

# VETERANS NEWS



VOL 2 / ISSUE 4 – DEC 2023

## 2023 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF ONE

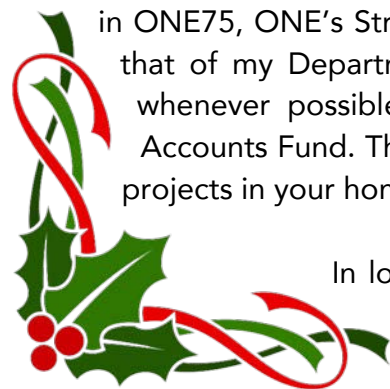
### Micheál Martin, T.D., Tánaiste and Minister for Defence and Minister for Foreign Affairs

On my own behalf and on behalf of my Government and Department colleagues, it gives me great pleasure to extend Christmas greetings to all the members of ONE and to your families.

This last year has been a productive and challenging one since I had the honour of being appointed as Minister for Defence on 17 December 2022. It has also been another very busy year for ONE. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate Michael Smyth on his recent appointment as Deputy Chief Executive Officer. Michael will work alongside Chief Executive Officer, Cormac Kirwan, steering and delivering ONE's daily operations and professional services and ensuring good governance.



I had the pleasure to visit ONE Headquarters at Brú na bhFiann, Smithfield, Dublin 7 on 26 July 2023. Whilst there, I had the opportunity to view first-hand the facilities ONE provides to veterans of the Defence Forces and to meet House Manager Richard Dillon and Deputy House Manager Sinead Black. On my visit, Colm Campbell, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and Audra Larkin, Director and Veteran Support Officer, updated me on the activities of ONE during 2023 and their plans for future developments set out in ONE75, ONE's Strategic Plan 2022-2026. I was happy to reaffirm my commitment, along with that of my Department and the Defence Forces, to continue to support ONE in your work whenever possible, and through the annual grant and further funding from the Dormant Accounts Fund. This funding was put to very good use in 2023 for the important infrastructure projects in your homes in Letterkenny and Dublin to improve the quality of life for residents.



In looking forward to the New Year and beyond, this also promises to be busy period and I note in particular the plans for the opening of ONE's fifth residential home in St. Luke's, Cork City in 2024, which will accommodate

six veterans. Some of the funding for this project will also come from the Dormant Accounts Fund. I note also that ONE has plans to open residential homes in Limerick and Newbridge in the next few years. The detailed Implementation Plan for the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces has recently been published which includes a recommendation to establish an Office of Veterans Affairs, an ambition of ONE's for some time.

Christmas is a time for us to reflect, and to remember those who are no longer with us. We remember in particular those who have died during this past year and our thoughts and prayers are with their loved ones at this time. It is also a time to recall those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace and in service of their country. The tragic and untimely death of Private Sean Rooney one year ago is a poignant reminder that peacekeeping sometimes comes at terrible cost and we think especially of his family and friends at this time. I think it is important also to remember and thank members of ONE for their loyal service to both the State and to the cause of international peacekeeping while serving overseas.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the officers in your headquarters, house managers and staff in your homes, Branch Officers, those who run the Veterans Support Centres, and all members of ONE and your families, a safe and peaceful Christmas and my very best wishes for the year ahead.



## 2023 CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TO MEMBERS OF ONE

### Lt General Seán Clancy, Defence Forces Chief of Staff

On behalf of the Defence Forces it is my privilege to extend season's greetings to you the men and women of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann (ONE) and your families.

In the season of goodwill, it is important for us all to give thanks and to take stock of where we are as we approach the end of the year. In reflecting on ONE, I am humbled to have witnessed the immense support you provide to the greater veteran community. I have seen first-hand your success with the expansion of services in 2023, particularly with two additional Veteran Support Officers and the 24/7 Mental Health Support Line. I also note your ambition to further expand the services that you offer across both homes and mental health in line with your Strategic Plan, ONE75. A highlight of my year was launching this year's Fuchsia Appeal in Dublin in Brú na bhFiann in September. The energy on the day from you, our veterans, was invigorating. It was truly inspirational to meet so many committed members of ONE, all focused on the same goal - the selfless betterment of others. Through your efforts you strive to ensure that no Irish veteran is left behind, no matter the circumstances in which our veterans find themselves. I want to thank you for the hard work, dedication, and the example you have provided and to congratulate you on the



expansion of your services throughout 2023. I look forward to witnessing the opening of your new homes in Cork, Limerick and Newbridge over the next year. In particular, I am delighted to support your sixth home in Limerick where the former Commanding Officer's House, Sarsfield Barracks will be refurbished into a 5 bedroomed facility for homeless veterans in Limerick.

In November, An Tánaiste published the Detailed Implementation Plan providing a roadmap for the implementation of the Commission on the Defence Forces recommendations. This programme of transformation will be the biggest and most radical transformation of the Defence Forces since the Second World War. Achieving the goals committed to by Government in the plan will require a huge effort. However, our serving members are already beginning to see the benefits with the introduction of private healthcare for all ranks, the increases in both Military Service Allowance and Patrol Duty Allowance, and additional appointments and promotion opportunities to name but a few.

In our veterans, we see the origins and reflection of what's best about the current members of Óglaigh na hÉireann. We see comradeship and our Defence Forces' values in action. You provide leadership through example to the current generation of the Forces, while to those outside the Defence Forces you demonstrate and represent the best of our organisation and a life serving the State. I take immense pride in being the Chief of Staff of those who currently serve, but also for those who have served and have given so much to Óglaigh na hÉireann. It is you, our forbearers, who have passed down and instilled the values our organisation strives to live by. It is also important to acknowledge the very positive and professional aspects of our service that you our veterans have helped inculcate into our Forces since our establishment over a century ago. It is these positive aspects of our culture such as service and loyalty that have enabled the Defence Forces to perform at home and overseas throughout our history, and as recently demonstrated during OP PIANO (MV Matthew interdiction), and by our personnel serving in the Middle East in a time of conflict.

Christmas is a time to remember those who have gone before us, a time when we feel their loss most acutely. We remember those members of the Defence Forces veterans' community who have passed during 2023. We also remember those serving members of Óglaigh na hÉireann who have gone to their eternal rest during the past year, including Pte Seán Rooney who died in such tragic circumstances in South Lebanon one year ago. Our thoughts and prayers are with their families, friends and comrades. Go ndéana Dia trócaire orthú.

As veterans you are more acutely aware of the sacrifices of service at this time. Our soldiers, sailors and aircrew continue to support the maintenance of peace in volatile regions, sacrificing time they could be spending with their families, in the pursuit of peace for others in their own homelands. Our veterans provide compassion, gratitude and an awareness that what our serving personnel are doing is special.

Finally, I want to thank you for your devotion and commitment to ensuring that those who need help the most are receiving the support they need. I wish you and your families a Happy Christmas and the best wishes for the New Year.

Nollaig shona daoibh go léir.



# MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH AT CHRISTMAS TIME

*By Audra Larkin, Veteran Support Officer, Cork/Kerry Area*

Mental Health does not take time off at Christmas and this can be a stressful time for many. Firstly, being aware of your own feelings over this time can serve to manage the holiday time. For many it is the first Christmas following loss. For others, issues like Finances, Family Dynamics, and Loneliness, Over-Stretching, “*Getting it all done*” and a Lack of Sleep can cause the impact. Being able to manage your mental health at Christmas is a skill that will serve you throughout the year also.

Most people experience stress and anxiety from time to time and this is normal. The stress results because extra demands have been placed on your brain or physical body. However, if not managed our Mental Health is impacted issues like Depression, Anxiety, Social Anxiety, Seasonal Adjustment Disorder and many more areas. Our mental health that can be affected at any time, however for some the Christmas period can be an exceptional time where the issues we face can increase.



We can also be affected in other ways like physical effects. With the increased demands and pressures of the holidays, it is also common to have physical effects. Some physical effects that may happen with stress can include things like Tension Headaches, Backache, Stomach Ache, Anxiousness Increased Heart Rate and Muscle tension. Being aware of how we carry stress is a great help to being able to identify when it gets tough for us.

The following are tips to manage the Christmas Period

1. If you have experienced loss this year, acknowledge those losses and emotions. If you have experienced loss this year, acknowledge that celebrations will likely be different.
2. Remind yourself it is okay to feel sadness, guilt, fatigue, and frustration.
3. Talk and listen to others about what you are experiencing.
4. Arrange to meet a friend or attend a community event where you can be around others. This will reduce the isolation factor.
5. Offer to help others. This itself can counteract feelings of loneliness and isolation and bring about a feeling of achievement.
6. Eat well although eating and cooking during the holidays can be time consuming and if celebrating alone can produce the “*what’s the point question*”. Cooking is in itself a therapeutic experience where you are actively engaged in creating. This produces a feel-good factor when accomplished.
7. Try to get enough sleep; sleep is crucial as when we are tired, we make different choices and decisions than what we normally would when fully rested.
8. Stay active. Get out of the house for at least 30 mins each day. Whether a quick walk or sitting in the park admiring the view, the impact of the fresh air and daylight will lift your mood.
9. Be kind and gentle with yourself. We all have good and not so good days. Do not criticise yourself and any attempt to do any of the above is an attempt and should be seen as an achievement.
10. Try to practice gratitude and maintain hope. Reminding yourself every day that there are things that you are grateful for this leads to enhancing hope for the future.

*Continued over...*



My top tip is one I use every day with clients that is that no matter how bad a day seems; a day will only always have 24 hours and after that it is a new day. So, imagine time spent sleeping, time spent eating, and time spent at any activity decreases the hours in a day, so the average person has about 6-8 hours to combat in the day. Make a list of things to do, read a book, go to the cinema, invite a buddy round, all of this uses up the remaining time. And if needed take it hour by hour, so make a list of a few things that you feel you could do to manage the hours left in the day. My last Christmas tip is to reach out if needed, it takes strength to reach out to somebody.

Use the Free Mental Wellbeing Support Programme for ALL Veterans, which is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Call 1800 911 909 or 01 5180350 or visit [www.LayaLEP.ie](http://www.LayaLEP.ie) for more help and advice on your Mental Wellbeing and Health. Access password is LAYAEAP.

## **FREE 24/7 Mental Wellbeing Support Programme available for ALL Defence Forces Veterans from Laya Healthcare/Spectrum**

**24/7 Free Phone: 1800 911 909 or 01 5180350**  
**[www.layaeap.ie](http://www.layaeap.ie) - Access password: LAYAEAP**



### **OTHER RESOURCES INCLUDE:**

**Samaritans** - services are available 24 hours a day, for confidential, non-judgmental support. Freephone 116 123, any time - [jo@samaritans.ie](mailto:jo@samaritans.ie) / [www.samaritans.ie](http://www.samaritans.ie)

**Text About It** - is a free, 24/7 service, providing everything from a calming chat to immediate support for your mental health and emotional wellbeing. Free-text HELLO to 50808 for an anonymous chat with a trained volunteer, any time. [www.textaboutit.ie](http://www.textaboutit.ie)

**Aware** - Information, support and peer groups for people experiencing anxiety, mild to moderate depression, bipolar disorder and mood-related conditions. Support also for friends and family members. Freephone 1800 80 48 48, 10am to 10pm every day - [supportmail@aware.ie](mailto:supportmail@aware.ie) / [www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)

**Pieta House** - Free individual counselling, therapy and support for people who self-harm or are thinking about suicide and people who have been bereaved by suicide. Freephone 1800 247 247, any time, Text HELP to 51444 - standard message rates apply - [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)

**Shine** - Support services for people living with mental health difficulties and their families. [support@shine.ie](mailto:support@shine.ie) - [www.shine.ie](http://www.shine.ie)

**ALONE** - National support and referral line for older people. Phone 0818 222 024, 8am to 8pm every day - [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)

**Seniorline** - Confidential listening service for older people provided by trained older volunteers. Phone 1800 804 591, 10am to 10pm every day. [www.thirdageireland.ie/seniorline](http://www.thirdageireland.ie/seniorline)

**Age Friendly Ireland** - Programmes and networks to support older people - [www.agefriendlyireland.ie](http://www.agefriendlyireland.ie)

***“Don’t ever lose hope. Even when life seems bleak and hopeless, know that you are not alone.” – Nancy Reagan***

# Private Paddy Kelly Remembered

On the 40th anniversary of the death of Pte Paddy Kelly – ONE has renamed our Athlone Branch in his honour.

Pte Patrick Kelly (36) was killed along with recruit Garda Gary Sheehan (23) on 16th December 1983, when a Provisional IRA gang opened fire on them after they came across a hideout in a Co Leitrim wood where supermarket executive Don Tidey had been kidnapped and held for 23 days.

Pte Kelly was married with four sons, Sgt Andrew Kelly MP Corps, David Kelly, Patrick Kelly and Michael Kelly, and are all pictured here with the new ONE Branch flag in honour of their late father, Pte Patrick Kelly. Pte Kelly had served overseas as a UN Peacekeeper on 4 occasions, three to Lebanon and one to Cyprus. Pte Kelly was posthumously awarded the Military Star by the Defence Forces.



In a ceremony held in Custume Barracks in Athlone on Friday 15th December 2023, the local ONE branch was renamed in his honour – to the Paddy Kelly Athlone Branch.

On Friday 8th December 2023, a new Memorial Stone for Pte Patrick Kelly in his hometown of Ballinamuck, Co Longford was unveiled for the 40th Anniversary of his death.



Pictured with his four sons are members of the ONE's Peter Keenan Branch – Branch Chairperson Pat Masterson and Steve Coy, ONE Board member.

ONE's Pat Masterson laid a wreath at the memorial stone on behalf of the Peter Keenan Branch and ONE. The unveiling was conducted with full military honours at the Ballinamuck Garden of Remembrance by Minister of State Jack Chambers TD on behalf of the Government.



## FUNDRAISERS WANTED

Like most charities, ONE is always looking for volunteers to fundraise for our charitable aims to help and assist former members of the Defence Forces who have fallen on hard times or are in need of homeless accommodation or additional services for their mental health.

Here are some inspirational examples for some fundraising activities here:

- \* Bag Pack
  - \* Boxing/MMA Event
  - \* Jumble Sale
  - \* Car Boot Sale
  - \* Coffee Morning
  - \* Cycling
  - \* Family Day
  - \* Golf Classic
  - \* Shave or dye
  - \* Hiking/Hillwalking
  - \* Marathon
  - \* Parachute / Paraglide
  - \* Hell & Back or other...
  - \* Quiz Night / Raffle
  - \* Sponsored Walk/Run
  - \* Treadmill Challenge
- List is not limited...

You can donate to our Fuchsia Appeal, by scanning the QR Code or by visiting:  
<https://oneconnect.enthuse.com/cf/33c1/fuchsiaappeal>



## MEMBERSHIP 2024

JOIN OUR TEAM - ONE Membership is open for new members and renewal of current membership for 2024.

*‘As individuals we stand alone, together as veterans we are ONE’*

### Handbook of Rules, Chapter 2, Para 2.1 - Ordinary Membership

Ordinary Membership of ONE shall be open to the categories listed hereunder providing such person had at least one year’s satisfactory service, has been honourably discharged, and has completed the current registration form declaring acceptance of the Constitution and Handbook of Rules for the ONE and providing such person is accepted by an affiliated Branch of the ONE.

- a. Veterans of the Permanent Defence Force.
- b. Veterans and serving personnel of the Reserve Defence Force.
- c. Ex-service personnel of the Civil Defence.
- d. Ex-service members of An Garda Síochána.
- e. Ex-service personnel of the Irish Red Cross.

## JOIN OUR TEAM



## MEMBERSHIP OPEN

Volunteer membership is also open to others interested in joining and assisting in our charitable services and goals.

Ordinary Membership is €25 per annum and Volunteer membership is €15 per annum. You can register your membership here:

[www.one-veterans.org/one-membership](http://www.one-veterans.org/one-membership)

ONE's Constitution, Handbook of Rules, Policies and Procedures including Code of Honour are available to download here:

[www.one-veterans.org/polices/](http://www.one-veterans.org/polices/)

**The above are being revised following the AGM & Convention and will be re-issued in January 2024**

## UPCOMING COURSES / TRAINING

### Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course / Finance Training

ONE will run a Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) course in February 2024 in Kilkenny. Finance training in Q2/2024 in Limerick and in Q3/2024 – Location TBD.

### Further Education & Training Course Hub (FETCH)

FETCH provides information about further education and training courses throughout the country such as Post-Leaving Cert courses, traineeships, back to education initiatives and many more. Visit: [www.fetchcourses.ie](http://www.fetchcourses.ie)

### FREE BOOKKEEPING & PAYROLL COURSES

Big Red Cloud Ltd in collaboration with KWETB are offering free training on Payroll and Bookkeeping Courses. Visit: <https://bigredcloud.com/training/#courses>

## UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### National Digital Awards 2024 – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024

ONE's website has been shortlisted for the National Digital Awards in the Not-For-Profit Website of the Year category. Ticket Only Event.

### 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the foundation of ONE – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2024

ONE was founded in the Mansion House on 10th March 1951 and unified two comradery associations in to ONE: National Federation of Irish Ex-Servicemen and Association of Regular Ex-Servicemen.

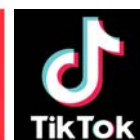
### Anniversary of the 1916 Rising – Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

The Defence Forces will hold a Commemoration of the Anniversary of the 1916 Rising on Easter Sunday morning at the GPO on O'Connell Street.

**Online ONE Calendar:** <https://teamup.com/ksapnu4n244mmwhsf9> - To add an event contact Wayne.

**Contact ONE:** For further info, to join as a member or to donate, contact ONE on 01 4850666, send us an email at [info@oneconnect.ie](mailto:info@oneconnect.ie), visit our website at [www.one-veterans.org](http://www.one-veterans.org) or find us on social media:

Follow us on  
social media →



### NEED TO CONTACT US?

Head Office:	01 485 0666 / <a href="mailto:info@oneconnect.ie">info@oneconnect.ie</a>
Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Cormac Kirwan:	087 665 5661 / <a href="mailto:cormac@oneconnect.ie">cormac@oneconnect.ie</a>
Deputy_Chief Executive Officer (DCEO), Michael Smyth:	087 121 0237 / <a href="mailto:michael@oneconnect.ie">michael@oneconnect.ie</a>
Executive Assistant, Paul Cooley:	083 098 9199 / <a href="mailto:paul@oneconnect.ie">paul@oneconnect.ie</a>
Marketing and Fundraising Officer, Wayne Fitzgerald:	083 097 3282 / <a href="mailto:wayne@oneconnect.ie">wayne@oneconnect.ie</a>
Head Office Veteran Support Officer (VSO), Steven Shields:	086 138 0825 / <a href="mailto:hqvso@oneconnect.ie">hqvso@oneconnect.ie</a>
Brú na bhFiann Veteran Support Officer, Tony Stafford:	087 280 8750 / <a href="mailto:onecaseworker1@gmail.com">onecaseworker1@gmail.com</a>
Cork/Kerry Veteran Support Officer, Audra Larkin:	085 218 2620 / <a href="mailto:cork-kerryvso@oneconnect.ie">cork-kerryvso@oneconnect.ie</a>
South Dublin, Kildare & West Wicklow VSO, Des Macauley:	086 616 7510 / <a href="mailto:sthleinstervso@oneconnect.ie">sthleinstervso@oneconnect.ie</a>
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House Manager Brú Doire Feá Letterkenny, Aiden Redican:	086 039 0635 / <a href="mailto:aiden@oneconnect.ie">aiden@oneconnect.ie</a>



## 8.1.5 ONE MEMBERS ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

Important energy-saving tips for heating, domestic hot water, and lighting that can help reduce energy consumption in ONEs members homes:

### Heating:

1. **Adjust Thermostat:** Lower your thermostat by just one degree to save 10% on your heating bill. Set living areas at 18-20°C and hallways/bedrooms at 15-18°C.
2. **Close Doors:** Keep doors shut between heated and unheated rooms to retain warmth.
3. **Furniture Placement:** Avoid blocking radiators with furniture; arrange beds, sofas, and desks near heat sources.
4. **Avoid Drying Clothes on Radiators:** Drying clothes on radiators reduces heat efficiency; use a drying rack instead.
5. **Tackle Draughts:** Seal gaps around skirting boards and floors to prevent cold air from entering.
6. **Curtains:** Close curtains in the evening to retain heat inside.
7. **Use Draft Stoppers:** Place draft stoppers or draught excluders at external doors.
8. **Bleed Radiators:** Regularly bleed radiators to remove trapped air and improve heating efficiency.

### Domestic Hot Water:

1. **Choose Showers Over Baths:** Showers use 20% of the energy needed for a bath.
2. **Limit Shower Time:** Reduce shower time to save both energy and water, especially with pumped electric showers.

### Lighting:

1. **Maximize Natural Light:** Open blinds and curtains to make use of natural daylight.
2. **Turn Off Lights:** Always switch off lights when leaving a room.
3. **LED Bulbs:** Replace old bulbs with energy-efficient LED options, using up to 90% less electricity and lasting longer.
4. **Consider Immersion Timer:** Install an immersion timer to heat water only when required.
5. **Choose Appropriate Wattage:** Select the lowest wattage bulb that adequately illuminates the room based on its size and natural light availability. Avoid using higher wattage bulbs than necessary.

6. **Maximize Natural Light:** Position furniture to take advantage of natural light sources, reducing the need for artificial lighting during the day.
7. **Use Task Lighting:** Use task lighting, such as desk lamps, for focused activities like reading or working. This allows you to illuminate specific areas without lighting up the entire room.
8. **Clean Lights Regularly:** Dust and clean light bulbs and lampshades regularly. Dust can reduce the amount of light emitted, so keeping them clean ensures optimal brightness.

#### Energy Saving Tips for Appliances:

1. **Washing Clothes:** Use lower temperature settings for washing machines to save energy. Run full loads in washing machines and dishwashers.
2. **Drying Clothes:** Opt for air-drying clothes on a clothesline or a rack near a sunny window.
3. **Fridge/Freezer:** Set fridge temperature at 3-5°C and freezer at -15-18°C. Defrost freezer regularly. Turn off appliances when not in use to avoid standby power consumption.
4. **Appliance Ratings:** Choose A+++ rated appliances for better energy efficiency over their lifetime. Only fill the kettle with the necessary amount of water.

#### Energy Saving Tips for Cooking:

1. **Oven Use:** Avoid opening the oven door frequently during cooking. Match pot/pan size with stove ring size.
2. **Cover Pots and Pans:** Use lids to boil water faster and reduce energy consumption.
3. **Kettle vs. Stove:** Boil water in a kettle instead of on the stove. Maintain a clean stove for effective heating.
4. **Microwave for Reheating:** Use the microwave to reheat small portions of food, saving 80% of energy compared to using the oven.

#### Managing Your Electricity Meter:

1. **Peak Usage Times:** Electricity demand is high between 7am-9am and 5pm-7pm. Reduce usage during these periods.
2. **Delay Start Timers:** Use delay start timers on appliances to avoid peak time usage.
3. **Meter Reading:** Submit regular meter readings to ensure accurate billing.