



# Roger Casement Branch of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



## The Link

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### Remembering our Air Corps Museum Volunteers RIP

As I write this piece in honour of the Air Corps Museum volunteers who have passed away in recent months, Mick Egan, Mick Reddy and Eamonn Tierney, I can't help but giggle to myself at some of the hilarious moments the rest of the team here in the hangar have had over the last nine years since the RCB members began volunteering in 2008. It was another very funny man, who has also passed away, Johnny Mahon, who initially spearheaded the volunteer programme after much consultation with ACHQ and the museum and Air Corps heritage has benefitted ever since.

I remember in the early days Johnny standing on top of a tall stepladder, reaching over the top wing of the full size replica Wright-Flyer with an extended and very colourful feather duster, while the rest of the crew joked about how cute and graceful he looked up there with his duster. Johnny had also purchased inflatable bird scarers, balloons to hang from the hangar

roof in order to prevent droppings destroying the aircraft. The hilarious part was trying to get the balloons way up there as we had no access to a mechanical hoist. Eamonn's solution was to fire a small projectile attached to a long length of twine which had a balloon at the other end, he brought in a high powered elastic gatt (similar to a slingshot). The plan was brilliant except that Eamonn was trying to fire a small piece of carrot which he had stolen from his kitchen that morning – try to imagine a group of grown men queuing up eagerly like little boys as if at a bus stop, to get a shot at firing this piece of carrot into the trusses, it went everywhere except where we wanted, the string too heavy, the carrot too light. Eventually after this exercise in futility and some light hearted abuse Eamonn found a long heavy nut and bolt which succeeded. Those grown men laughed like children. The balloons are still in place today.

Mick Egan's weekly enquiry to me on entering the museum was "what's for dinner today Michael, chips?"

I remember worrying about him as he stood on the wing of the Vampire with a sweeping brush in his hand regaling me with wisdom. It was like he was on stage doing a stand-up comedy sketch, Johnny threw in a remark as he always did when Mick told a tale 'this is a true story.' Mick Egan always brought in a jam Swiss-roll and carved it up first thing for the lads, every slice could hold the hangar doors open. Mick Reddy's shoulders would curl up as he laughed at the shenanigans in the cha room and the slagging over the weekend's sports results would start. I miss those moments, the craic was always 90, the banter was brilliant, everyone of the crew was really a boy at heart.

Mick Reddy could do magic, he did many times in the museum. He put the tail section back on the Avro XIX and repaired the nose section by manufacturing small parts. He helped me with a bird problem once, a story that can't be elaborated on here but believe me it's a good one. I looked forward every week to the lads coming into the museum, all of them, still do. The museum and the work I do can make for a lonely environment sometimes but the craic I have with the volunteers gives me a fantastic boost, I recharge in the face of frustration. The RCB volunteers are a godsend – they have assisted on a number of outside exhibitions and on all and every event that has come up since day one on the base. These men infused me with history and stories, some of them tall tales mind you (ref 'Mick Egan) and they took me under their wing. I felt like I was important to them, they were and are my friends.



Museum Working Party 2015: L/R. Mick Egan (RIP) Michael Whelan, Curator. Eamonn Tierney (RIP). Kevin Maye, Mick Reddy (RIP.) Frank Donnelly, Peter Mc Glynn,

We lost Johnny in 2009, Eamonn and the two Mick's in the last 14 months, and Niall Jordan who had just come on board. I and the museum as it currently exists are only here as a result of what these guys did and continue to do, what they gave to the project and to me personally can never really be measured, but they gave their energy, their friendship, their promise and in the end part of their final years. It was important to them. They were and are important to me; I miss them very, very much. I miss that jam Swiss roll. RIP fellas you were great men - GIANTS!

Michael J. Whelan - Air Corps Museum

### Editors Note

Following the release of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of 'The Link', the newsletter now enters its second decade of publication. The on-going support of our sponsors and contributors continues and is greatly appreciated. The new edition features an article recognising the role of the Roger Casement Branch members in the development of the Air Corps museum and particularly pays tribute to the members who passed away during the past year. The article was provided by A/M Michael Whelan M.A. Michael is the Museum curator who has been a regular supporter of the newsletter and is an Associated Member of the Branch.

Included also is an article on the Atlantic Air Venture Centre in Shannon founded by Eddie Ryan a former member of the Air Corps. Eddie has had an auspicious life-long career in Aviation including a period as a test engineer with many of the iconic Fighter Jets such as the Buccaneer, Lightning and Harrier. We also appreciate the Air Corps News section which keeps the old Boys informed of the important and busy role played by the present Air Corps in the life and business of the country. Many thanks to Capt. Sean McCarthy and to Sgt Jimmy Hayles for their continued support.

Paddy O'Meara Editor.

Edition sponsored by a member of the 1959  
Apprentice Class



## AIR CORPS MEMORIAL BOOK

A Memorial Book which contains the names of known deceased members of the Air Corps of all ranks is retained in the Garrison Church in Casement Aerodrome.

The Memorial Book was introduced in 1991 when a working party was formed with the Branch Chairman Jack Lynch as project leader. Full support was received from the GOC Brig-Gen Pat Cranfield. The project team included branch members including Jim Nolan, Bill Duggan, Felix Connolly, Jim Canavan and the Air Corps was represented by Col. Kevin Hogan and Lt. Col Kevin Byrne.

The Book is located in a glass case at the rear of the Church and is only removed on special occasions such as the Annual Mass for deceased

Members which is held on the second Sunday of October each year when it is placed on the altar during the Mass. The Memorial Book was installed by the Roger Casement Branch and is updated annually when the names of the recently deceased former members are inscribed in the book by a Lithographer.

Visitors are able to view the details of names entered in the book from an index file which is kept updated with the names in alphabetical order and located in the adjacent drawer.



The Glass case containing the Memorial Book is located at the rear of the Church in Casement Aerodrome.

Copy of the First page of the Memorial Book.

This Memorial Book  
presented by  
The Roger Casement Branch  
O.N.E.  
has inscribed within the names  
of the deceased members who  
served the Air Corps  
Cuiusvis



Names of the deceased are inscribed annually by a Lithographer.



The Memorial Book being presented at the altar by Paddy Goodman also included is the late Eamonn Tierney, Tony McCormack and Fr Jerry Carroll.

## BRANCH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2016.

The Roger Casement Branch held its annual Christmas Lunch on December 8<sup>th</sup> in the West County Hotel, Chapelizod. In excess of 90 members and guests were in attendance, with members travelling from the UK, USA and from various parts of Ireland. Guest of Honour was Brig-Gen Paul Fry GOC Air Corps.

The traditional Christmas pudding was piped in by piper John Brennan and the pudding was toasted by the piper and by Brig-Gen Fry. An enjoyable day was had by all.

Traditional piping of the Christmas Pudding.



Group enjoying Lunch includes members Paddy Goodman, Mick Barry, Mick Lally, Paddy McLoughlin, Frank Donnelly and respective wives.



The committee table. L-R. Paddy O'Meara. (Deputy Chairman). Jim Nolan (President), Michael Delaney (Chairman). Brig-Gen Paul Fry (GOC) Bernadette Nolan and Rev Addie Patterson, Peter McGlynn (PRO) Finnbar Lyons (Previous Chairman)





## Atlantic Air Venture Centre, Shannon

The Atlantic Air Venture Centre and museum was founded in Shannon by former Air Corps member, Eddie Ryan, to provide an introduction to the wide world of Aviation mainly to young people who may wish to pursue careers in Aviation.

Eddie has been involved in Aviation since joining the Air Corps as a member of the 1950 Direct Entrants Class. During his 6 year period in the Air Corps he worked in the electrical shops in both Baldonnell and Gormanston and worked on various aircraft types including, Miles Magister, DH Chipmunk, Percival Provost, Avro Anson, Seafire and Spitfire.

On leaving the Air Corps he joined Skyways Of London Airways(Laker) and later BOAC and then moved to English Electric Aviation when he was called up for Reserve National Service in the RAF. On completion of his Reserve National Service he returned to English Electric and was remarkably assigned back to the RAF as a civilian representative and technical inspector on Canberra and Lightning aircraft. He then joined the UK Air Ministry as an inspector and was engaged in RAF test evaluation programmes for many aircraft types including the Lightning, Harrier and VC 10 aircraft based in the high security Boscombe Downs Test facility.

Following a period of training, Eddie was assigned to the TSR2 Nuclear Bomber test programme which was subsequently cancelled by the UK Labour Party. He then moved to the Blackburn Buccaneer aircraft which was under evaluation for the UK Navy. Eddie, representing the UK Air Ministry also travelled to the USA with the Buccaneer when the aircraft was being evaluated by the US Navy.

Eddie through his contacts has secured a Buccaneer aircraft which is on static display at the Air Venture centre in Shannon.

He retired from the Air Ministry in 1980 and moved back to Ireland with his wife where he settled near Shannon Airport. With his life-long commitment to Aviation and vast knowledge of the aircraft industry.

he was encouraged to share his experiences with young aviation enthusiasts. He set up a branch of the international Young Eagles Programme which attracted interested young people many of whom have progressed to careers in Aviation in various positions including as pilots and engineers.

This has now evolved to the present impressive Aviation Centre located on the main entrance road to Shannon Airport which is visited by many hundreds of school children on their annual school tours from around Ireland. Special programmes for transition year secondary school students have been developed which provide tuition in subjects such as flight principles, Air Traffic Control, Use of mini flight simulators and advice on careers in aviation. The museum also contains many aircraft and cockpit examples including a fully equipped CFM 56 Jet engine.

A range of evening courses in a variety of aviation topics for adults are also available, these include the Certificate in Aviation course run in conjunction with LIT.

A fully operational Boeing 737 NG Flight Simulator is available and in much demand by trainee pilots and aircraft engineers. The simulator is also available to would be pilots wishing to try their hand at landing a jet liner.

Eddie Ryan has given a lifetime to Aviation and gained knowledge of the legendary aircraft which were part of the History of Aviation. He still finds time to pass on his knowledge and experience to young people in his Aviation learning Centre in Shannon.



*Eddie paid a visit to the old Electrical Shop in Gormanston.*

*Visiting corporate group at the Blackburn Buccaneer.*



*DH Venom on static display in Shannon.*



*Boeing 737 NG Flight Simulator.*



# CUIMHNIMIS ~ *Let us remember those who have died.* ~

NOEL COLLENDER SEAN MURRAY EAMONN TIERNEY WILLY O'CONNOR (RQMS) SYLVESTER DONNELLY  
JOHNNY BOYLE RODGER AHEARNE JOHN JOYCE BILLY LENIHAN KIERAN FRIEL GEORGE DENNIS

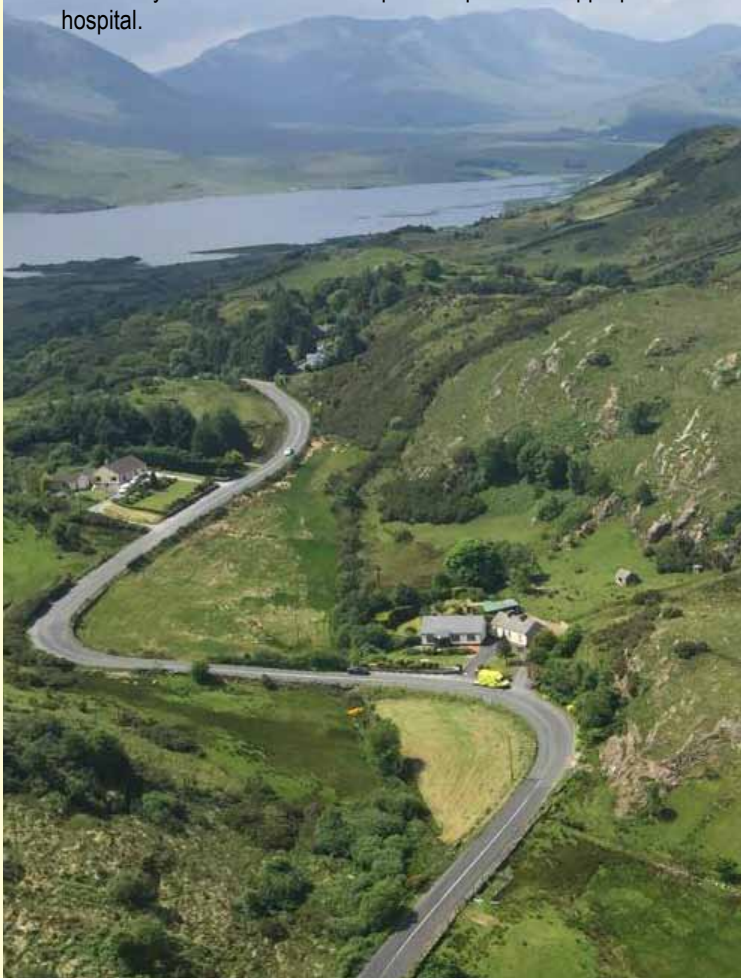
## Air Corps News

**1: Aircorps 112** completed its final mission for 2016, treating a patient following an equestrian incident in Co. Wicklow. We have responded to over 600 patients this year, right across Ireland, providing a life-saving link for rural communities. We look forward to continuing to serve the country in 2017.



### 2: 1 February at 17:36

The scene of a medical emergency in rural west of Ireland recently where Air Corps 112 assisted local National Ambulance Service (NAS) paramedics. It's in locations such as this that the Emergency Aero Medical Service (EAS) can be of huge benefit to patients who need early advanced care and rapid transport to an appropriate hospital.



**3:** The latest group of Helicopter Pilots are being taught the intricate techniques needed to land a helicopter on a mountain top that's covered in snow.

Thanks to Cpl Diarmuid Corcoran, of 3 Operations Wing for pictures.



**4:** Air Corps personnel attended the BT Young Scientists exhibition in the RDS.



**5:** Impressive pictures of the Air Corps flypast at the 1916 Easter Rising Centenary Ceremony in Dublin.

