



# Roger Casement Branch of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



## The Link

[www.oneaircorpsbranch.com](http://www.oneaircorpsbranch.com)

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*Paddy O'Meara, Deputy Chairman, Frank Walshe and Ollie O'Connor CEO ONET, attended the Annual Memorial Service arranged by the British Legion in the Islandbridge Memorial Park in July 2013. The Exhortation was delivered by Major General The O'Morchoe (Ret) CE CBE and Paddy O'Meara.*



*Members of the RCB with Minister of State Dinny Mc Ginley at the Memorial to the 16th Irish Division in Guillemont, Somme on July 1, 2013.*

### From the Chairman . . .

Our branch has been very active over the last 6 months participating in various events and ceremonies throughout the city and country. From Tipperary town in the south, to Slane and Skerries in the north, members represented our branch at numerous events. We also had a good representative group of members at the annual WW1 commemoration ceremonies at the Somme during first week in July. Our annual commemoration mass and wreath laying ceremony took place in Baldonnel on the 13th of October. We had a large attendance including Brigadier General Paul Fry, GOC Air Corps, Mr Jim Fay, Chairman of the LAC, Mr Michael Carroll and Mr Jim Nolan ONET Directors, and members of St Conleths, St Barbara's, and Fr. James Gilmore Branches of ONET. We also had members of the Irish Naval Association and the RAF Association in attendance.

I would like to thank Brig. Gen. Paul Fry for making the Propeller Club available for refreshments after the ceremony and opening the Air Corps museum to visitors on the day. We received many favourable comments about the suitability and convenience of the Propeller Club.

Our Fuchsia fund raising campaign during the month of July was a great success and I would like to thank all members for turning up at the various centres for the flag days. This is a very important revenue source for the company every year and requires a lot of commitment and planning to make it a success.

November 2013 marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Irish Volunteers – the original Óglaigh na hÉireann. When the Irish national army was formed in 1922 – following the Treaty – they adopted Óglaigh na hÉireann as its Irish language name.

To commemorate the anniversary, ONET have commissioned a special commemorative medal and members can order it from Brú na bhFiann, North King St, Smithfield Market, Dublin 7. (Tel 01 4850666). There is a nominal charge for the medal plus postage and packaging. All funds raised will go towards the ONET Fuchsia appeal.

Finnbar Lyons

### Secretary's Report . . .

The Branch is going from strength to strength with a regular increase in membership and we are delighted to welcome all new members including those who transferred from other branches – the Transfer Window is now open!

Activities over the past months included a busy Social Committee schedule, a very active fundraising with members participating in many commemorations. The Air Corps Museum volunteers have also been very active over the summer and autumn.

Thanks to all Branch members who helped with over seven days of Fuchsia collections at various locations from Citywest to Swords. Many thanks to the shopping centre management companies who allocated collection points.

Members attended many social events including the WW1 Somme visit in July, the Edinburgh Military Tattoo in August, the Royal Hospital Kilmainham Ennio Morricone concert in July and the Defence Forces Annual Gala Concert in the NCH in October. A group also attended a poetry-reading by Associate Member Michael J. Whelan at the Red Line Book Festival in Tallaght in October.

Members attended many commemorations including supporting the Air Corps Guard of Honour at the Merrion Square Memorial in August, and laying wreaths at the Islandbridge and Kilmainham Memorials in July. September was a very busy month for commemoration ceremonies, particularly Sunday 29th with members at 3 different events on the same day. These were the Tipperary Remembrance Arch event, IUNVA Annual Mass at Arbour Hill and the official unveiling of the Skerries Seapole Memorial by President Higgins, which is dedicated to all lives lost at sea around the coast of North County Dublin. This event was attended by many relatives and families and representatives from the air/sea rescue services (Naval services, Coastguard, RNLI, Air Corps and ONE Branches). An Air Corps CASA CN235 and a Coastguard Heli. performed a flypast. The Skerries Memorial features over 260 separate nameplates on the base, listing persons/vessels lost since 1726.

The Air Corps Museum Volunteers met with members of the Air Corps Museum Feasibility Group including Ministers Jimmy Deenihan and Frances Fitzgerald, and assisted with technical questions. The Museum was also manned by Branch members on Saturday 13th July (Flight-Fest Weekend) for visitors to Casement Aerodrome.

Noel Murphy

Edition sponsored by "A member of the 1959 Apprentice Class"





# ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH VISIT TO THE SOMME

A group of 11 Roger Casement Branch members made the annual trip to the Somme to attend the Memorial Services in 2013. Having arrived at Beauvais Airport we picked up our hired cars and travelled north to our pre booked hotel on the edge of the historic town of Albert. Having checked-in we made plans to split up the group in order to visit two different locations.

**Group 1** went north to the town of Loos near the Belgian Border

**Group 2** were to proceed East on a 1 ½ hour drive to visit the grave of the War Poet Wilfred Owen.

A feature of the annual trips to Ypres and the Somme has been the visits to Cemeteries to locate the graves of fallen soldiers at the request of various families and friends. In some cases the graves may not have been previously visited.

The group will usually carry out a short military type service at the grave supported by a piper.

## Visit to the Loos area (Group 1)

**1:** A request to Branch Member Richard Murphy to find and photograph the grave of 3615 Cpl George Mason, of Sandyford Co. Dublin (where Richard lives) and bring the results back home to a relative. Cpl Mason, locally recalled as "Gunner Mason" is buried in St. Patricks Cemetery in the town centre. Cpl Mason was serving with the 6th Battalion Royal Irish Regiment and was killed in action on Aug 10 1916. This mission was successful and the evidence was brought home to Sandyford.

**2:** Willy O'Connell who was a member of the 1957 Air Corps Apprentice Class and later of Aer Lingus requested that the group would also visit his grandfather's memorial. His Grandfather, who was also called William, was killed in action in the Loos area. 5674 Pte. William O'Connell was serving in "A" Coy of the 9th Battalion Royal Munster Fusiliers and was killed in action on 27th Mar 1916 in the Hulluch sector near the town of Loos. Due to the nature of the fighting in that area his body was never found, or if it was it was never identified. His name is inscribed on the wall at Dud Corner Cemetery; this is also called "The Loos Memorial". In this case the photographs were also emailed to Willy O'Connell who now lives in Reading in England as does Jim Galway of the 1958 Apprentice Class.

Both parties returned to Albert quite late in the evening to prepare for the ceremonies on the following morning.

On July 1st (Somme Day) the group attended the moving dawn service at the Loughnagar Crater at La Boisselle.

In the afternoon, the members provided a Guard of Honour for the 5th consecutive year at the memorial service in Guillemont. The service was conducted by the Rev, Martin Smyth and was attended by Minister of State, Dinny McGinley and Brig-Gen Tom Behan representing the Government and People of Ireland.

The band of the Royal Irish Regiment was also in attendance.

Other dignitaries present included the Mayors of Guillemont and Ginchy and representatives from Northern Ireland. The delivery of the Exhortation was shared by Major W.T.Nickels of the Royal Irish Regiment and by Paddy O'Meara, Branch Deputy Chairman who recited the final two lines of the prayer in Irish.

The ceremony was concluded by the playing of the Irish, French and United Kingdom National Anthems.

*Tony Roe, Roger Casement Branch.*



**Branch Chairman Finnbar Lyons at the monument to the 16th Irish Division in Guillemont.**



**The forester's house in Ors where Wilfred Owen spent his last night, has been transformed into an art installation and permanent memorial to Owen and his poetry, which opened to the public on 1 October 2011.**

## Visit to the ORS Area (Group 2)

### ANTHEM FOR DOOMED YOUTH – WILFRED OWEN

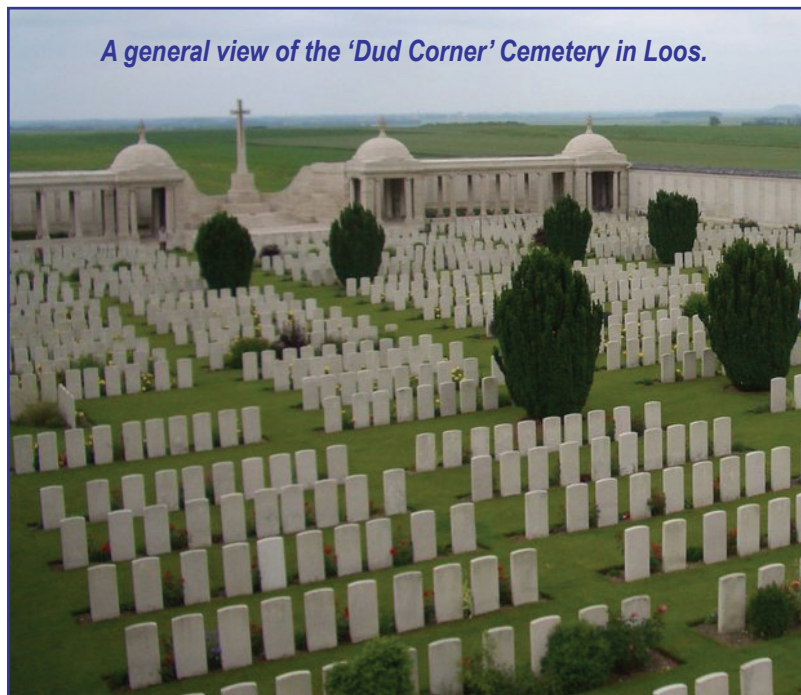
After arriving in Albert, France on 30th June, Paddy O'Meara, Finbarr Lyons and myself drove to the village of Ors Located to the North of Albert to try to locate the Grave of Wilfred Owen, the Foresters House and the Sambre-Oise Canal area synonymous with the last days of the Great War poet's life. After some difficulty we located the Foresters House (now a museum, which was closed but was wonderful to see) where Lt Wilfred Owen MC took refuge with his platoon prior to the push across the canal and where he wrote his final letter to his mother. At 14:45hrs after some more difficulty with restricted access and road works we found ourselves in the village of Ors where Finbarr and myself walked in the footsteps of the advancing troops to Ors Communal Cemetery and final resting place of one of the leading poets of the conflict and a place I have always hoped to visit. We took some photos; I read his famous poem, which I have used for the title of this piece you are reading. After paying our respects we then walked to the canal close-by to where the poet was killed while leading his men across the water under heavy machinegun fire on November 4th 1918, almost a week to the hour before the Great War finally ended. His mother received the telegram notifying her of the death of her son on November 11th, while the bells rang out for the first time in four years. We picked a poppy near the spot, which I keep in the back of a treasured copy of his war poems, a book I read from and photographed beside his headstone

*Michael J. Whelan – Air Corps Museum*



**Michael Whelan reading Wilfred Owen's poem at the grave of the Poet in Ors Communal Cemetery,**

### A general view of the 'Dud Corner' Cemetery in Loos.





# 2013 BRANCH ANNUAL MASS

The Mass for deceased members of the Air Corps which is arranged annually by the Roger Casement Branch was held on Sunday October 13 in the Garrison Church, Casement Aerodrome. The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Jerry Carroll CF who was assisted in the Service by the Rev. Addie Patterson. Brig-Gen Paul Fry G.O.C. Air Corps and a number of ONET Directors were in attendance.

There was a large attendance of Roger Casement Branch members who were joined by a significant number of members from other ONET Branches.



*A candle was lit in memory of every deceased former Air Corps member notified to the Branch during the past year.*



A number of families of deceased members also attended and were invited to retain the memorial candle which was lit for their deceased family member.

Wreaths were laid at the ONE Memorial after the Mass by Brig-Gen Fry on behalf of the Air Corps and by Finnbar Lyons, Chairman, Roger Casement Branch and by the RAF Association. Refreshments were served later in the Propeller Club.

*Special Guests included ONET Directors Jim Nolan and Michael Carroll, Jim Fay Chairman LAC, Brig-Gen Fry, GOC Air Corps and Rosaleen Dwyer, Heritage Officer, South County Dublin County Council.*



*Former GOC Air Corps Brig-Gen Jerry O'Connor with Paddy O'Meara and Brig-Gen Paul Fry, the present GOC.*



*The Branch was very pleased to welcome visitors from other ONET Branches to the ceremony.*



*A wreath was laid by members of the RAF Association*



*L/R: Flag Bearers: l/r. Michael Lally, Mick Delaney, Niall Jordan.*



*PJ Brennan provided music during the Mass and Wreath Laying.*



*All ready for the wreath laying ceremony*

## Upcoming Events

### 50th Heli Reunion.

The 50th Anniversary of Military Helicopter Aviation in Ireland will be celebrated in Casement Aerodrome on November 22nd 2013. The event will commence with a Service in the Garrison Church at 1415 Hrs which will be followed by a visit to No.3 Operations Wing HQ. Any former members of Heli Wing wishing to attend should contact : 50heliyears@gmail.com or call, Sgt. Elaine Fitzgerald @ 01-4037595

### Annual Christmas Lunch

The Roger Casement Branch Annual Christmas Lunch will be held in the West County Hotel, Chapelizod on Thursday 5th December at 1300 Hrs. Tickets are €30.00 per person.

As tickets are limited members should contact any member of the committee as displayed on the front page of this Newsletter before Friday 29th November.





## CUIMHNIMIS ~

Let us remember those who have died. ~  
**WILLIAM BAGNALL BILL DUGGAN**

## NEWS ITEMS

### TIPPERARY REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

A Remembrance Ceremony organised by the Tipperary Remembrance Trust was held on Sunday 29th September. The Ecumenical Service was held in St Mary's Garrison Church, Tipperary and was conducted by the Rev. Browen Carling and by Fr Dan McCarthy CF.

The President of the Remembrance Trust, Major General The O'Morchoe (Retd) was in attendance.

The service was followed by a parade through the town led by the St.Bridgets Pipe Band to the Remembrance Arch at the former Tipperary Military Barracks for a wreath laying ceremony.

Wreaths were laid by various guests including the Military Attaches from: The USA, Canada,

United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand,

A wreath was laid on behalf of the Roger Casement Branch by its Deputy Chairman Paddy O'Meara.

### RED LINE BOOK FESTIVAL 2013

A group of members attended the poetry reading given by A/M Michael Whelan M.A. on 17th October at the Red Line Book Festival which took place in the Rua Red Arts Centre in Tallaght. Michael is the curator of the Air Corps Museum and the event was sponsored by South Dublin Libraries.

### 60TH REUNION.

Congratulations to the 1953 Apprentice Class who recently held their 60th Anniversary.

*Paddy O'Meara lays a wreath at the memorial in Tipperary on behalf of the Roger Casement Branch.*



*RCB Branch Members attended the Red Line Book Festival.*



*1953 Apprentice Class reunion and 60th Anniversary, Front L/R: M.O'Donnell, T.Purcell, M.Derham, F.Donnolly, E.Lally, D.O'Regan. Back L/R: T.McCormack, M.Garrett, P.J.McCaffrey, J.Douglas, J.Reddington.S.Noonan.*



## Air Corps News

### FLIGHTFEST 2013

"On Sunday 15th September 2013 saw a truly historic event involving more than 30 aircraft flying at low level along the mouth of the River Liffey right through to the centre of Dublin.

All major Irish airlines supported the event, including Aer Lingus, Ryanair, CityJet, Air Contractors, and Aer Arann, but the Air Corps took centre stage for the 130,000 people which lined the banks of the Liffey.

Bad weather threatened to delay the show but at exactly 2pm an Agusta Westland 139 flying the Irish flag appeared from behind a rain shower and opened the Flightfest on time.

Formations from Wolf Section (helicopter), Eagle Section (PC-9) and Neptune Section (CASA) battled the turbulent conditions to put on a great display and showed the Nation the professionalism of the Air Corps."



*An Air Corps AW 139 Helicopter flying the Tricolour opened the flight display at Flightfest 2013.*

*Air Corps Flypast - An impressive flypast of Air Corps Casa CN235 and PC9 aircraft in formation.*

