**My Career Story.**

My journey within the Army can be divided into three phases in space and time.

Phase 1 – Building my Professional Foundation.

The early phase of my career was shaped by my appointment as a platoon commander within the 3rd Infantry Battalion, Kilkenny. During my time in the 3rd Infantry Battalion I was lucky enough to have been mentored by a fantastic group of officers and NCOs within the unit who have gone on to do great things within the organisation. They helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses and allowed me to develop, helping me to understand that I was too intense in how I approached problems and how I can approach problems in a better way. I was also lucky enough to meet my wife in Kilkenny and as such I have set up my home base there.

Phase 2 – Enhancing my Professional Knowledge Base.

The next phase of my journey I moved to the Military College to undertake my Junior Command and Staff Course. Following this course I remained as an Instructor. This combination of student/instructor roles within the Officer Training Wing (OTW) allowed me to experience the course from two perspectives, which in turn shaped how I approached learning and instruction. This changed how I presented information and how I researched content for delivery. It was during this time that I became a father for the first time. This event changed my perspective on family and how it can influence people at work. I also learned the importance of humility in my role in the OTW.

Phase 3 – Applying my Professional Ability.

The most recent phase of my journey began when I was appointed to European Section within Operations and Planning Branch, DFHQ. This allowed me to experience the organisation at the strategic level and to develop my capacity to engage positively with the most leadership within the organisation. Following this I was appointed to Strategic Planning Branch where I had to opportunity to engage with external actors and broaden my communication and professional knowledge.

Other Key Journey Shaping Events include the following:

Building Resilience

During my career I have applied multiple times for appointments in DFHQ and the Cadet School as well as the US and UK Command and Staff courses and have not being successful. This was exceptionally professionally and personally disappointing and nearly led to me leaving the organisation. However, a personal tragedy has thought me to view these previous experiences in a different way. Embracing these professional disappointments and using them to build my resilience within the organisation potentially turning this into and advantage in the future.

Benefiting from Lucky Breaks.

I have also been lucky enough to have benefited from some lucky breaks. Having missed out on an appointment in DFHQ I was selected to participate within an OSCE mission in Ukraine in March, April 2014. Incidents during this mission shaped my ability to manage fear and self-confidence. I also engages early with the NATO PfP Operational Capabilities Concept programme. This allowed me to build my professional knowledge and introduced me to the benefits of defence standardisation. This in turn shaped the decision to appoint me to both Operations and Planning Branch and Strategic Planning Branch. Finally my appointment to MONUSCO as the Senior National Officer allowed me to deal with a crisis and manage my team in an effective way based on my previous experiences.