



ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH OGLAIGH NAISIUNTA na hEIREANN



The Link

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Secretary's Notes

The main event in October was the Annual Mass and wreath laying at the Memorial in Baldonnel. There was a congregation of over 250 which included family members of the deceased. Some of the families travelled long distances to attend this special event. A large number of representatives from other ONE branches were also in attendance whose support was greatly appreciated.

The names of 25 deceased former members of the Air Corps were read and an individual candle was lit in their name. The reception afterwards provided an opportunity for former members to meet and recall old memories.

November was also a busy month for the branch. The GOC invited the Branch to attend the Air Corps annual Mass of Remembrance and wreath laying ceremony at Casement Aerodrome on 3rd November. Members of the Branch also attended the Niemba Ambush Memorial Mass in Cathal Brugha Barracks and the Wreath laying Ceremony at the UN Veteran's Memorial at Arbour Hill. Jim Nolan National President ONET and a member of the Roger Casement Branch attended the events and took the opportunity of wearing the new Branch head-dress on each occasion.

REMINDER:

The annual subscription (€20.00) becomes due on January 1st. Payment should be made before the end of January as returns are required by the company auditors at that time.



Tiger Moth with former Air Corps pilots J.J. Sullivan and Geoffrey White on board at the Flying Films Reunion.

From the Chairman...

New Headgear for Branch Approved:

I am very pleased to advise members that following representations from the Branch committee, that the Board of ONET has approved the wearing of distinctive headgear for members of the Roger Casement Branch. The following is an extract from the letter issued by the Chief Executive Officer on 6 October, 2008.

"The Roger Casement Branch of Oglagh Naisiunta Na hEireann Teoranta (ONET) May wear a forage type hat in the same colour and design as that worn by the Air Corps of the Defence Forces as part of the official ONET uniform. This resolution only applies to members of the Roger Casement Branch and is subject to agreement being reached on the wearing of such headgear between ONET, i.e. Roger Casement Branch and the Military authorities"

A request for approval has been sent to Brig-Gen Ralph James for processing as required. I wish to express my appreciation to the Chief Executive Officer and to the Board of ONET and to the GOC Air Corps for their support for the proposal which marks a proud event in the history of the Roger Casement Branch.



I am pleased to advise that Mick Prince John Mahon, John Clarke and Jim Conway are making satisfactory progress after their recent illnesses. I also wish to thank the members for their good wishes during my recent hospitalisation.

The Branch also extends condolences to Airman Mick Whelan following the untimely death of his mother. Mick has developed excellent relationships with members of the Branch who attend the museum on a weekly basis. 'Ar dheis De go raibh a anam' Finally I wish all the members a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous and healthy new year.

Edition sponsored by

CITYJET

Flying Films Reunion



A Successful reunion of the personnel engaged in the making of the Flying Films in the 1960's including The Blue Max, Darling Lily, Von Richtofen and Browne and Zeppelin took place in Baldonnell on 18 September 2008.

In excess of 100 former Air Corps members and civilians who took part in the filming were in attendance including pilots, aircraft mechanics, transport and special effects staff.

The main sponsor of the event was CityJet with additional sponsorship from the National Flight Centre and from Weston Executive Airport Ltd.

The GOC and all Air Corps staff fully supported the project. Lunch was provided for the visitors in the Officers Mess.

Approval was granted by the Department of Defence for 3 biplanes to visit Baldonnell for the event. DH Tiger Moth EI-AHI was flown by former Air Corps pilot Capt. J.J. Sullivan. A second Tiger Moth EI-AWP was flown by David Bruton. This aircraft actually appeared in The Blue Max. David is a son of the late Sammy Bruton who played such a huge part in the maintenance of the film aircraft. The third aircraft was a Stampe flown by Aer Lingus Captain Brendan Bruton.

In addition to the visiting aircraft Jim Boland again provided 2 Rolls Royce vintage cars for the static display.

Special guest of honour was Derek Piggott who acted as chief pilot during the films. Derek now in his 85th year is still an active glider pilot.

Arrangements were made for Derek to revisit the Bridge in Fermoy under which he flew more than 30 times during the making of the Blue Max.

Commemorative Stained Glass Window

A number of participants have expressed an interest in the installation of a stained glass window in the Church. The window which would blend in with the existing windows would commemorate the film period and would remember the personnel who died during and after this momentous period.

The cost of such a commemorative window will cost in the region of €2,000.00 and donations towards the cost would be greatly appreciated.



Myles Cassidy, Derek Piggott, Brig-Gen Ralph James, Tony Roe



Group of former aircraft mechanics



Derek Piggott, Paddy O'Meara



Pilot Group

*Myles Cassidy, Brian Mc Donnell, Peter Mc Mahon
Ken Byrne, Mick Hipwell*

Profile: Mick Prince

Mick Prince is truly a remarkable man!

He was born in 1931 and has roots in Waterford. He was educated by the Brothers of St. John of God where he learned the shoemaking trade and spent 4 years working with a shoemaker in Maynooth village. It was a time of change when rubber soles and synthetics were being introduced into the shoe trade and work for the traditional shoemaker became very scarce.

Mick decided that he had to look for work elsewhere. Fortunately at that time, the army was looking for tradesmen so Mick enlisted. Luck was on his side! At the end of the basic training it turned out that the Air Corps needed a shoemaker and Mick was posted to Baldonnel in 1953.

It was at that time that his career took off. He remembers well all the things that he learned from his colleagues while basking in the sun during the summer evenings outside the block. It was the University of Life for Mick. He picked up words (4 letters and others) that were new to him. He found out what "getting a 50 the night before" meant. It was hearing all the talk about Gaelic Football that really stirred him up. From his early boyhood, Mick was a fanatic fan of that sport and now he was in his element. He was living with players whom he had previously had only watched. Names like Weir, O'Grady, and Boyle spring to mind.

Mick became involved with the Air Corps teams and recalls the days of travelling in an army truck to the matches and the songs which were part of the trip. Songs like "We're a bunch of bad boys" "The Banks" and others. He recalls how he enjoyed travelling to the matches in the 'low loader' which was an adventure.

In 1957, as he was so involved with the teams, Mick, along with P.J. Barry was appointed a selector and manager of the Air Corps teams. He was so

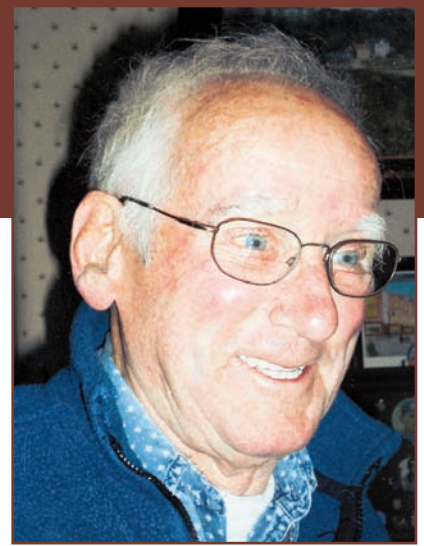
obsessed with fielding the strongest team that he often went straight to the top to get team members off guard duties so that they could be available to play. Mick was the manager of the teams that played during the Golden Years 1957/68 winning 5 successive All Army Championships and the Medical Services Cup on 6 occasions. The team also had a number of successes at that time in the Dublin County Championships and leagues. Mick must also hold a record of having attended all the football and hurling All Ireland Finals since 1944 with the exception of the football final which was played in New York in 1947. He missed one hurling final in 1960 as he was attending the Olympic Games in Rome.

Mick had a fanatical interest in photography and as a result he was posted on 2 six month tours of duty to Cyprus as the official army photographer. During this time he became a close friend of Archbishop Makarios.

On his return from Cyprus he was assigned to the welfare group in charge of sports equipment in Baldonnel.

Football and photography weren't Mick's only interests. Encouraged by John Patterson and Johnny Molloy he joined the Motorcycle club in the camp and became the proud owner of a BSA Bantam. When the Air Corps teams disbanded in 1969, Mick went on to manage a junior team in Na Fianna Club Dublin. That team won its first and only junior championship in 1973. He was the instigator of the famous senior inter-county 7-a-side competition which ran for many years in Na Fianna Club.

In 1973, having completed 21 years service he joined Paddy O'Meara in AnCo (later FAS) as a General Assistant. He didn't waste time there and became the gardener and a self taught expert on flowers and plants.



In recognition of his services there was a tree planted in the FAS Training Centre Grounds in Ballyfermot.

Mick took this expertise with him and is responsible for the landscaping of the Memorial Garden and Grounds at the United Nations Veterans Post 1 at Arbour Hill.

People still remember the competition in the Irish Independent some years ago where entries were to forecast the winners of each match up to the All Ireland Finals for a grand prize of £1,000 pounds. Mick Prince devised and was the sole adjudicator of the competition.

Three years ago on a visit to with ONET to the Battlefields of Europe, Mick located the grave of his uncle Patrick who was killed in battle aged 19.

If anything, Mick is a survivor having survived one heart bypass in 1982 and another in 1996. Mick collapsed in Croke Park during the 2008 Football final and made a successful recovery in hospital.

Mick and Marie were married in 1970. Their two daughters, Deirdre and Edel, one a teacher and one an architect respectively live near their parent's home in the Manor Street area. Mick and Marie have two grandchildren Jack and Lily who are frequent visitors to their grandparent's home.

Mick is enjoying his retirement under Marie's care and attention. He has very fond memories of his life in the Air Corps and has an enthusiastic appreciation of all his former colleagues.

Army Intelligence in the 1960's

by Tony Roe

Interaction between the Army authorities and the Air Corps in the 50's and 60's was limited and certainly at NCO and Airman level we did not know, and did not care, very much about what went on in Companies, Battalions and Brigades. This was all to change later as Army / Air Corps Co-operation became a very important aspect of military life in the 1970's.

However this little story will highlight just how little each one knew about the other in both lower and higher echelons.

In late 1969, four NCOs from the Air Corps were selected to attend the 2nd Potential Officers Course to commence in early January 1970 at that most important and highly regarded institution, The Military College.

The joining instructions issued stated that students had to report by 14.30 hrs on a particular day. As the Curragh was only "down the road" from Baldonnell, the two Flight Sergeants, one Company Sergeant, (Air Sqdn Sigs) and one Sergeant, had lunch in Casement and arrived in the College at 14.25 to be met by the assembled student and College officers who were eagerly awaiting our arrival

Now it must be emphasised that "the College" was and is now regarded as the font of all knowledge about the army and all things military. The big problem was that the college authorities had to appoint a Class President, and that would normally be the senior man of any class.

Students for the course had been selected from Army, Navy, and Air Corps units. They did appear to know about Company Sergeants from infantry units, Squadron Sergeants from cavalry units, Chief Petty Officers from the Naval Service etc, but there, their limits had been reached and they just did not know what sort of military animal a Flight Sergeant was.

It was not until we walked in the door, and introduced ourselves, that they saw the rank marking on our sleeves and were able to deduce that we were the equivalent of a Company Sergeant / Chief Petty Officer. Only then were they able to designate a Coy. Sgt. From East Comd HQ, being the senior man, as Class President.

So much for Army Intelligence in those days.

CUIMHNIMIS

Let us remember those who have died recently;

Michael Collins	Edward Murphy
Jack Goulding	Liam Murphy
Michael Greene	Patrick Roycroft
John Greene	Brendan Sheeran
Davis Lawless	Martin Smith
Steve Mc Garry	Peter Mc Manus



Notice

The Branch AGM will be held in the NCO's Mess, Baldonnell on Thursday January 17th. 2008 at 2000 hrs.

All members are expected to attend.



Air Corps News

On the 16th Nov the final AW 139 tail number 279 arrived in Baldonnell from Italy. It was crewed by Comdt John O'Keeffe, Capt Dave Browne & Lt Peter Grennan and routed back to Baldonnell via 14th Milan - Avignon - Bergerac & 15th Bergerac - Brest - Baldonnell On Monday Nov 03rd at 1200hrs the annual memorial mass was held in the church for deceased members of the Air Corps. It was well attended by bereaved families and the congregation included many members of the Roger Casement branch of the O.N.E.

The Wright flyer arrived back in the Air Corps Museum on the 6th

Nov 08 from its short stay with Bombardier in Belfast. It was on display in their factory as part of their 75th anniversary.

Other News

Flypast on Sat 8th Nov for the National Memorial Day: 4 x PC9's Crew: Cmdr Capt David O'Riordan, Capt Brian D'Arcy, Lt Paul Fahy & Col Paul Fry.

Flypast on Mon 10th Nov for the Czech President's visit: 4 x PC9's Crew: Cmdr Capt David O'Riordan, Capt Paul Kelly, Lt Emmet Farrelly & Col Paul Fry.



Brig-Gen Ralph James laying a wreath at the Air Corps Memorial during the annual Memorial Service on November 3rd.