



# ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH

## OGLAIGH NAISIUNTA na hEIREANN

# The Link



Issue 01-10 Jan. 2010

**Branch Chairman: P.O'Meara.**  
Ph. 086 8500316  
omeara.pa@gmail.com

**Hon. Secretary : B. Downey.**  
Ph. 01 8420958  
downeybp@eircom.net

**Hon. Treasurer : E. Tierney**  
Ph. 01 8475206  
eamonn.tierney@gmail.com

**PRO: J. Clarke**  
Ph. 01-4670688

## Secretary's Notes

2009 was a significant year for the Roger Casement Branch. It was the 30th anniversary of its foundation and a number of important events occurred during the year. The unexpected deaths of long serving committee members Jim Conway and John Mahon early in the year and the passing away of Anthony Kelly in November had a traumatic effect on their many friends and colleagues. They were dedicated and committed members and will be a great loss to the Branch.

Significant developments throughout the year brought the Branch into prominence. The introduction of the blue forage headdress was a major change which was achieved by the unfailing efforts of the Chairman. The distinctive headdress attracts great interest in the Branch especially when worn at ceremonial a public occasions. The new dedicated website is frequently used by our overseas members and the Quarterly newsletter "THE LINK" continues to keep members of developments within the Branch. The Branch was honoured when Jim Nolan was elected National President of ONET for a period of two years. On standing down at the AGM, Jim was elected to the Board of Directors. Jim kept the Roger Casement Branch very much to the fore when attending the many functions and events throughout the country. The Branch had a lot of exposure at the South County Dublin Heritage Aviation exhibition which was held in conjunction with the Air Corps in Tallaght for eleven days in October. Branch members involved in the Casement Museum helped with the setting up and dismantling of the exhibits. Branch members were in attendance on a daily basis and made a huge contribution to the success of the venture. The Roger Casement Branch was the winner of the Cassidy Cup at the ONET Golf Classic in September. There was the usual large attendance at the Annual Mass for deceased members which was held in October. This was followed by a reception in the NCO's mess where the opportunity was provided for former colleagues to meet up and to share old stories.

Membership of the Branch has increased significantly assisted by the introduction of



*Members of the Air Corps Apprentice Classes of 1969/70 who celebrated the 40th anniversary of the '69 class at the Westgrove Hotel, Clane on 17th October.*

the Website and the new headdress, The Branch now has in excess of 120 members many of whom reside overseas in countries which include, UK, USA, Canada, Australia and The Netherlands. New members are always welcome.

Relationships with serving members of the Air Corps continue to be very strong and members of the Branch frequently attend at various events in Casement Aerodrome. On Nov. 2nd the Branch were invited by the GOC to participate in the ceremonies at the Air Corps annual Mass of Commemoration. 15 members in uniform attended. They also attended the reception in the Catering Complex afterwards. Branch members attended at the Blessing of the Fleet on Dec. 8th.

**Brendan Downey**



**The Chairman and committee  
wish all our members a happy  
Christmas and a peaceful  
and prosperous  
2010**

## From the Chairman...

2009 was a mixture of sadness and success. The Branch lost three stalwart committee members when Jim Conway, John Mahon and Anthony Kelly passed to their eternal rewards. It was an honour for the Branch to provide full honours at the respective funerals.

On a more positive side, the Branch's communications systems have been placed on a solid footing. The ongoing production of 'The Link' newsletter and the introduction of a dedicated Branch website and the introduction of the new Air Corps style headdress have served to spread the news of the existence of the Branch to the many former Air Corps members throughout the world. I wish to express the appreciation of the Branch to the GOC Air Corps and to the many serving personnel in Baldonnel who have greatly supported the activities of the Branch during 2009.

The Branch continues to support the main aims of ONET particularly in the support of homes for needy former members of the Defence Forces. I am pleased that the Branch approved a sizeable donation to ONET at their November meeting.

I wish all our members a very Happy Christmas and Peaceful 2010.

**Paddy O'Meara**



**Edition sponsored by  
The 1969  
Apprentice Class.**



# A visit to Gelibolu (Gallipoli to you)

From Sept 21st to 29th this year John Clarke, John Condon, and Tony Roe, of this branch went on a trip to the famous WWI battleground of Gallipoli, or as it is sometimes referred to, The Dardanelles.

This place where so many Irishmen fought and died is a peninsula on the European side of Turkey next door to Greece and the Balkans. The WWI Allies tried several times from Nov 1914 to Jan 1915 to send naval forces through the very narrow Dardanelle Straits in order to get supplies to Russia by way of the Black Sea. The Turks were supporting the Germans and had German advisors in the area. About 15 allied warships were sunk by the shore batteries from Nov to Jan and Winston Churchill was determined to get through, but even he had to admit that naval power alone was not enough, and so it was decided to send in ground troops

The First landings took place on April 26th 1915 when at dawn the landings began. Commonwealth and French forces landed at several points but were either decimated as they came out of their ships and smaller boats, or were pinned down on the beaches by the Turkish defenders who in many cases were only some 50 to 75 metres from the landings but on high steep cliffs which are a feature of the area. Very much is written about the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACS) as the fighting is now seen as the real births of those two nations, and in truth they really did make their mark during this period.

The Irish Regiments of the British Army were well represented in the 29th Divn during the April landings and later on in August when the 10th (Irish) Divn landed. The Dublin and Munster Fusiliers were cut to pieces as they emerged from the troop ship River Clyde at the bottom, south western end of the peninsula on April 25th. so bad were the casualties that what remained of two battalions were merged into one, numbering about 400 men, and were called the "Dubsters".

The fighting dragged on for several

*V Beach, where the Dublins and the Munsters landed 24.4.1915 Rocky outcrop to sea is where the troopship River Clyde ran aground. Photo taken from the Turkish trench line. Also note the Fort at the other end of the beach.*



months with great carnage on both sides from snipers, artillery, grenades, and even vicious hand to hand fights. Thirst and diseases claimed many more.

A second attempt was made in August when, another major force was sent in to try force a breakout from the beaches and gain control of the sea route to the Black Sea. These landings further up the west coast at Suvla Bay included the 10th Irish Divn (29th and 30th Brigades) comprising newly formed battalions of the Royal Irish Regt. the Royal Irish Rifles, the Connaught Rangers, the Leinster Regt, the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers and the Inniskilling Fusiliers.

This second front was no more successful than the initial efforts of April and many more casualties ensued. The stalemate continued into the winter months and eventually the Allies had to admit that the Turks were not bowing to pressure and would defend their homeland to the last. A decision was made to withdraw, and by the end of Jan 1915 the whole force was taken off to fight either in the Balkans or back to Europe.

The only real "success" of the Gallipoli campaign was the withdrawal, as it was carried out with great secrecy and when they had all left and the Turks came to the allied trenches they found no one there, but rifles that had been rigged with various devices to fire automatically every few minutes until magazines were empty.

Unlike the battlefields in Europe which reached from the channel coast to the Swiss borders, the area of conflict in Gallipoli measures some 5km wide by 20km long. However in that small land space the allies sent in some half a million men, of whom almost half became casualties. In that short period of 8 ½ months it is estimated that almost 47,000 allies died. Turkish losses are put at 251,000, of whom 86,700 had died.

The visiting group had several ceremonies to honour the dead of both sides and indeed some members had distant relatives who fought, were wounded, and died there. We also had a few days in Istanbul to see the sights there. While we were in the general area of Gallipoli we stayed on the Asian side and were able to visit the ancient city of Troy and the temple of Apollo. A trip to be recommended to anyone thinking of holidaying in that area.



*This is our group at the memorial to the Turkish soldier who organised a local truce so that he could carry a wounded officer back to the allied trench.*



# PROFILE: Jim Nolan

Former National President of O.N.E.T.

Jim joined the Air Corps in 1961 and after his initial training was posted to the Machine Shop which was attached to Technical Wing based in Baldonnell. He was a dedicated and hard worker and was promoted to Corporal in 1965 followed by promotion to Sergeant in 1967.

Jim was, and still remains a very keen sportsman participating in GAA (both football and hurling) rugby, soccer, gymnastics, handball, volleyball and athletics.

During his early years in the Air Corps, he won one minor and four All Army medals, three Medical Services medals and six Air Corps League medals. Jim also won two All Army medals for Rugby.

In spite of his sporting accomplishments, Jim also found time to socialise and attended many dress dances in Baldonnell and in Dublin at the various dance halls such as the Ierne Ballroom and The Irish Club in Parnell Square. It was at such a social night that he met Bernadette his future wife. They were married in 1969 and have two daughters Loretta and Amelia.

In 1971 Jim retired from the Air Corps to take up employment in the school of Engineering in University College Dublin as a laboratory technician in the Chemical Engineering Workshop. He spent many happy years in this position before retiring from UCD in 2005.

Jim joined the Aer Lingus O.N.E. Branch in 1971 and later became a founder member of the Roger Casement Branch in 1979. During the following years, Jim at various times served as Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary of the Branch.



He also had the honour of being elected for a term as President of the Leinster Area Council.

In 2007 the greatest honour was bestowed on me when I was elected to the position of National President of O.N.E.T. It was such a surprise to me and certainly was the pinnacle of my association with O.N.E.T."

During his 2 year tenure as National President Jim was always warmly welcomed by the members during his many visits to the Branches throughout the country. He was ably supported by his wife Bernadette who frequently accompanied him to many functions. They were treated with great respect on all occasions.

Following the conclusion of his term as President he was elected at the National Convention of the O.N.E.T. to the Board of Directors.

Jim brought great honour to the Roger Casement Branch during his term as President by the manner in which he discharged his duties and responsibilities while in office.

Jim has been a committed member of ONET at Branch, Area and National levels and we wish him every success in the years ahead



## NOTICES

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION:

Please Note. Annual subscription increased to €25 from Jan. 1st 2010 by direction of Board of Directors.

### AGM

The Branch AGM will be held in the NCO'S mess on Thursday 21st January 2010.

Notification will be sent out by the Hon.Secretary. A full attendance is expected.

### SERVICE MEDALS

ONET Service Medals may be awarded under the following criteria:

- A person must be a fully paid up member and active in the Branch
- A 3 year Service Medal without bar is awarded for 3 years continuous satisfactory service.
- A 7 year Service Medal is awarded for 7 years continuous satisfactory service.
- A 12 year Service Medal with two bars is awarded for 12 years continuous satisfactory service.
- A metal bar with engraved figures 25 is awarded for 25 years satisfactory continuous service. The metal bar to be attached to current medal.
- Where 25 years service is exceeded a bar indicating such may be worn on approval by the Board of Directors.
- The cost of medals to be borne by recipient.

Contact: Jim Canavan @ 01-4551393

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

**WHAT IS EAMONN KNITTING?**



*Answers in triplicate on AF117 to the Editor*



## OBITUARY

Following the recent death of Anthony Kelly, the Roger Casement Branch lost a very loyal and committed member.

Anthony was quiet and unassuming and served in the Air Corps for 24 years. Following his retirement he continued to work in Baldonnell as a member of the BFW staff. He took a great interest in the Roger Casement Branch and was well known and respected by several generations of Air Corps personnel.

Anthony had artistic talents and his designs were incorporated in the Branch crest, he also designed the flag which was presented by the Branch to the Air Corps Apprentice School.

He was actively involved during the construction of the Memorial Monument and took many photographs to record the event.

Anthony had a long interest in motorcycles and was secretary of the Clondalkin Motorcycling Club. He frequently travelled to Lourdes with the annual military pilgrimage and took a special interest in the Church in Baldonnell where he served as a reader. His popularity amongst his peers in Baldonnell and in his parish was reflected in the very large attendance at his funeral where military honours were provided by the Air Corps.

Members of the Roger Casement Branch provided a Guard of Honour at the Church.

We extend our deepest sympathies to his family. He will be sadly missed by a large circle of friends.

Go Ndeana Dia Trocaire ar a hanam

## CUIMHNIMIS

*Let us remember those who have died;*

Alan O'Regan

David Jevens

Derek Furniss

Frank Farrell

William Kilpatrick

Anthony Kelly

John Smith

Patrick O'Shea

## Annual Mass for Deceased Members October 11, 2009.



Frank Donnelly, Paddy Goodman, Finnbar Lyons.



54 Apprentice Group J. Collins, S. Dooley, M.O'Brien, R. Murphy, J. Savage, B. McKevitt, G. Hanley, J. Digan with Mrs Collins



A HISTORY OF THE IRISH AIR CORPS AS SEEN IN STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN THE CHAPEL, AT BALDONNELL, AIRCROPSHIRE, CO. DUBLIN



[www.military.ie](http://www.military.ie)

## Air Corps Calender

The annual Air Corps Calender for 2010 will be available Mid December.

The theme is a history of the Air Corps through stained glass windows.

The price will be €5 per calendar and postage where applicable. The size is A3.

Contact the Air Corps Photo Section or the Branch Treasurer, Eamonn Tierney for your copy.