



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

Issue 04/10
September
2010

www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

Branch Chairman: **Paddy O'Meara**
Phone: 086 850 0316
Email: omeara.pa@gmail.com

Hon. Secretary: **Brendan Downey**
Phone: 01 842 0958
Email: downeybp@eircom.net

Hon. Treasurer: **Eamonn Tierney**
Phone: 01 847 5206
Email: eamonn.tierney@gmail.com

PRO: **Peter Mc Glynn**
Phone: 086 401 1154
Email: peter.mcglynn@yahoo.com



Branch members attending the National Fuchsia collection in Clondalkin Shopping Centre, L/R: E. Tierney, T. Roe, P. McGlynn, F. Donnelly, J. Nolan, J. Clarke

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Roger Casement Branch continues to be very active especially in July. The main activities included a visit to commemorations at the Somme. A group also visited the Ulster Transport Museum.

The Branch was represented at the National Commemoration ceremonies in Kilmainham and also at the unveiling by IUNVA Of a commemoration window in the Garrison Church at Baldonnell.

Thirteen members of the Branch were invited to participate in the 50th Congo anniversary ceremonies Casement Aerodrome. Three Branch Members also attended the launch by Alan Dukes of the book "The History of Military Aviation in Ireland 1922 – 1945" by Lt Col Michael O'Malley.

The Branch, for the first time was involved publicly in the ONET Fuchsia collection. The collections were made at selected shopping centres and with the hard work of the members proved to be very successful.

The membership of the Branch continues to increase. We need to expand awareness of the Branch to former colleagues in order to increase the support for ONET and the Branch.

Current members should spread the news about the Branch to their former colleagues.

A number of photos of groups received for inclusion the 'The Link' were not suitable for publication as it was difficult to recognise some of the people in the photos due to their position in the group. Group seating should be similar to a sports team and should be as close-up as possible. A group sitting around a table is usually not suitable as the ones closest to the camera may only be recognised.

Brendan Downey, Hon-Sec.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN.....

Congratulations to all the members who participated in the Fuchsia collections which were held during July 2010. A special thanks to the organisers Jim Nolan (Newcastle Supermarket) John Clarke, (Clondalkin Shopping Centre) Finnbar Lyons (Omni Shopping Centre) and Richard Murphy (Churchtown shopping Centre). As well as raising in excess of €2,000 for the support of former ex-servicemen and women the public relations element of the exercise was of great benefit to the Roger Casement Branch in developing bonds with the general population who expressed great interest in the activities of the Branch and in the Air Corps.

ONET has introduced the Fuchsia as an emblem to promote its fund raising activities and July was nominated "FUCHSIA MONTH". Each Branch was asked to promote the sale of Fuchsias during that month.

I had the great pleasure in sending a letter of congratulations on behalf of the Branch members to former GOC Air Corps, Brig-Gen Ralph James following his appointment as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces. It is the first time since the foundation of the state that an Air Corps Officer has been appointed to such a prestigious position which is a great source of pride for the existing and former members of the Air Corps.

As GOC, he has been very supportive of the Roger Casement Branch and we wish Major-General James our best wishes in his new position.

*This edition is kindly sponsored by
The 1955 Direct Entrant Class*



PROFILE : EDDIE RYAN

Eddie Ryan a former member of the 1951 DE class is making a name for himself in Shannon where he has established the Atlantic Air Venture Centre.

The Centre is an exciting facility for people of all ages to learn about and enjoy aviation. Atlantic Air Venture's aim is that students and visitors alike will gain a new insight into the world of aviation and that their visit will spark an interest that might never have had the opportunity to surface otherwise.

In 1997, after an inspirational visit to Oshkosh in the USA, Eddie began to research and document a concept plan for an Aeronautical Park, a major aviation complex encompassing an aviation museum, restoration and building hangar, education complex, flight simulation facilities and flight school.

Eddie is well on the way to achieving his dream with the establishment of the Atlantic Air Venture Centre which has recently moved into new premises adjacent to Shannon Airport.

In the Air Corps, Eddie served his time as an instrument/electrical technician. On leaving the Air Corps Eddie's first job was with Freddie Laker at Skyways of London Airways. He returned home for a time to work for Aer Lingus before moving on to BOAC and English Electric Aviation.

Called up for national service in the RAF, Eddie was placed on reserved occupation as a service engineer on Lightning MK 1 and Trainer MK 11 aircraft and also on Canberra aircraft. He then became Service Engineer on the English Electric Lightning at Boscombe Down later to become the Empire Pilots Test School, the home of the British Air Ministry aircraft trials and development.

Eddie was appointed as an electronics test engineer with the newly formed Ministry of Aviation Technical Services Division and later served as Senior Supervisory Avionics Engineer in the Avionic systems Engineering Dept

Eddie attended the Salisbury College of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Southampton University. On graduation he was appointed a professional member of the Royal Aeronautical Society. As Senior Principal Supervisory Avionics Engineer he worked on well known military aircraft such as the TSR11, Nimrod, Lightning, Buccaneer and the Vulcan, Valiant and Victor bomber aircraft.

Eddie also served for a period as the Air Ministry representative to the U.S. Aircraft Naval Research Stations. His role was to oversee the aircraft trials of the Buccaneer and other aircraft for the Royal Navy aboard the U.S. Aircraft Carrier "Lexington" in Pensacola, Florida.

On his return from the U.S Eddie was appointed an instructor to the RAF Air Cadet Training Corps. In the early 90's he returned to Ireland.

Eddie's love of Aviation and his desire to pass on his great enthusiasm and knowledge of the industry is reflected in his dream of developing the Air Venture Training Centre in Shannon.



Above: Eddie Ryan, Pensacola Florida 1963 during the evaluation of the Buccaneer Aircraft

Right : Eddie, passing on his knowledge to a Young EagleClass in Shannon.



Eddie Ryan in the Air Venture Centre, Shannon August 2010



ANNUAL MASS
Will take place in Casement Aerodrome
on SUNDAY OCTOBER 10th
at 10.00 Hrs.

A wreath laying ceremony will take place after the Mass.
Members of ONET, family members and friends are welcome.
Light refreshments will be served afterwards in the NCO's Mess.

Website: www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

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.

TRIP TO IEPER (YPRES) AND THE SOMME

Account of the trip provided by Frank Walsh

The party of nine Branch members led by our Chairman Paddy O'Meara departed Dublin Airport on an early morning flight to Brussels on 30 June 2010. Having travelled by minibus to Ieper we commenced our tour proper in the afternoon with a walk around the sites in the town of Ieper (Ypres) which was our base. We visited the Royal Fusiliers Celtic cross memorial, St Martin's Cathedral, St. Georges Chapel and the Menen Gate. We then walked the ramparts to the cemetery of the same name, noting the five members of the Leinster Regiment who were killed with the same shell on 29 August 1915. We returned to Menen Gate for Last Post Ceremony at 2000 where the Roger Casement Branch were honoured in being invited to lead the wreath laying ceremony in remembrance of the fallen in the Great War.

We had dinner back at our hotel just off the Great Market Square where we planned to depart early next morning for the Somme. We attended the Somme Anniversary service at the Thiepval Memorial. Frank Donnelly laid a wreath in memory of his two uncles Henry and Joseph Donnelly RDF who were killed on 9 September 1916 and named on the memorial. Having paid our respects to Brig-Gen Tom Behan who commands the Irish military delegation to the E.U. and to Lt. Col P.A.J. Walker, commanding Officer 2nd Royal Irish Regiment we moved on to the Ulster Tower and laid a wreath honouring the 36th (Ulster) Division who achieved their objectives on the first day of the battle. Following lunch we formed up at the Celtic Cross at Guillemont. This cross commemorates the 16th Irish Division who liberated Ginchy and Guillemont in early September 1916. It is somewhat ironic that that the division was relieved by the Brigade of Guard which included the Irish Guards who suffered heavily in the continuing conflict. Having laid a wreath on the grave of Pte.P.Prince (uncle of Branch Member Mick Prince) at Cerisy-Gailly cemetery, we then viewed Lochnagar crater, passed the South African memorial at Delville Wood cemetery on our way to the Pipers Memorial. This monument at Loungueval is unique in that it is dedicated to the pipers of just two countries Scotland and Ireland. This was a fitting finale to our day on the Somme.

At Wijtschate we paused and remembered the 16th (Irish) Division at the celtic cross which is similar to the one visited the previous day at Guillemont. Both these crosses were dedicated on successive days in August 1926, the one at Wijtschate being first.

The day's tour concluded with a visit to Essex Farm cemetery where Canadian Capt John McCrea RAMC tended the wounded at this advanced dressing station and wrote his famous poem "In Flanders Fields".

We planned an early reveille the next morning so having had a farewell dinner in Ieper all were present and correct on check parade for return to Brussels. The tour was very successful. We paid our respects to the fallen, covered a lot of ground of the Great-War of specific Irish interest. Tony Roe had suggested that each of us adopt a grave, Why not adopt a cemetery and make this an annual affair? Tony also gave all who travelled a hand-out of some aspects of Irish involvement in the Great-War which included extracts from Terence Denman's book "Ireland's Unknown Soldiers".



1. Wreath laying at the Ulster Tower L/R; John Clarke, Gerry McCann, Frank Donnelly

2. Wreath laying at the grave of Pte P.Prince in Cerisy-Gailly cemetery on behalf of his nephew, branch member Mick Prince.

3. Wreath Laying ceremony at the Menen Gate, Ypres L/R; Frank Walsh, Frank Donnelly, John Condon



4. Group at the ceremony at the Thiepval Memorial



5. Group at the Irish Peace Park in Mesine

CUIMHNIMIS

Let us remember those who have died.

Dermot Early
Jim O'Grady
Larry O'Donnell

Late Lt-Gen Dermot Early R.I.P.

It is with great sadness that we heard of the death of former Chief of Staff the late Lt General Dermot Early on 23rd June last. Dermot will be remembered for his friendly smile and willingness to help whenever he could and for the great work he did to improve and develop the Defence Forces both at home and abroad.

He was a great sportsman and will always be remembered as a GAA legend.

He will be missed. Ar dheis De go raibh a Anam dilis.



*Lt-Gen Dermot Early with members of the Roger Casement Branch attending the Military Lourdes Pilgrimage in 2008.
L/R: A.Kelly (RIP) Paddy O'Meara, Branch Chairman, Lt Gen.D.Early, P. McLoughlin, J. Clavin, A. Dooley.*

Late Paddy Harte R.I.P

We were saddened by the death of our colleague Paddy Harte.

Paddy was a staunch Cork man, born in Roscarbery on St Patricks Day 1936 and lived there until 1955

when he joined the Air Corps as a Direct Entrant. On completion of his time in the Air Corps he was employed by Aer Lingus up to his retirement in 1995. Initially, Paddy's main interest was Gaelic Football but in the Air Corps and in Aer Lingus he became involved with the hockey teams. Through his administration talents, he became club secretary of the Aer Lingus Hockey Club, Match Secretary of the Leinster Branch, Irish Hockey Union for 14 years, Chairman of the Youth Activities Committee of the Leinster Branch, Irish Badminton Union for 15 years and was made an Honorary Life Member of the Leinster Branch in 2000 for his services to Badminton over the years.

He was very active in his local community and was chairman of the Sutton Tidy Towns Committee and secretary of the Dublin Airport Retired Staff Golfing Society.

Paddy's wife June and family sincerely thank all Paddy's former colleagues in the Air Corps who sympathised with them and attended the funeral. They very much appreciate the Guard of Honor from the Roger Casement Branch of O.N.E.

Social Committee Activity



Ben Downey and Tony Roe at the Locomotive Meadh.

A group of 10 members made a visit to the Ulster Transport Museum at Cultra, Co Down on July 21, 2010.

The museum consists of a wide range of exhibits covering a hundred years of transport in Ireland which are displayed in a comprehensive range of separate galleries. The rail gallery is the largest and has the renowned steam locomotive Maebh (800 series) which operated on the Dublin to Cork line.

Other galleries include the Bicycle and Motorcycle Gallery which holds a very large collection of vintage bicycles and motorcycles including a Penny-Farthing bicycle.

The Road Transport Gallery has a wide range of trams, buses, fire engines and commercial vehicles. The Car Gallery contains a large selection of vintage cars including the Ford model T and the DeLorean car which was built in Belfast.

The Sea and Sky Gallery has an early Short Brothers and Harland experimental VTOL aircraft and holds the Titanic exhibition.

We were fortunate to have a very knowledgeable guide to take us through the Rail Gallery. She gave us detailed information on the history of the introduction and development of the railway system in Ireland.

The museum is part of a large Folk Museum complex with a town and rural setting. The visit was most interesting and was enjoyed by all.



Retired Lt- Col Michael O'Malley who holds a Doctorate in History from Maynooth College has recently launched a book on Military Aviation in Ireland which covers the period from the earliest days of the foundation of the State to the end of the emergency period. The book gives a fascinating insight into the forward thinking of Michael Collins into the future of Civil Aviation in Ireland, into the intense politics that existed between the Air Corps and the general military regime which included the appointment of successive Commanding Officers. The book also contains an excellent account of the role "Father Bill" played in the training of pilots and in his attempts to have a proper Met station established in Baldonnel.

This book is a must read for any former members particularly those who served up to the 1950's. Lots of familiar names mentioned.

Congratulations to Lt Col O'Malley for the hard work and intense research which he applied to the project.

NEWS ITEMS ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION The annual sub has been increased from €20.00 to €25.00 by direction of the Board of ONET. Payment for 2011 can now be made to the Hon. Treasurer Eamonn Tierney.