open until 14 March 1959. This year seen the establishment of the Depot and School MPC. The Depot was located in the Military Detention Barracks and the School located in the old internment camp. The School conducted the 1<sup>st</sup> Military Police Probationers Course comprising of eleven students from 26 January 1959 to 04 March 1959.

Escalation of troubles in Northern Ireland in August 1969 led to the 4 Grn MPC being moved to Donegal for service in aid to the civil power. This involved long patrols and the control of Medical Aid Posts for refugees from Northern Ireland crossing the border into the republic. This unit was also responsible for the security of field hospitals at Rockhill House and Fort Dunree. The Unit HQ, 4 Gnr MPC returned to Custume Barracks, Athlone in October 1969 but the detachments remained.





# Curragh History Archives

In 1972 with the intake of civilian prisoners into the Military Detention Barracks, Depot MPC was relocated to the old internment camp. In 1974 the Depot and School were again relocated, this time to their present home, Alexandra House, Curragh Camp, a location once used by the Queen Alexandra Nursing Service prior to 1922. The Military Detention Barracks (or the "Glasshouse" as it was known because of its distinctive glass roof) was a purpose built prison constructed in 1863. It operated as a detention barracks for military detainees for nearly 130 years.



**Inside "The Glasshouse"**

Overseas service brought various new aspects of the Military Police work to the fore. In the Congo (ONUC), the Military Police were employed in a Police/Intelligence role. They performed all the usual policing tasks of Traffic Control, Escorts, Discipline Enforcement and security of installations. Since then the Military Police have served with distinction in Sinai (UNEF), Cyprus (UNFICYP), Lebanon (UNIFIL), Iran/Iraq (UNIIMOG), Bosnia (SFOR), Eritrea (UNMEE) and in the near future, Kosovo (KFOR).



The Organisation of the Defence Forces was reviewed in the Gleeson report, resulting new establishment saw the Curragh being selected as the Defence Forces Training Center. The Military Police in each of the three new Brigades and the DFTC were named MP Coy. The Military Detention Barracks was taken over by the Department of Justice, renovated and is now a civilian prison with no military input. The MP School came under the Combat Service Support College, DFTC and so on the 21 October 1999 the Depot & School, Military Police Corps and the Military Detention Barracks had their official Stand Down at McDermott Barracks, Curragh. The end of an era and the beginning of a new and challenging future for the Military Police in the Defence Forces.



# Curragh History Archives



Personnel of MP Coy DFTC on patrol in the Curragh Camp