



# ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH OGLAIGH NAISIUNTA na hEIREANN



## The Link

Issue 02/09  
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### Secretary's Notes

A well attended AGM of the Branch was held in Baldonnell on 15 January, 2009.

The Chairman (P.O'Meara), Hon-Secretary (B.Downey), the Hon-Treasurer (E.Tierney) were re-elected for a further term. The PRO (John Clarke) was also re-elected.

John Mahon will continue as Assistant Secretary and Peter McGlynn was elected as Assistant Treasurer.

The returns for 2008 show that membership of the Branch with 108 members is the largest of the 49 other branches in ONET. It should be possible for the number of members to be further increased with the assistance of the existing members in getting former colleagues to join the Branch.

The main objective of ONET is to provide accommodation for homeless and disabled members. The Roger Casement Branch endeavours to provide the opportunity for former personnel who have served with the Air Corps to meet and keep in contact. Present members should spread the word and encourage others to join the Branch, It is also important to keep in touch with the people who are overseas.

Members are reminded that in order to keep the Branch operating the annual membership fee of €20.00 should be paid now.

Members are also encouraged to visit the Air Corps Museum in Baldonnell. Contact the Museum Curator Airman Michael Whelan 01-4037994. Take along the Grand-Children.



Branch 2008 Christmas Lunch  
Paddy O'Meara, Brig-Gen Ralph James, Jim Nolan

### From the Chairman...

Chairman's address at AGM:

2008 was a significant year in the life of the Roger Casement Branch.

As mentioned in the secretary's report, the Branch continues to be very strong and vibrant with the largest membership within ONET.

We are honoured that Jim Nolan a Branch Member continues as the National president.

The Branch made major contributions to the ONET AGM in Galway and was represented at all the major ONET events including the anniversary Military pilgrimage in Lourdes. Excellent relationships were maintained with the ONET Board and with the Air Corps Senior staff, the Branch being represented at all the major events in Baldonnell.

The approval of a distinctive Forage Cap for the Roger Casement Branch was a major achievement in identifying the aviation connections of the Branch and its members.

The Branch was also pleased to be in a position to make an extraordinary financial contribution to ONET and to make a donation towards the Baldonnell Garrison Church renovations.

Four editions of The Link were published and I am pleased to say that sponsorship was received for all of the editions.

I wish to thank the members of the committee who worked so hard during the year. I especially wish to extend my thanks to our secretary Ben Downey for keeping the show on the road in his own special way in spite of

being in and out of 'Doc' on a number of occasions. A special word of thanks to our Hon-Treasurer Eamonn Tierney who made a great success of his first year in the job. Finally, my thanks to the organising teams for successfully planning the Annual Mass and the Christmas Lunch which greatly enhanced the year's activities.

Looking ahead to 2009, we plan to continue to issue the popular newsletter but further involvement from some interested members of the Branch would be appreciated. We also need to extend the sponsorship base for the remaining 2009 editions of The Link.

As a matter of priority the Branch will take every opportunity to extend the membership further. Action will be taken to attract new members thereby improving the level of contributions towards the upkeep of the ONET hostels.

The introduction of a Branch Web-Site will also be progressed which will further assist the ongoing contacts with former Air Corps colleagues throughout the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our members a Happy, Healthy and successful 2009.

Paddy O'Meara, Branch Chairman

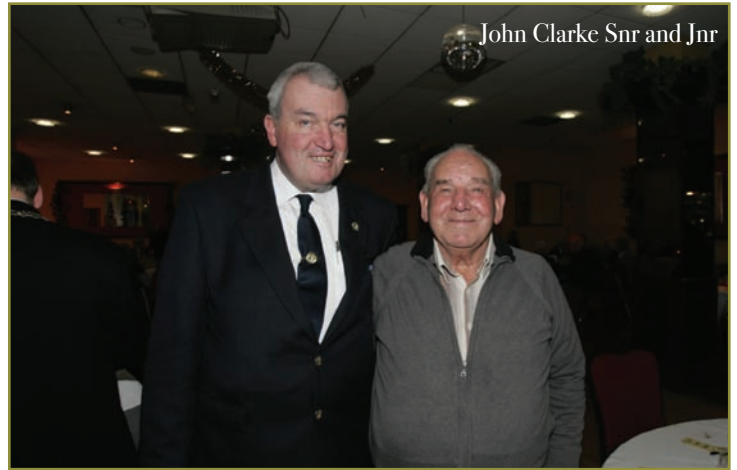


**Edition  
sponsored by  
Churchtown  
School of  
Motoring and  
Michael Prince**

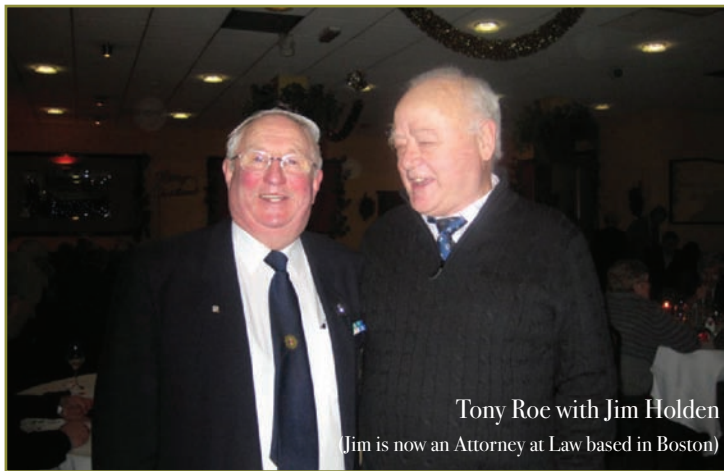
# Branch Christmas Lunch 2008



Mick Prince with BG Ralph James



John Clarke Snr and Jnr



Tony Roe with Jim Holden  
(Jim is now an Attorney at Law based in Boston)



Matt and Cathy Kennedy



Pat Spillane and Charlie Wren



Jim Wardick, Paddy King, Jim McKenna



Podge Tormay and Jim Conway



Matt Kennedy, Tim Malone,  
Bill Murphy, Tom Colgan (standing),  
John Patterson, Martin Calvin (ex Aer Lingus)

# Profile: Archie Raeside

First Air Corps Member to serve with the United Nations

Archie was selected as an apprentice aircraft technician in 1955.

Following 2 years schooling in the Technical Training Squadron he was briefly engaged as an aircraft technician with the Advanced Flying Training Squadron. At that time AFTS were flying Percival Provost aircraft.

Within a short time he entered the drawing office of the Aeronautical Engineering Section at Air Corps Headquarters. The work in the drawing office was principally in the area of engineering, so Archie decided as insurance for the future to study architecture.

He was a keen gymnast and for four years competed in the All Army championships as a leading member of the Air Corps team.

His interest in 'movie making' resulted in short films of general interest and events at Baldonnel such as 'Wings' presentation ceremonies, cross country flying or a day on the firing range.

This came to the notice of the Officer Commanding, the Air Corps, Col. W.J. Keane and led to his selection as the first Irish Airman to serve with the United Nations.

Archie was the first official Military photographer to record the activities of the Irish Peacekeepers in the Congo with the 32nd and 33rd Battalions. As a youth, he had been tutored in the mysteries of the photographic 'dark room' by his father who had a lifetime passion for photography. This enabled him to set up temporary darkrooms all over the Congo and develop and print most of his photographs before dispatching to GHQ with appropriate captions.

As a musician he initially played Violin but Trumpet was his favourite instrument and with Paddy O'Meara, Sean Kinsella, Arthur O'Neill, Myles Mooney, Eirnie Berkenheier and Mick Mc.Namara was a founder member of the Airchords Showband. His training as a Piper with the first Air Corps Pipe Band abruptly ended due to his departure to the Congo. The interest continued however and he later qualified as a Piper with the Scout Pipe Band and performed with them for a number of years. He continues making music by playing Mandolin.

Following the statutory nine years term at Baldonnel he retired from the Air Corps in the rank of Sergeant to pursue a successful career in

engineering, architecture and as a Stone Design specialist.

At Weston Aerodrome he continued his interest in aviation by flying light aircraft.

He also enjoyed qualifying as a Paracender at North Weald airfield in the U.K.

In 1982 the National Executive Board of the Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland (now Scouting Ireland) decided to add aviation related activities to the traditional and sea scouting programmes. Archie was a scout leader with the 35th. Dublin Saint Theresa's

Unit and enthusiastically took on the appointment of National Commissioner for Air Activities and set about devising a progress scheme to cater to the needs of young people interested in aviation. He founded the first Air Scout section that year at Weston Aerodrome in Leixlip courtesy of Captain Darby Kennedy. Similar dedicated groups were established throughout the country. Air activities continue to be a part of the overall scouting programme within the movement to this day. A number of Air Scouts went on to take up careers in aviation including Archie's youngest son who is a professional airline pilot flying the 747 with British Airways. The Irish Air Corps afforded assistance and encouragement in developing this new area of activity for young people and the annual venue for the National Air Scout Competitions was for many years, the Air Corps base at Baldonnel.

Compiling training leaflets on a wide variety of aviation related subjects as well as publishing promotional material, which appeared regularly in the Scout Leader, helped to develop his interest in writing. This interest in writing as well as building radio controlled scale model boats resulted in the magazine 'Model Boats' publishing some of his articles on the hobby. The writing continued and a number of his short stories have appeared in 'Ireland's Eye'. As an author his best known work to date is 'The Congo - 1960' which was published in July 2004 and launched by Brigadier-General Ralph James G.O.C. Air Corps. It is a moving personal account of a young soldier, bidding farewell to sweetheart, family and friends and embarking on a highly important but dangerous mission based on his personal experiences. The mission launched the country onto the world stage, portraying it in



*Archie designed the UN peace memorial in Portlaoise which was unveiled in 2008.*

the best possible light. It can be seen as an important turning point in the history of modern Ireland.

To this day, he maintains contact with his former colleagues through membership of the Roger Casement Branch of the ONET and the Irish United Nations Veterans Association.

Archie is currently President of Post 27 Portlaoise, IUNVA. The primary role of IUNVA, which was formed in Dublin in February 1990, is to provide advice and counselling to members and their families who have been affected by overseas service. Membership is open to Soldiers, Gardaí and Civilian personnel who are veterans of United Nations Operations. Archie, designed and supervised the erection of a memorial which is dedicated to those who gave their lives in the service of world peace while serving with the United Nations. Located in the Millview Peace Park in Portlaoise the memorial was unveiled at an impressive ceremony on 16 November 2008.

His life is mainly dedicated to his wife Bernie and their children Eugene, Catherine, Martin, Archie, Bernadette and Christina and their spouses as well as their grandchildren Ruadhan, Charlotte, Sophia, Eoin, Aoife, Connor and Cameron.

The medium through which many budding romances flourished in the 1960s and 1970s, namely 'letter writing' was presented by RTE in a documentary called 'Wait a minute mister postman', first screened in September 2005 and records the story of how Archie and Bernie maintained contact by letter during Archie's service in the Congo. The documentary was one of three films worldwide, nominated for the prestigious FIAT/IFTA award.

In 1999 he and Bernie relocated to Mountrath in County Laois. His main interest is family and also includes writing, gardening and building and sailing scale model boats.

## National Football League Semi-Final Croke Park, April 25, 1954

Tony O'Grady Dublin, Sean Wynne Mayo,  
Johnny Boyle, Dublin

Three serving members of the Air Corps took part in the 1954 League Semi-Final between Dublin and Mayo on opposing sides. Both Sean Wynne and Tony O'Grady were the goalkeepers. Result: Mayo 0-11 ; Dublin 0-7. (Photo, Johnny Boyle)



## Notices

### Annual Subscription

Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription of €20.00 is now due for payment. The Branch is required to make the annual capitation payment to ONET before March-end so immediate payment would be appreciated. Why not consider setting up an annual direct payment debit? Contact Hon Treasurer for details.

### The Link

The publication of The Link depends on the Branch obtaining sponsorship for each edition. To date, every edition has been sponsored by various companies

, from former Apprentice or DE Classes or from individuals or groups of members.

In order to maintain this vital link with former colleagues and friends, members are urged to consider organising a sponsorship group. Postage is an expensive part of the Link's circulation and any member who would be happy to receive a copy of the newsletter by email should pass their email address to any member of the committee as published on page 1 of The Link.

## CUIMHNIMIS

*Let us remember those who  
have died recently;*

Des Walsh

Joe Kelly

Donal Linehan

Les Lucey

Patrick Lyons

Billy McCormack

Eddie Mullen

Gerry Young

Dessie Griffin

Matt Brocklebank

John Farrell



## Air Corps News Mountain Rescue

Members of the ARW (Army Ranger Wing) and two Air Corps AW 139 helicopters were deployed to assist Glen of Imaal Mountain Rescue Team and Irish Coast Guard in the search for two men, missing since the previous afternoon. The ARW were diverted to the Glen of Imaal from a training exercise to assist.

The men were visually located at approx. 12.30 pm by a search team from the ARW and a team from mountain rescue was first to get to their location. Due to cloud cover on Lugnaquilla (953 metres/3,034 feet) it was not possible to airlift these men immediately off the mountain.



Three Alpha Jets of the French L'Armée De L'Air visited Casement Aerodrome on 10 February, 2009 as part of a training exercise.