

TO NORTH POLE, via Middle East

By LEADER REPORTER

THE Druze Militia mightn't be amused, but the North Pole has been lumped with the beleaguered Middle East in Santa's Christmas mail from Limerick.

In fact, only for the good grace of Quartermaster Sergeant Shay Mullins, in the 54th Irish Battalion (Lebanon) Headquarters in Tel Aviv, Santa would never have received the carefully written letter from the young Moore children of Shannon Banks.

Re-directed

The letter, posted in the local letter box in Shannon Banks and addressed to the North Pole, ended up on the desk of QMS Mullins, who promptly re-directed it to the proper destination.

But QMS Mullins also took the trouble to write to the Moore children, Aisling, Ciara, Daragh, Dervla and Ian, assuring them that, although the letter had come to him by mistake, it had been re-directed.

"I hope he gets your letter in time," he wrote from Tel Aviv, "and that he brings you all the presents you asked for. Remember to be very good children and do as your Mam and Dad tell you."

Special

There was also a special greeting to the delighted chil-



Toys from Santa via the Mid-East for the Moore children, Daragh (7), Dervla (18 months), Ciara (3), and Ian (9). Missing from the picture is four-year-old Aisling, who is on holiday with relatives.

dren from "all in the 54th Battalion serving in the Lebanon."

"I don't know how it got to the Lebanon," said the composer of the letter to Santa.

nine-year-old Ian, obviously oblivious to all the strange quirks of An Post's predecessor.

But then, he agreed, Israel wasn't a bad shot for a puzzled
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individual basis but initiatives were now needed to develop this co-operation with the Gardai on a community level.

Success

He referred to the success of community watch operations in Albany, New York, and he observed that a pilot scheme was currently being undertaken by Thames Valley police in Britain.

He said this was an important development.

Dealing with firearms, Mr. Noonan said that although a high percentage of Gardai were now armed, he was not in favour of having an armed police force.

Mr. Noonan denied any cutbacks in the manpower levels of the Divisional Task Forces.

He said that previously the members of the Divisional Task Force were only answerable to the Chief Superintendent and the members could be anywhere in a division of their own volition at any time.

Mr. Noonan said that in a police force there must be a hierarchy of responsibility and this was especially true when dealing with a cohort of heavily armed members.

Instead of two special forces, the special branch and the special task force, there was now one, he said.

Outcry

The recent outcry about the Special Task Force change was brought about by misunderstanding and political mischievousness.

"It is not a question of a commissioner responding to a Government on an economy drive," said Mr. Noonan.

He praised Garda Commissioner Mr. Larry Wren, who, he said, had done a very good

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being erected on the site of the existing temporary church on Blackthorn Drive.

O.N.E. meet

O.N.E. (Patrick Sarsfield Branch) will be held in the C.I.E. Social Club on this Sunday at 3 p.m. All members are requested to attend. The officers for this year will be elected.

Fewer drive while drunk

Gardai in County Limerick have reported a dramatic fall in the incidence of drunk driving over the Christmas/New Year holiday period compared to figures from the previous year.

The number of people arrested was less than half that of 1982, according to Garda sources in the three county Garda districts, Newcastle West, Askeaton and Bruff.

Weather

A belt of persistent heavy rain will cover the Limerick area this Friday evening, according to the Met. Office in Shannon. This Saturday will be colder with blustery showers. It is expected that the cold weather will persist on Sunday, which will be mainly dry. Frost is likely early on Sunday morning.

Tragedy

A 26-year-old County Limerickman died after being struck by a car at Dromsalagh, Cappamore, on Sunday night at around 11 o'clock. He was Mr. Roger O'Connor, Tower Hill, Cappamore.

SOCCER PROBLEM SOLVED?

By LEADER REPORTER

WITH THE settlement of Limerick City's "accommodation" crisis this Thursday, Mr. Pat Grace, chairman, appealed for all to put the past behind and get on with football.

Stating that he was going ahead with his plans to take over the Old Crescent grounds at Rathbane, Mr. Grace spelled out his own goal for City: "We aim to be on par with the best clubs in

Ireland within five years."

Meeting

City's tenure at the Markets Field was due for termination on January 2. But following a meeting with some United directors, the City board received approval, by way of affidavit, to continue playing at the Markets Field.

Said Mr. Grace after the peace summit: "We are delighted that it is all over and that we can now concen-

trate on football rather than on the legalities.

"This will take a lot of pressure off Ewan Fenton and the players as they won't have to worry whether they will have a home ground to play on. I would hope that this is the end of the thing.

"I don't foresee any problems arising from here on in. We don't wish any ill will to Limerick United people and I hope that all soccer followers in the city will unite

behind the team.

"The lads are doing very well and all support, financial and moral, will be welcome. The lads deserve great credit."

Paying tribute to the manager, Mr. Fenton, Mr. Grace said it was difficult to continue in the league campaign with the uncertainty hanging over the team's future.

Mr. Grace said he still intended to go ahead with his plans for the Old Cres-

cent grounds and expected a purchase deal to be hammered out within two weeks.

Permanent

"I am confident that it will go through and it would be a big plus and to the good of Limerick City to have a home for senior soccer in Limerick."

Mr. Grace added: "It's impossible to have a solid structure in football without having a permanent home."