



**Óglaigh  
na hÉireann**  
DEFENCE FORCES IRELAND

**An Chartlann Mhíleata**  
Military Archives

# **Military Archives Acquisition Policy**

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## **References**

- Military Archives Appraisal Policy
- National Archives of Ireland Act 1986, Regulations 1988
- National Archives of Ireland Acquisition Policy 2015-2017

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The role of the Military Archives is to acquire, preserve, appraise and make available archival material from the foundation of the Irish State up until the present day, including records from overseas missions. This is to ensure its availability both as a historical / academic / research resource and to safeguard citizens' rights. The Military Archives' holdings relate to all aspects of the Defence Forces and Department of Defence and provide essential primary source material for people seeking to understand the military, social and political forces which have shaped our nation. Specifically, our material relates to the role of Óglaigh na hÉireann, from its part in shaping the modern Irish State to its development into a modern, professional military force operating on the international state.

### **1.1 Purpose**

This document is designed to articulate the acquisition policy of the Military Archives in relation to its statutory and broader mandates. It does so by defining the criteria by which the Military Archives will consistently, systematically and transparently identify material for accession.

### **1.2 Authority**

The authority to acquire state records originating from the Defence Forces and Department of Defence stems from the status of the Military Archives as the official place of deposit for the records of both of those organisations, as defined by the National Archives Act 1986 (Section 14) and authorised by An Taoiseach since 1990.

The Military Archives also has the authority to acquire material that supports its mission in preserving and promoting Ireland's documentary military heritage in a way that is as nuanced and inclusive as possible. In this respect, the Military Archives acquires material from other sources that support its mission, primarily through individual private donations, gifting and bequeathed collections.

In its most broad and holistic definition, as the only unit within the Defence Forces dedicated to military culture and heritage, the Military Archives has authority based on a moral obligation to acquire, as far as is reasonably possible within resources, material that may more naturally fall within a museum context but which is acquired in order to ensure its safeguarding and availability into the future, until such time as a suitable place of curation and exhibition comes available.

### **1.3 Scope**

The acquisition of official records has a statutory basis under the National Archives Act, and in general, all military and departmental records which are more than 30 years old and are worthy of permanent preservation, must be transferred to the Military Archives and made available for inspection by the public. The process of identifying which official records are worthy of permanent preservation is dealt with in details in the Military Archives Appraisal Policy.

Therefore, the remainder of this policy document will refer to the acquisition of records *not* generated in the course of the business of a section of the Defence Forces or Department of Defence, except where such material has come into private possession.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Records**

"Record" means any kind of recorded information, regardless of the physical form or characteristics, and without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes correspondence, files, registers, indexes, bound volumes, maps, plans, drawings, diagrams, photographs, films, paintings, pictorial and graphic works, microforms, sound recordings, video tapes and machine readable records received or created, or deposited, on file and held by any organisation or person, public or private.

### **2.2 Books and published material**

Books or published materials are generally not acquired by the Military Archives unless there are special or compelling reasons for them to accompany acquired archival records.

### **2.3 Ephemera and non-paper media**

Ephemera, where relevant to our core holdings, falls within the acquisition policy of the Military Archives as it serves to animate and provide depth to official documentary material.

Contingent on our capacity to store, process and access specific media, photographic, film and sound material fall within the acquisition policy of the Military Archives where relevant to our core holdings.

### **2.4 Artefacts**

Artefacts are generally not acquired privately by the Military Archives unless there are special or compelling reasons for them to accompany acquired archival records, but should generally be referred to an appropriate museum authority. In some instances, a joint acquisition process may be appropriate.

### **2.5 Material not accepted**

In general, newspapers clippings and reproductions of original material will not be accepted, except where the original no longer exists. Original records offered for the purpose of creating a surrogate will generally not be accepted except where the material

is appraised as having a significant research value in accordance with the Military Archives Private Donations Appraisal Policy (Appendix A).

### **3 METHOD**

#### **3.1 Acquisition by donation (gift or loan)**

The Military Archives may accept deposits either as a gift or loan. Where a collection is acquired by gift, the Military Archives requires depositors to sign a Deposit Agreement, which transfers all rights they may have in relation to the archives, including intellectual property rights, to the Military Archives.

Where a collection is acquired on loan, the Military Archives requires depositors to sign a Loan Agreement. This stipulates that such records remain the property of the depositor, who may withdraw them subject to agreed terms of withdrawal. A loan can be converted into a gift at any time during the period of deposit.

Except for exceptional circumstances, the Military Archives will avoid acquiring collections on loan due to the considerable time and resources required to properly process and integrating the material into our repository and finding aids, only to have to deaccession them at a later date.

#### **3.2 Purchase of archives**

The Military Archives may occasionally purchase records which are of direct relevance to its archival holdings. Although the National Archives Act permits the purchase of archives, neither the National Archives nor the Military Archives wish to promote or encourage the sale of archives or a commercial market in archives. Like the National Archives, the Military Archives does not offer finders' fees or valuations of individual records and record collections.

#### **3.3 Appraising private donations**

Appendix A to this policy is a Private Donations Appraisal Report. This may be used by archivists in order to consistently, systematically and transparently justify the acquisition of material by the Military Archives, as well as reasons for rejecting proposed donations in a way that minimises potential offence.

## **APPENDIX A**

**ACCESSION NO:**

### **MILITARY ARCHIVE PRIVATE DONATIONS APPRAISAL REPORT**

This appraisal report has been designed in order to assist archivists in the Military Archives to assess the suitability of private material presenting for accession. It has been prepared with due cognisance of the Military Archives Acquisition and Appraisal Policies and should be completed in consultation with those documents.

Note that where report refers to “The Defence Forces / Department of Defence” this is to be interpreted in the broadest sense including preceding organisations such as the Irish Volunteers, Irish Citizen Army, IRA GHQ etc.

#### **1. Subject and Background**

**a. Subject of the appraisal:**

**b. Background of the appraisal:**

**c. Individual, group, organisation responsible for creation:**

**d. Their connection to the Defence Forces or Department of Defence:**

**e. Individual, group, organisation responsible for offering donation (if different from ‘b’):**

- f. **Their connection to the Defence Forces or Department of Defence (if different from ‘b’):**

## 2. **The Material**

### a. **Suitability**

If material does not elicit at least one “yes” answer, strongly consider its suitability. If it does not and is recommended for accession, please elaborate in the “recommendations” section.

| <b>Criteria:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Details</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Does the material primarily relate to the Defence Forces (DF) or Department of Defence (DoD), was it created or published within the DF / DoD or created or published outside the DF/DoD but with DF/DoD relevance? |            |           |                |
| Does the material relate to other individuals or events in a way that sheds light on aspects of the DF/DoD, or answers queries relating to the DF/DoD?                                                              |            |           |                |
| Does the material relate to Ireland in a way that sheds light on aspects of the DF/DoD’s history and development?                                                                                                   |            |           |                |

|                                                                                                                             |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Does the material document the experience of members of the DF/DoD?                                                         |  |  |  |
| Is the material of a rarity and significance that it is considered of importance to the mission of the Military Archives?   |  |  |  |
| Is the material a model of material such that it may be used as a comparative methodology in a similar study of the DF/DoD? |  |  |  |
| Has the material been produced the DF/DoD?                                                                                  |  |  |  |
| Is the material relating to the genealogy of members of the DF/DoD?                                                         |  |  |  |
| Will the material provide access to newspapers not already available through existing physical or online sources?           |  |  |  |
| Does the material consist of, or contain, books which will inform studies of the DF/DoD?                                    |  |  |  |

**b. Is the material being made available through: (tick box)**

**Donation** ☐ See sec. 3.1 of Military Archives Acquisition Policy

**Purchase** ☐ See sec. 3.2 of Military Archives Acquisition Policy

- c. **Physical description of the records, including formats:** Consider requirement and availability of storage space, particularly for outsize items, or items made from material that requires specialist storage conditions or playback apparatus, such as film etc.
- d. **Dates of creation:**
- e. **Administrative history:** (the administrative systems that led to the creation of the records if applicable)
- f. **Custodial history:** (if the donor is different from the creator, describe how it came into their custody)
- g. **Scope and content:**

### 3. Appraisal findings

- a. **Evidential and informational value to the Military Archives:**
- b. **Related records at the Military Archives:**
- c. **Related records at other repositories:**
- d. **Restrictions on access to public:** (under FOI Act, Data Protection Act, or indicated by donor)
- e. **Physical condition:**

f. **Creator generated finding aids available:**

g. **Potential for future donations that would expand the collection:**

h. **Cost considerations for archival processing:**

i. **Any other issues:**

4. **Recommendations:** (Recommendation as to whether to accession material or not and explanation the reasons. Include any related actions required such as preservation, sampling or referring donor to another repository.)

**Prepared by:**

**Date:**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**