

The Military Heritage Research Bursary 2026

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Acknowledging that military heritage is common to the different political, religious, and cultural traditions on the island, the Military Heritage of Ireland Trust CLG, (hereafter referred to as “Trust”), advances an all-Ireland, cross border, non-denominational, and non-political approach to Ireland’s Military Heritage.

The Trust encourages the study of Ireland’s Military Heritage, history, and memory in all its diversity and complexity.

Bursary

Arising from its objectives, the Trust will award a bursary to an individual conducting original and innovative research into an aspect of Irish Military Heritage, and the Story of the Irish Soldier.

The title of the bursary is “*The Military Heritage Research Bursary*”. The year that the bursary is awarded will be incorporated within the title.

On a world-wide basis, talented undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoctoral students, and researchers; early career researchers; independent scholars; and established authors; are encouraged to participate in the process.

The bursary commemorates Major-General P.F. Nowlan RIP, a founding member of the Trust, who was elected its first Chairman (1999 - 2011), and remained as an active and highly respected member of its Board of Directors (1999 – 2015). His enduring legacy ensures an environment that fully understands and appreciates the role of the Irish Soldier in Ireland’s distinctive and shared military heritage. Major-General Nowlan’s biographical details are attached as Annex A.

On an annual basis, details of the bursary will be circulated, as appropriate to universities, military educational establishments, museums, libraries, heritage centers, veterans’ associations, and regimental associations. Details will also be published on the Trust’s website.

The Military Heritage Research Bursary, launched in January 2018, has replaced the Annual Military Heritage Award (2010 – 2017).

Frequency

The bursary is limited to one award in a calendar year.

Funding

Conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner, with a realistic level of ambition, the Trust will fund the award of the bursary.

The amount of the bursary will reflect the Trust's financial resources and, in some cases, could be determined by a legacy provided to the Trust. Subject to available finances, it is envisaged that the bursary will be awarded on an annual basis.

The bursary is an ex-gratia payment of €500.

The bursary will be paid at the completion of the associated work and the formal submission of an Academic Paper to the Trust's Board of Directors. The payment of the bursary will normally take place at a Trust's Annual General Meeting.

Scope

The output of the research should constitute a significant and scholarly contribution to our understanding of Military Heritage and the Story of the Irish Soldier.

Research must have a military dimension, concentrate on one or more aspects of Irish Military Heritage, and include the impact on the associated economic, political, and social environment.

The range of research also includes contemporary military operations such as peace support operations, humanitarian operations, the maintenance of law and order, and in aid to the civil power duties.

From time to time, to provide focus on the Trust's mission and objectives, specific areas of research, or a particular author, for a bursary may be identified by the Trust's Directors.

Timeframe

Following approval in the September 2026 timeframe, the Trust will circulate the Terms of Reference to universities, libraries, museums and heritage centers as appropriate. In parallel, the Terms of Reference will be posted on the Trust's website.

Applications from prospective candidates for the 2026 bursary should be submitted to the Trust's Secretary, not later than 31 January 2026.

Following a review of submitted applications, the Trust's Directors will select a suitable candidate for the bursary by 31 March 2026, and invite the successful applicant to conduct the research culminating in the submission of an Academic Paper.



A draft of the Academic Paper will be submitted to the Trust's Secretary not later than 30 September 2026. The completed Academic Paper will be submitted to the Trust's Secretary not later than 01 December 2026.

The presentation of the 2026 bursary will take place at the Trust's Annual General Meeting in May 2027.

Eligibility

The eligibility cohort consists of:

- Undergraduate, postgraduate or postdoctoral researchers and students;
- University graduates of all levels, within three years of graduation:
- Individuals who are conducting significant research, or who have been so engaged, for an institution such as a Museum, Heritage Centre, Military Educational / Training Establishment, Public Library, or organisations such as Veterans' Associations or Regimental Associations; and
- Established authors researching and writing a monograph, whose subject matter largely pertains to Irish Military Heritage and History.

Application

To be considered for a bursary, applicants are invited to submit a paper of 1,000 words, outlining their proposed research topic in an area related to Irish Military Heritage and History.

- The paper should include, inter alia, Title, Subject Area, Background, Research Question(s), Methodology, Sources and proposed Outputs and Deadlines.
- Details of any publications should be also be submitted.
- Submissions should be accompanied by a CV.
- Applications should be supported by an academic reference.

Only one Military Heritage Research Bursary may be held, or applied for, at any one time.

Selection

The Trust may avail of a selection panel, drawn from the on-island university history environment to make recommendations to the Board of Directors for the award of a bursary to an appropriate qualified applicant, conducting a discrete piece of research.



Product

The product of each bursary will be an Academic Paper between 4,000 and 5,000 words excluding footnotes and bibliography. The Academic Paper will be formally presented by the author at an appropriate forum, such as seminars and workshops, as decided by the Trust.

Completed work will become the property of the Trust for distribution and publication, as appropriate.

The successful Academic Paper will be published on the Trust's website which has 130 links to external sites and agencies; and will be circulated to universities, libraries, museums, and heritage centers as appropriate, and will also be provided to publications such as The Defence Forces Review, An Cosantóir Magazine and History Ireland.

The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust CLG

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Annex A. Biography of Major-General P.F. Nowlan

Annex B. Previous recipients of the Military Heritage Research Bursary

Major-General P. F. Nowlan **1936 - 2015**



Military History and Heritage

Major-General P.F. (Paddy) Nowlan had a lifelong interest in Irish military history. He was an active member of the Kildare Archaeological Society and was one of the Vice-Presidents of the Military History Society of Ireland. General Sir Bryan Joseph Mahon (Born in Galway, 10th Irish Division, Commander-in-Chief Ireland, and Senator, buried in Ballymore Eustace) was the subject of his MA thesis, which he was using as the basis of his Doctorate, and intended to publish before he died in November 2015.

With the transfer of Collins Barracks, Dublin, to the National Museum of Ireland in 1993, Major-General Nowlan played a significant role in identifying Collins Barracks as the optimum location for a Military Museum. He was primarily responsible for the elaboration of the “*Defence Forces Policy for Military Museums*”, which was promulgated in September 1998.

Promoting the widest understanding and appreciation of the story of the Irish Soldier, and acknowledging that military heritage is common to the different political and religious traditions on the island, Major-General Nowlan was the key instigator in masterminding the establishment of The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust CLG.

In August 1999, through his many influential contacts, he personally brought together a group of like-minded individuals drawn from the different traditions in Ireland – North and South, with a variety of backgrounds including business, public service, military service, and academia forming the Trust’s founding Officers and Directors, and concurrently enhancing the strategic peace dividend.

Major-General Nowlan’s experiences, service and expertise were instrumental in shaping the Trust’s ethos, vision, mission, objectives, and membership. As a founding member of the Trust, he was elected its first Chairman (1999 - 2011) and remained as an active and highly respected member of its Board of Directors (1999 – 2015).

In parallel, Major-General Nowlan, played a key leadership role shaping the political, diplomatic, military, academic and resource environments which culminated with the opening in 2006 of the much-acclaimed Soldiers' and Chiefs' Exhibition in Collins Barracks (*"From 1550 to the Present Day"*). Likewise, he championed the Trust's close relationship with the National Museum of Ireland, and with military and regimental museums throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Under Major-General Nowlan's Chairmanship, the Trust assisted in the publication of research that supported its core focus on military heritage, commissioned and launched publications. Instituting the "The Military Heritage Annual Award", in honour of Major Charlie Trainor MM, 2nd Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Major-General Nowlan encouraged the scholarly research of Ireland's military heritage by the younger generation.

In essence, through his active involvement in The Military Heritage of Ireland Trust (CLG), Major-General Nowlan promoted the memory of the courage, valour and sacrifices of Irish men and women serving in the profession of arms, irrespective of the Theatre of Operations, National Flag, or Regimental Colour.

Soldier and Peacekeeper

A native of New Ross, prior to his Cadetship, Major-General P. F. Nowlan enlisted in the Defence Forces in June 1955. A member of the 30th Cadet Class, on commissioning in 1957, he was posted to the Artillery Corps. As a Gunner Officer, he served in the Depot and School, 1 Air Defence Regiment, 2 Field Artillery Regiment, 6 Field Artillery Regiment (FCA) and 2 AA Battery (FCA). In addition to Regimental Commander of the 1 Air Defence Regiment, Major-General Nowlan was Battery Commander on the establishment of the 3 Battery, (Demonstration Battery) Depot and School Artillery in May 1980.

During his service in the Defence Forces, Major-General P. F. Nowlan filled appointments in 'A' Administration Section, The Military College, Eastern Command and Curragh Command.

Serving in the cause of peace, he had extensive tours of duty in the Congo with ONUC (37 Infantry Battalion), in Cyprus with UNFICYP (9 and 20 Infantry Groups), in Cairo and Bagdad with UNTSO (1984 - 1986), and in Lebanon with UNIFIL (46 and 49 Infantry Battalions). His last overseas appointment was with the Office of the [UN] Secretary-General in Afghanistan and Pakistan (OSGAP) from 1992 to 1993.

On promotion to the rank of Colonel, Major-General Nowlan was appointed Deputy Adjutant-General in September 1991. As a Brigadier-General, he held the appointment of Assistant Chief of Staff from February 1994.

Promoted to the rank of Major-General, on the advice of Government, the President appointed him as Quartermaster-General in June 1997.



Following the reorganisation of Defence Forces Headquarters on 01 October 1998, Major-General Nowlan became the first officer to hold the appointment of Deputy Chief of Staff (Support). He retired from the Defence Forces on 29 November 1998, after 43 years of loyal and dedicated service to the State and its Defence Forces.

A Family Man, Gentleman, Soldier, Peacekeeper, Diplomat, Bridge-Builder, Historian and Colleague, may Major-General Paddy Nowlan, Rest in Peace.

Annex B

PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS OF THE MILITARY HERITAGE RESEARCH BURSARY

2019: No Award

2020: No award – Covid 19

2021: The winner of the 2021 bursary was Mr Eoin Scarlett, a Post Graduate Student, Trinity College Dublin. The title of his Academic Paper was *'From 'Bulls' Wool' to 'Forty Hits': The legacy of participation in the United Nations Operation in the Congo within the Defence Forces.*

2022: The winner of the 2022 bursary was Mr Stephen Kelly, a PhD Student, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. The title of his Academic Paper was *The Use of Military Courts and Courts-Martials by the British military as a weapon in counter insurgency against Irish Republicans in the 18th brigade area of operation in Ireland from November 1919 to July 1921.*

2023: No Award

2024: No Award

2025: No Award