

IRISH DEFENSE FORCE

Army Ranger Wing



Within the Irish Defense Force there is a unit known as "Cciathan Fhiannoglaigh an Airm" or by the english translation as the Irish Defense Forces' Army Ranger Wing. Formed in 1980 from Ranger-trained Irish Defense Force personnel, the Irish Army Ranger Wing (ARW) is the Republic of Ireland's military special operations, and counter-terrorist (CT) force. The unit is based at Curragh Camp, in County Kildare.

Between 1968 and 1971 a small group of Irish military personnel were selected to attend US Army Ranger training, at Ft. Benning, GA. The group was drawn from senior NCO's, and officers of all branches of the Irish armed forces. Upon their successful completion of training, the group would be used to establish a similar training program in Ireland.

This group formed the initial training cadre at the Irish Ranger school at Curragh Camp. The training course is open to all Irish military personnel. Personnel who successfully complete the demanding course are awarded a black and gold "Fianoglach" , or Ranger tab.

With terrorism on the rise, the Irish government felt that it would be prudent to have members of the military receive more specialized training. As a result several members of the Irish Army Ranger training program received CT training from the RNLMC.

After conducting a review of international hostage rescue teams/counter terrorism (HRT/ CT) units, the Irish government directed the formation of a new military special operations force. The force was to be composed of 100-150 Ranger qualified personnel, and would operate under the direct control of the Irish Army Chief of Staff. The initial group of volunteers were selected from serving Ranger qualified members of the Irish Defense Forces.

Volunteers are required to pass a grueling four week selection course. Survivors of the selection course then advance to the six month long basic skills course. The course provides instruction in combat medicine; weapons and explosive handling; hostage rescue training and tactics; CQB and precision shooting; survival training; mountaineering; Long Range Patrolling; and a basic parachute course.

Upon completion of initial training the Rangers may progress on to more specialized training courses conducted by the unit and other services. Rangers can receive instruction in HAHO and HALO operations; EOD; fast roping and rappelling; a combat diver course including training in small boat handling, and amphibious operations; and a sniper course , with approximately half the unit qualifying as snipers.

The Rangers are tasked with conducting several missions. There more conventional military tasks include: conducting raids, ambushes and sabotage operations; conducting Long Range Recon Patrols in support of conventional units; intelligence gathering; VIP protection; capture of key enemy personnel; counter insurgency operations. The Rangers are also tasked with conducting CT operations in support if Irish law enforcement organizations.

The ARW has at its disposal a large amount of modern technology to help it execute its designated missions. Weapons available to its personnel include Sig P-226 pistols, HK MP-5 Series submachine guns, Remington 870 shotguns, HK SG1 rifles, and Accuracy International (AI) A1 96 sniper rifles.

-Dominique Sumner