



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

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www.oneaircorpsbranch.com



DH VAMPIRE REUNION

A reunion of all personnel who were involved in the operation and maintenance of the DH Vampire aircraft between 1956 and 1973 will take place on June 03, 2010 in Casement Aerodrome. The programme will include a history of the Aircraft in service with the Air Corps and a static display of Vampire paraphernalia and photos. It is hoped that a serviceable Vampire will be on display subject to weather and operational constraints. The reunion is being organized with the kind permission of the GOC Air Corps and with the generous support of City Jet. If you have worked on the Vampires and would like to receive an invitation to attend the reunion, contact Louise Mcenerney by email: vampirereunion@gmail.com or by phone: 01 870 0111.

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN...

During the past year the installation of improved communications systems within the Branch has been accomplished with the continuation of The Link newsletter and the introduction of the Branch's website. The new head-dress has also been successfully introduced. Following the well attended AGM

which was held in January, the new committee will now look at ways and means to improve the social activities within the Branch the also to further increase the Branch Membership. The Roger Casement Branch is the largest Branch in ONE and the committee will introduce additional measures to assist in the achievement of the ONET objectives particularly

with regard to supporting the homes for needy ex servicemen and women. The involvement of the Branch in the Air Corps Museum is an important part of its general activity. I strongly urge interested members with aircraft maintenance skills to join the museum team during their Wednesday visits to Baldonnell.
Paddy O'Meara, Chairman

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The main event at the end of 2009 was the Annual Christmas Lunch which was an outstanding success due to the efforts of the Social Committee. It was a full-house attendance with some members travelling from various parts of the country and from overseas. The Branch was honoured to have in attendance, the G.O.C. Air Corps Brig-General Ralph James and Air Corps Chaplin Rev. Gerry Carroll. A highlight of the lunch was the special cake with the branch emblem to commemorate the Branch's 30th anniversary. The cake was displayed by being piped around the table. Brig-Gen James, expressed his

appreciation of the close relationship between the serving personnel and The Roger Casement Branch and especially of the contribution being given by the members who help in the museum on a weekly basis. The hotel staff contributed to the occasion by providing balloons in the Air Corps blue and gold colours. A special word of thanks to all of the members who made the event such an enjoyable occasion. The very well attended AGM was held in January in Casement Aerodrome. Details of the new committee are published elsewhere in The Link. I am pleased to report increased interest in the Branch and a steady

increase in membership numbers. Any suggestions on how the operations of ONET or the Branch can be improved are invited from members. It is planned that a programme of trips and events will be issued shortly to give members an opportunity to take part. Members are reminded of the increase in the annual subscription from €20.00 to €25.00. If you have not paid yet, we ask that the sub be paid as soon as possible.
Brendan Downey, Hon-Sec.

This edition is kindly sponsored by Ken Loughheed and a member of the 1959 Apprentice Class



1946/47 Apprentice Football Team



Photo taken outside Officers Mess Garage, Baldonnell, supplied by Ken Lougheed.

Back Row: J.Lally, J.Smyth, J.Goulding, J.McGovern, F.Gaffney, M.Ward, J.Cullen, E.Cotter, E.Power, D.McMahon.
(Billy Moore PT Instructor in uniform -centre back row).

Front Row: R.Rogan, J.O'Shea, J.Killian, D.Dillane, G.Cummins, J.Bushe, K.Lougheed, S.Sweeney.

ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH

In late 1979 it was decided to form a Branch of the O.N.E which would have close links with the Air Corps and have Baldonnell as its base. In this way, the Branch through the ONE organisation would provide help and assistance where necessary to the camp personnel at the time of their discharge. With the kind permission of the GOC Air Corps at the time, the Branch was named The Roger Casement Branch and was permitted to hold its meetings in Baldonnell.

From that humble beginning 30 years ago, the Roger Casement Branch has grown from strength to strength. The Branch is very prominent and is held in high regard in the overall O.N.E organisation.

The success of the Branch stems primarily from the support and activities of the members and the help and co-operation from GOC Air Corps and the personnel in Casement Aerodrome.

Apart from keeping to the mission of maintaining contact with former colleagues, a number of significant events have been undertaken by the Roger Casement Branch including the following;

- The creation of the O.N.E Memorial Garden with the unique Monument to the memory of deceased former personnel who have served with the Air Corps.
- An Annual Mass of Commemoration which is held in October each year in the Garrison Church in Casement Aerodrome.
- A Memorial Book containing the inscribed names of deceased personnel is located in a special cabinet in the church.
- The presentation of a unit flag designed by a member of the Branch to the Apprentice Training School.
- A presentation to the GOC Air Corps of a book of copies of the letters of Roger Casement. The GOC Air Corps has allocated an office in the Museum area for use by the Branch. Each year a number of trips to places of historical interest are arranged as well as events which provide an opportunity for former colleagues to meet and renew acquaintances. For example, the annual lunch at Christmas creates an opportunity for retired personnel who have served in the Air Corps to socialise and renew acquaintances with

each other. This is a very popular event and has become a favourite reunion of former colleagues. Over 100 colleagues and friends attended the event in 2009

Personnel who have served in any part of the Defence Forces are very welcome to join the Roger Casement Branch and to attend the Branch Meeting which is held on the third Thursday of each month at 20.00 hours in the NCO's Mess, Baldonnell.

ANNIVERSARIES AND REUNIONS

- Congratulations to the members of the 8th Short Service Wings Course 1960 who will celebrate their 50th Anniversary in 2010. R. Mc Partland / A. Mc Kenna / K. Hogan / F. Thompson / T. Mc Bennett. The late Capt John Kelly was also a member of the class.
- The 1960 Apprentice Class will also celebrate their 50th anniversary in 2010.
- The 50th anniversary of troops leaving Baldonnell for The Congo will be celebrated in July.
- A reunion of personnel who operated and maintained the DH Vampire aircraft will take place on June 3. (Full details on page 1).

TRAGEDY IN CO. LIMERICK

On December 10th, 1940 an Army lorry which was transporting aircraft spares including batteries and aviation fuel from Baldonnel to the Air Corps Base in Rineanna (now Shannon Airport), overturned at a place known locally as Wilmot's Hollow which is located near Herbert's Public house a few miles north of Limerick on the main Limerick to Dublin Road. As a result of the accident, the lorry caught fire causing the tragic death of Air Corps pilot Lt. Herbert Lee, Cpl. Harry Myles and Pte. Robert Lynch. Captain M. Maloney survived the accident and later arranged for the erection of a monument on the site in memory of his deceased comrades. The monument was restored in 1973 by the Limerick based Patrick Sarsfield Branch of the O.N.E. A wreath laying ceremony is arranged each year by the Patrick Sarsfield Branch on the Sunday in December nearest to the 10th.. The monument was rededicated by Cllr. Brigid Teefey and the O.N.E. in 2003 at a ceremony at which a Guard of Honour of Air Corps personnel participated. The roadside monument is situated on boggy ground near a small stream. At the ceremony held in December 2008, it was noted that the

foundations may be coming undermined. This situation was brought to the attention of Cllr Mary Jackman who performed the wreath laying ceremony and strong representations have been made to Limerick County Council for the monument to be moved to a more suitable adjacent location.

The 2008 Ceremony organised by the Patrick Sarsfield Branch was well attended. The Tricolour was carried by Hon Secretary Joe O'Mahoney and the Branch colours by Paul Kelly. The Roger Casement (Air Corps) Branch was represented by its Chairman Paddy O'Meara.



The roadside monument near Daly's Cross, Co.Limerick where three Air Corps members died in a tragic road accident.

John Collopy President of the Patrick Sarsfield Branch, Limerick and Paddy O'Meara Chairman of the Roger Casement Branch at the annual wreath laying ceremony in December 2009.



NEWS ITEMS

Annual Subscription

The annual sub has been increased from €20.00 to €25.00 by direction of the Board of ONET. Payment is now overdue. Cheques should be made payable to the Roger Casement Branch and sent to the Hon. Treasurer.

Dates for your Diary

July 12th, 2010; ONE National Day of Commemoration

July 25th, 2010; 50th Anniversary of troops leaving Baldonnel for The Congo. Full details of commemoration service later.

October 10th, 2010; Branch Annual Mass, Casement Aerodrome.

Dec 8th, 2010; Annual Christmas Lunch.

Condolences

Members of the Branch extend their deepest sympathy to committee member Noel Murphy and family following the recent untimely death of his wife Brid.

Ar dheis de go raibh a anam dilis.

Air Corps Museum

The Museum has been awarded a grant of €4,000 from the Heritage Council of Ireland which has been accepted by the GOC Air Corps. The award is due reward for the ongoing support provided by the

Air Corps and the RCB members and particularly in recognition of the dedicated work of the resident curator A/M Mick Whelan.

Website

Members are recommended to frequently refer to the Branch Website which is updated on a regular basis. Members should also inform their friends and former colleagues of the existence of the new website at: www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

SOCIAL COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

March 28th: Visit to the Titanic Artefacts Exhibition at City West. Travel back to 1912 to experience the legendary story of the Titanic through photographs, sound and over 300 genuine artefacts. Interested members should meet up at City West at 11:00 hrs. Entrance fee is €14.00
Contact Paddy Mc Loughlin
01 626 5156 or Finnbar Lyons
01 658 5776 for more details.

June 30th - July 3rd:

Somme Commemoration
A group of members from the Roger Casement Branch will attend the Annual Commemoration Ceremonies at The Somme on July 1st. The group will also visit the Ypres area in Belgium
Details: Paddy O'Meara 086 8500316

July: Visit to the Ulster Transport and Folk Museum Belfast. Date TBA. The Centre is located 7 miles East of Belfast. It is proposed that a bus tour be arranged from Dublin and will also visit other nearby Tourist centres. Estimated cost in the region of €30.00 per head.
Contact Paddy Mc Loughlin or Finnbar Lyons for details.

September: Visit to Waterford and Kilkenny. Date TBA. Visit to Kilkenny Castle and a visit to the memorial to the Air Corps Helicopter Crew at Tramore, Co Waterford.
Interested members contact Paddy Mc Loughlin, Finnbar Lyons or John Clarke.

CUIMHNIMIS

Let us remember those who have died.

Patrick Heary
Edmond O'Keefe
Mick Power
Felix Connolly

AIR CORPS NEWS

Following the tragic events of last October 12th when Capt Derek Furniss and Cadet David Jevens were killed the Irish Air Corps received considerable assistance from the community of Cór na Mona, Co. Gaillimh.

As a mark of appreciation for this assistance, General Officer Commanding the Air Corps organised for Air Corps personnel to partake in the 6.30 Mass in Cór na Mona Parish Church on Saturday 20th February.

An officer's guard of honour was in attendance in the church alongside a flag party bearing the National and Air Corps colours.

After the mass a small function was held in the local Community Centre a where GOC Air Corps presented a commemorative plaque to a representative from the local community.

The picture shows GOC Air Corps making the presentation to Aine Bhreathnach deputy secretary of the parish committee and principal of the local VEC.



Air Corps Guard of Honour at Parish Church in Cornamona, Co. Galway.

