



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hEireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

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Branch Members with
Col Gerry O'Sullivan
at the ONET, La na bhFiann
ceremonies in Arbour Hill

SECRETARY'S REPORT

There was significant activity recently which involved the members of the Branch. Volunteers from the Branch took part in the ONET Fuchsia collection in a number of areas.

A group, at the invitation of the Leixlip Town Council attended the unveiling of a memorial plaque to the late Sgt Hugh Gaynor who was killed in the Niemba ambush.

A number of members made a trip to the Somme where they held prominent positions during the various ceremonies. A group of members also attended the Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

The Branch was represented at the Ceremony of National Remembrance at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. There was an excellent turnout of members at the annual La na bhFiann Mass and wreath laying at Arbour Hill.

The Guard of Honour of Branch members in Uniform at the funeral of John Patterson was the largest ever seen at such an event.

The members who assist in the running of the Air Corps museum are presently restoring a Gypsy Major engine which will be on display in the military Transport Museum in the Curragh.

The Branch continues to grow in numbers and we are delighted to welcome three new members who have transferred from other ONET Branches.

The Branch now has two members on the ONET Board of Directors following Derek Ryan's election to the board where he joins Jim Nolan. Derek is appreciative of the Branch members who supported his election in June.

Two forthcoming events for your diary: Annual Mass in October and the Christmas Lunch in December.

Brendan Downey



Fuchsia Collection, Pavilion Shopping Centre, Swords. L-R.
Eamonn Tierney, Tim Malone, Noel Murphy, Frank Donnelly

Dates for your Diary

- 9 October 2011 Annual Mass for deceased Members
1000 Hrs at Garrison Church, Baldonnel.
- 14 December 2011 Annual Christmas Lunch
300 hrs at West County Hotel, Palmerstown,
Co. Dublin.
Contact: Paddy Mc Loughlin, 01 6265156
- October 7/9, 2011 1956 Apprentice Class 55th Reunion
Contact Paddy Mullen, 01 8402082

This edition is kindly sponsored by
the 1949 Apprentice Class



Visit to Arbour Hill and IUNVA Post

Account of visit provided by Brendan Downey

On 27 June a group from the Branch made a two part tour of Arbour Hill.

The first part included a tour of the Church and Grave Yard. With the assistance of guides Tony Roe and John Condon, It was a most enlightening, informative and enjoyable trip back through the history of the area since 1797 right up to the present day.

The tour commenced with a narrative on the church structure especially the belfry with the unique feature in the Celtic round tower on a rectangular base. Inside the church the work which was carried out after 1922 was highlighted.

There is a large display of Irish military flags including the colours of the units that have served overseas.

There are many interesting features of the church including the Altar which is designed in the image of a gun carriage. The Cedar Room which commemorates those who died in the Lebanon was of particular interest.

The cemetery in the church grounds still has many head-stones of the British personnel and their families which were buried there during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The narration on the process of the interment of the 1916 leaders following their execution in Kilmainham Jail to their burial in Arbour Hill was most informative.

At the 1916 Memorial the Group formed a Guard of Honour when John Clarke laid a wreath on behalf of the Branch while the piper played a lament. The ceremony attracted the attention of the visiting tourists which was good PR for ONET.

The second part of the tour was a visit to the nearby IUNVA Post No.1.

A wreath was laid at the IUNVA Memorial while our piper again played an appropriate lament. The garden at the Memorial and the grounds of the Post are most impressive.

All credit to the head gardener who is none other than our colleague Branch Member, Mick Prince.

The tour of the building was also very interesting. There are a number of rooms including a reception, reading, committee and a room where many artefacts and photos relating to the IUNVA overseas service. The tour concluded with light refreshments which were enjoyed by all especially the tea supplies by Marie Prince.

Overall this was a most memorable tour. Tony Roe and John Condon were very knowledgeable on the area and provided many gems of historical information. Special thanks to Piper P.J. Brennan who enhanced the tour by his playing at the Memorials. This outing was considered to be one of the best enjoyed by the Branch Members.



Members, Jack Power, P.J.Brennan, Paddy Mc Loughlin, Peter Mc Glynn on parade at the La na bhFiann ceremony.



Wreath Laying Ceremony



UN Veterans Memorial, Arbour Hill



Enjoying a cup of tea in Arbour Hill House

Roger Casement Branch - Visit to the Somme 2011

REPORT PROVIDED BY TONY ROE

It was the evening of June 30th when 12 travellers (10 uniformed members and 2 lady spouses) set out from Dublin Airport en route to France for our 3rd annual visit to the area of the Somme Battlefields and to take part in the July 1 anniversary ceremonies. The main purpose of this trip was to celebrate the liberation of the twin villages of Guillemont and Ginchy by the 16th Irish Division. We arrived at Beauvais Airport at 22.30hrs, picked up 2 x hired vehicles and drove to our overnight hotel in Beauvais town.

Early on July 1st we set off for the city of Amiens to locate our hotel and to deposit our luggage, we then made our way to Albert in order to visit the museum which is located under the Cathedral and runs for about 900 metres under the town streets. This visit was to give a taste of the Great War story, and the sights, and sounds, to those members who were out on their first visit to the battlefields.

From Albert we moved NE to La Boisselle to visit the memorial to the Tyneside Irish who were a Rifle Brigade who fought in the area. As skilled riflemen they took a huge toll on the advancing German forces but also suffered many casualties themselves from enemy machine gun posts. Very close-by we visited the mine crater at Lochnagar where tunnellers had dug for about one mile right up under the German positions and exploded huge caches of the explosive aminol under them.

In this same area we stopped for lunch at Poppy's cafe where we had a very good meal including starter, main course, dessert, cheeseboard, coffee and wine, all for €15.

On then to Longueval to the Pipers Memorial to pay homage to the men who played the troops into many a battle. It was right and fitting as we had not one, but two pipers in our party (although only one had pipes). Having entertained some villagers for a short while we moved on to Guillemont to await the ceremonies at 16.30hrs.

The main street has been renamed Rue de la 16th Irish Division in honour of the liberation and the local church is St. Patricks, which has a corner dedicated to the Irish troops. The ceremony is organised by the Friends of the Somme Association from Northern Ireland and the guest of honour was HRH the Duke of Gloucester, along with Peter Robinson, the First Minister from Northern Ireland. The Government of Ireland was represented by Mr Dinny McGinley from Donegal, and the Defence Forces by Brig. Gen. Tom Behan (and his good lady) who once again took time off from his duties in Brussels with the EU to attend.

The MC spoke in French, Irish and English and welcomed the local Mayors and guests. The UK military contingent on parade was the Territorial Branch of the Royal Irish Regiment who are descendents of the Inniskilling Fusiliers. Their Regimental Band was also in attendance. Speeches were made, wreaths were laid and music / laments were played. When the 3 National Anthems (French, Irish, and UK) were played some French people sang their anthem, the 12 of us sang Abhrann na BhFiann, and then we had about 100 singing "the Queen" but it was all in a good spirit, and it set the tone for some good interchange during the Garden Party which followed. We met a young Lieutenant with the R.I.R. who hails from Limerick. Incidentally Gen Behan had been on his own for two ceremonies earlier in the day and when we paraded at Guillemont he remarked that we were his personnel Guard of Honour.

The group then returned to Amiens where we had our evening meal on the banks of the River Somme.

On day two we returned back to Pozieres and to the biggest memorial of all at Thiepval where some 74,000 names are remembered. Those who are listed as missing in the area of the Somme include Lt. Tom Kettle, and also two uncles of Branch member Frank Donnelly who died together when a shell destroyed their machine gun position. The Ulster Tower was next visited where the exploits of the 36th Ulster Division are commemorated. They were one of the few successes on the day of battle but had to withdraw later as no other unit made it up to support them.

It was then on to Beaumont Hamel to see the Memorial to the men from Newfoundland who fought and died in that area. The ground here is as it was left after the battle, with trenches and shell holes still evident. Many of the dead are still in the ground where they fell.

We then went to the village of Authuille which has, in its cemetery, the grave of Willie McBride, made famous by the song (he was actually 21 years old, but that did not fit the rhythm of the tune). There is another William McBride in this cemetery buried on the front row near the steam that was 28 years old. He is often mistaken as the subject of the song. Having piped a lament and played the song about Willie, we then left to head back to Amiens to pack and get ready to leave next morning for our return flight to Dublin.

The group arrived back safely at Dublin Airport at approximately 10.30hrs on Sun July 3rd after a very enjoyable and informative visit to the Somme.

Guillemont; Tony Roe with Brig-Gen Tom Behan and Mrs. Behan with a Lt. from the Royal Irish Regiment.



Brig-Gen Behan with Branch Members prior to the ceremony in Guillemont.

Group at the Pipers Memorial at Longueville.



Piper John Brennan playing a lament at the Willy Mc Bride Grave.



John and Mary Brennan visiting the Thiepval Memorial.



CUIMHNIMIS

Let us remember those
who have died.

Mick McNamara
Benny O'Neill
John Patterson
Paddy Powell

Obituary: Obituary John W Patterson

We were all saddened by the death of our colleague John Patterson.

John was a committed member and supporter of the Roger Casement and contributed greatly to its success. He was big in stature, big in compassion and big in Faith. His concern for the wellbeing of others knew no bounds. The respect and popularity in which he was held by his former Air Corps and Aer Lingus colleagues was reflected in the large attendance at his funeral service. The Roger Casement Branch had the privilege of providing a Guard of Honour at the graveside with a piper from the Branch playing an appropriate lament. John will be sadly missed by all his former colleagues and friends. We extend our condolences to his wife Addy and family.
Go nDeanna Dhia Trocaire ar a anam dilis.



Where are they now?



CONGO AIRLIFT 1961. Jim Carpenter, Eamonn Maher, Mick Bohane, Pat McDonald, Frank Cavanagh, Jim O'Keefe B.P. Murray, Les Murray (at rear), Dick Murphy, Pat Kane, FRONT: Myles Mooney, Tom Burke, Tom Coleman, Mick Whoelly.



301 Squadron of No. 3 Operations Wing operate a fleet of 6 AW139, medium lift helicopters, routinely conduct winch and casualty evacuation training with the Naval Service, off the South coast of Cork.

AIR CORPS NEWS

Check out the latest book from Airman Michael Whelan. Newly published book on the origins of the Irish Defence Forces 'ALLEGIANCES COMPROMISED: Faith, Honour and Allegiance - Ex British Soldiers in the Irish Army 1913-1924,' by Airman Michael J. Whelan MA, of the Irish Air Corps (Curator: Irish Air Corps Museum).

Launched by Cllr Marie Corr, Mayor of South Dublin County and Brigadier General Paul Fry - General Officer Commanding Irish Air Corps on Tuesday 21 June 2011 at Tallaght County Library. Published by South Dublin Libraries. Cost €5.

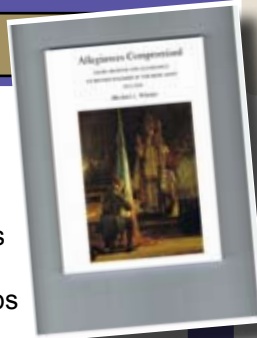
The book details the treatment of Boer War and Great War Veterans who returned to a hostile Ireland after those conflicts in how they impacted on the Irish Volunteers, IRA and National Army during Ireland's revolutionary period and establishment of the Irish Defence Forces at the ending of the Civil War.

The book is available from South Dublin Libraries and other outlets. For more information see 'Tallaght Library' and 'Michael J. Whelan-Author' on facebook
Busy time for the Helicopter rescue crews and the Learjet 45 crews engaged in emergency Organ Transplant flights during June and July.

15 June 2011.

AW 139 IN CLIFF RESCUE OP. AW139 (276) completed a rescue operation of an injured man from the bottom of a ravine in Baltimore, Co. Cork this evening.

Following a request from Valencia Coast Guard the 139, which had been operating in the area as part of a joint Defence Forces exercise, deployed to the scene.



The injured man, who is believed to have suffered a broken leg in the fall, was winched to safety by the crew. The injured man was transferred to Cork Airport from where he was transported to Cork University Hospital by ambulance. The helicopter arrived on scene at 5.55pm and completed their mission at Cork Airport at 6.35pm.

27 July 2011

'Irish 258', a Learjet 45 of No1. Operations Wing has landed in RAF Northolt at 0930Z this morning. Its crew of 3 successfully flew a 6 month old baby together with a HSE team to the UK to receive specialist treatment. The patient is currently being transported by ambulance to Kings College Children's Hospital, London.

26 July 2011

'AW276' departed Baldonnell at 1950Z this evening to aid in the Air Ambulance Organ Retrieval operation ongoing in Kerry Airport. The crew of 3 will position to Tralee General Hospital to help transport the HSE team on their return leg to Dublin later tonight.

31 July 2011

AW279 has just returned from Mayo General Hospital, Castlebar, after airlifting a woman to safety from Croagh Patrick after sustaining a fractured leg during the annual pilgrimage, Reek Sunday, this morning. It is now returning to the scene to retrieve another casualty who could not be reached earlier due to poor weather conditions on the mountain. The crew of AW279 will be on duty throughout the day working closely with Mountain Rescue Ireland.