



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



## The Link

Issue 03/17 September 2017

Branch Chairman: Michael Delaney 087 225 9023

Hon. Secretary: Noel Murphy 087 6342941 Treasurer: Patrick Lynch 083 147 0659

PRO: Peter Mc Glynn Phone: 086 401 1154

Link Editor: Paddy O'Meara

E: [onerogercasementbranch@gmail.com](mailto:onerogercasementbranch@gmail.com)

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



Honorary Branch President: James Nolan

**Brigadier General  
Seán Clancy  
General Officer  
Commanding  
Irish Air Corps**



Brigadier General

Seán Clancy is the General Officer Commanding, Irish Air Corps and Director of Military Aviation with effect from 1st July 2017.

Brigadier General Seán Clancy joined the Irish Defence Forces in 1984 as a cadet and commenced his flight training in 1986. He has flown both fixed and rotary wing aircraft and has accumulated nearly 5,000 flight hours. He is a qualified type and instrument-rating examiner, a qualified flight simulator instructor and has most recently held type, instrument and NVG ratings on the AW139.

He has served in appointments including Squadron Commander, Wing Commander, Senior Staff Officer Operations, Senior Staff Officer Personnel and Chief of Air Staff Support in Air Corps Headquarters. Prior to promotion he has served as Director of Strategic Planning Branch on the Chief of Defence's Staff, Defence Headquarters.

Brigadier General Seán Clancy has spent a considerable period of his career as a Search and Rescue pilot and was the commander of the crew who received the Marine Medal for Meritorious Service in 2002. He has served for a year with the European Union Force in Bosnia as the military advisor to the Force Commander and spent two years as a non-permanent member of SHIRBRIG, the UN standby Brigade.

He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Trinity College, Dublin and a Masters in Military Leadership and Defence Studies from the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. He is a graduate of the Defence Forces Command and Staff College where he was the recipient of the Lt Gen Tadhg O'Neill Award. In 2017 he completed a Level 9 Diploma in Advanced Management Performance with the Smurfit Business School.

Brigadier General Seán Clancy is married to Caroline. They have three children Lauren, Ryan and Lilymai and live in Dublin.



*The COS Vice-Admiral Mark Mellett with members of the Roger Casement Branch and the RAF Assoc. at the National Monument in Merrion Square on July 29th 2017.*

### Editors Note

On behalf of all the members we extend our congratulations and best wishes to Brig-Gen Sean Clancy on his recent appointment as GOC Air Corps and Director of Military Aviation. We look forward to working with Brig-Gen Clancy on matters of mutual interest during his period in service.

We include an article written by Frank Walshe who recently attended the centenary ceremonies at Messines in Flanders. Members of the Roger Casement Branch have been participating in Memorial Services both in the Somme and Flanders for the past eight years and have developed strong links in the WW1 regions. In addition to the Messines Ceremonies, a group of members also visited Passchendaele during the centenary period.

We also wish to thank the Air Corps Press Officer Capt Sean McCarthy and Sgt Jimmy Hayles for their valued support in providing

valuable information regarding current activities in the Air Corps which is greatly appreciated by the 'Old Boys'

### Link Circulation Postage Costs

Members will be aware that communication by post has become extremely costly and that the postage can now exceed the production and printing costs. Since the introduction of the Link Newsletter in 2007 all editions have been sponsored thereby preserving the Branch's funds for the support of the ONE objective in providing support for disadvantaged ex-servicemen and women. Considerable savings can be made by the use of email and with this regard if you are in a position to accept your copy of the Newsletter on-line we would appreciate if you could pass your email address to the Branch Secretary as follows: [onerogercasementbranch@gmail.com](mailto:onerogercasementbranch@gmail.com)

**UPCOMING EVENTS - October 08, 2017 1000 hrs : Annual Mass for Deceased Members, Garrison Church, Casement Aerodrome.**

**December 07, 2017 1300 hrs: Annual Christmas Lunch West County Hotel, Chapelizod.**

*Edition sponsored by a member of the 1959 Apprentice Class*



# Picture Gallery



*Paddy Goodman presents the Journey Logbook for Aer Lingus DH86B, EI-ABH for the period 30 August 1938 to 27 April 1939, to the Air Corp's museum curator, Cpl. Michael Whelan. The Log Book was donated by Denis O'Connor, a former Air Corps apprentice.*



*L/R Noel Murphy, Denis Barry, Paddy Goodman, Finnbar Lyons, Tony Kearns, Pat Lynch, Tony Roe, Back, Cpl. Michael Whelan.*



*Attending the Ceremony at the Menin Gate, June 2017. L/R: Ollie O'Connor (CEO ONE), Frank J Walshe, Noel Murphy, Michael Carroll, National President ONE.*



*RCB Museum Crew: Back L/R. Tony Kearns, Pat Lynch, Noel Murphy, Front L/R. Frank Donnelly, Tony Roe, Gerry McCann, Denis Barry*



*Members of, ONE, RAFA, Naval Service and the French Foreign Legion attended the Garden Party in LPH on 12th July.*

*High Flight*

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things  
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung  
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,  
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung  
My eager craft through footless halls of air.*

*Up, up the long delirious, burning blue  
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace  
Where never lark, or even eagle flew -  
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.*

*P/O John Magee RCAF KIA 13/12/1941*



*Members of the 46th Apprentice Class recently celebrated their 35th Anniversary in Casement Aerodrome. Included is Col. Rory O'Connor who was a former member of the class.*

# Remembering Messines 2017

## Day 1: Made in the Great War

Frank J Walshe



The battle field tour on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and theatrical production that evening at Ieper Art Centre was inspired by the life of Richard Spencer Holmes, fiddler, luthier and music hall performer from Leeds who was killed at Messines 1917. He joined the British Army in 1916. The age for conscription was raised to 35 years in 1916 and this is the likely route that put him in the army. Moving forward to 2008 Sam Sweeney, traditional English fiddler bought a violin from a stringed instrument maker in Oxford. He took considerable care in selecting an instrument for quality construction and sweetness of sound to his ear. It seemed that what he bought was a new violin but inside was written 1915 Richard S. Howard. Sweeney's research revealed that Roger Claridge violin maker bought the unconstructed maple spruce ebony pieces of the violin which were contained within a manila envelope in a Manchester auction room in 1993. The morning battlefield tour followed the route taken on the ground by Howard's unit the 10<sup>th</sup> Duke of Wellington's West-Riding regiment. The tour was organised by the friends of Flanders Fields Museum and the tour guide was one of their principle historians Piet Chielens. We paused at Caterpillar crater and Piet emphasised how the crater was the most northerly one detonated on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917 and over a hundred German soldiers were killed there while only three casualties have known graves. Private R.S. Howard was killed in this area and is buried in Woods Cemetery 1 Km to the west of Caterpillar Crater (Hill 60). The tour was around in the area SE of Zillebeke and ended at the Bluff on the Ypres-Combines canal. Howard had left behind a wife and school going daughter. His wife may have worked in the local munitions factory in Leeds. When we arrived at Woods Cemetery we held a short memorial service. Sam Sweeney played a number of tunes on Howard's fiddle which he had obviously ordered before departing for the Western front and his subsequent death on Messines Ridge. The unfinished instrument was now complete and Sam Sweeney carried it on his back, travelling the fateful journey that Howard travelled to his death on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917. The Reveille and last post was sounded by a trumpeter from the Ieper fire brigade who play each evening at the Menin Gate. The tour party then retired for lunch to restaurant De Palingbeek.

As already stated an evening theatre performance was held at the Arts Centre in Ieper based on the life and times of Richard S. Howard before he enlisted in the army. The first part of the show was musical with emphasis on the music that Howard played in his music hall performance career; mainly English and Irish traditional music of the day. The second half of the show was dedicated to telling the personal life and family story of Richard S. Howard before and after enlistment. Considerable licence was taken in constructing the story but backed up by original documentary evidence which helped to form the narrative. In that regard reference was made to birth and marriage certificates and census records. There were four performers in total on the stage which including Sam Sweeney, two other instrumentalists and a narrator. The background scene was Richard Howard's shop in Leeds. The narrator gave the story continuity which enhanced the excellent production. The show Made in the Great War enjoyed a short tour in England on their return including at a London venue. It was thoroughly enjoyed by myself and Noel Murphy. We were unable to stay even for a small libation after the show as we were up at 02.00 hrs the next morning to follow the route taken by the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment and Major William Redmond at Messines.

### Day 2: William Redmond Tour 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

The plan was to walk part of the route, but not strictly in the sequence that Redmond and his battalion followed, until he was injured in the course of the battle; we then went on the path he took on his final journey to Loere (Loker) having died on the way. He was carried by Private Meeke of the 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division to the casualty station, where in spite of having his injuries attended to he died. The battle was led by General Plumer's 2<sup>nd</sup> Army with Australian and New Zealand forces. The Australians miners

had of course done most of the tunnelling for the underground mines. Plumer a Yorkshireman whose Chief-of-Staff was Harrington had earlier served in Ireland as GOC of the Curragh. It was one of the best planned attacks in the salient if not in the whole of the war. Nineteen mines were detonated at 03.15 hrs on the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup> June the kick-off time of the battle.

The aim of the battle was to dislodge the Germans from Messines ridge which they held from the beginning of the conflict. Plumer was senior to Haig in service and had the latter in staff college and did not award him a high mark. The last mine was ready just minutes before the deadline although Plumer had resisted immense pressure to commence the attack on Messines ridge much earlier in time.

The walk was approximately 10 Km in total; we started walking uphill towards Spanbroekmolen Crater (Peace Pool) at 04.15 hrs which was reckoned to be one hundred years hence. We then continued on past the mine craters towards Wijtschate where Redmond was injured. We then routed via Lindenhoeck across the Kemmelberg to his grave at Loere. We had travelled in a ENE direction towards Wijtschate along the Messines Ridge the town that the RDF and RIR overran later on the same day one hundred years ago. We had already reviewed the direction taken by the 16<sup>th</sup> Irish Division and 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division in their uphill advance towards the Peace Pool and Peckham Farm. Spanbroekmolen was in fact on the path the 36<sup>th</sup> Division advanced, the 16<sup>th</sup> (Irish) Division being on the left of the Ulster Division. We climbed Mount Kemmel not quite to the top which of course is forested. We could however appreciate the panoramic view of the whole landscape afforded at such altitude. Mount Kemmel is of course a virtual continuation of the high ground from Wijtschate in an easterly direction. At various stops along the way events within the battle were explained. On one such stop was at the French Military cemetery / Ossuary Mount Kemmel. Plumer had a plan of the battlefield laid out the size of two tennis courts which was close to Mount Kemmel. Piet Chielens our guide noted the location where Redmond was wounded and the route taken back to the Loere Hospice. At various points along the route we stopped for both explanations and music. We also had a stop for a fortifying drink of what tasted like snaps. Our Belgian friends would not appreciate us calling it snaps although it was apple based.

Having reached Redmond's grave Piet spoke for the penultimate time, encapsulating the life and ambitions of Redmond and his brother John the driver of Home Rule after Charles Stewart Parnell. The musical group played popular Irish music of today and yesteryears. We then moved on to the now vacant Loere hospice building of today. A memorial book was opened in tribute to Redmond after his death. It was signed on page one by Maj. Gen. Hickey. It was closed on the day having existed for a hundred years and we were invited to sign the tribute before a new memorial book was opened; we were also invited to sign new memorial book. We then retired to Den Heksenstoel for a copious Irish breakfast.

In the late fore-noon we made our way to the football stadium in Ieper for security checks and transport to the Peace Park at Messines. A Pack lunch was provided for all in attendance. HRH The Duke of Cambridge and an Taoiseach Mr Enda Kenny were the hosts and welcomed Princess Astrid to the ceremony. A Royal Belgian Navy band entertained those in attendance and played the three national anthems which concluded the commemoration. The band had earlier accompanied Tracey McRory and Richard Laird composers of The Messines Suite, accompanied also by Darren Milligan. The colours of the Irish Defence Forces and the Royal Irish Regiment were on parade.

Events of the day concluded when the Irish Defence Forces and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Regiment marching side by side paraded their colours to the Menin Gate for the daily evening ceremony.

Frank J. Walshe

# CUIMHNIMIS ~ Let us remember those who have died. ~

DAITHI O'CEARABHALLAIN  
TOM FARRELL  
JIM FAHY

MARTIN O'SULLIVAN  
JAMES O'BRIEN  
PAUL MOLONEY

RICHARD MURPHY  
FR. COLM MATHEWS  
JOHN MULVEY

## Air Corps News

### Garda Air Support Unit 20th Anniversary

On the 7th of September 2017, the Garda Air Support Unit (304 Squadron) will celebrate its 20th Anniversary. The squadron has three aircraft, two helicopters and one fixed-wing aircraft, based at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel and is jointly operated by Air Corps Pilots and Garda Observers. The Unit's role is to rapidly respond to a wide range of scenarios such as immediate threats to life, incidents of a criminal, terrorist or other nationally important nature, public order incidents, crime prevention/detection, evidence gathering, intelligence gathering, aerial photography, traffic management and much more.

The aircraft are fitted with the latest police role equipment including 'state of the art' daylight and thermal image cameras mounted on gyro-stabilised platforms, search lights, extensive communication suites and microwave downlink/uplink technology. All of this provides Garda Command and Control a truly valuable Eye in The Sky.

The Unit operates on a 24hr basis, 365 days a year. Crews are in a state of constant readiness around the clock to respond to tasks. The duty crew can be airborne within two minutes and over Dublin City within five minutes from the time of receiving a task. Squadron aircraft have the capability to respond nationally and are often deployed around the country providing air support to local Garda units as required.

It is right that we mark this occasion, wishing the Garda Air Support Unit many more years of successful and safe operations.



EC-135 Helicopter, Garda Air Support Unit. (GASU)

### 5 Years and 3000 Missions for the Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS)

The Air Corps has a proud tradition of serving the people of Ireland and 3 Operations Wing has introduced a number of capabilities to the State, including its first inter-hospital air ambulance service, SAR and night vision operations. In 2012 the Unit embarked on its next legacy project, the introduction of the State's first dedicated Emergency Aeromedical Service.



Gavin Chadwick (6) from Moneygall who was accidentally run over by a lawn mower and received severe injuries was transported to hospital in Galway by EAS. Gavin has made a huge recovery and called to give a big thanks to Capt. Alan Bray and the crew.

The EAS is a joint project between the Irish Air Corps and the National Ambulance Service (NAS), designed to deliver advanced medical care to remote locations and rapid transport for seriously ill or injured patients to the most appropriate hospital for treatment. The service combines the speed of the AW139, cruising at almost 300 kph, with the level of care provided by the NAS Advanced Paramedic on board.

EAS in action at Mallow Bridge Co.Cork.



In five years it has carried out almost 3000 missions, responding to the most critically ill patients across the country and on the 25th of August the Irish Air Corps, with the National Ambulance Service held a Family Day for the patients, and their families, who have been treated and transported by the EAS. This day was an opportunity to reconnect the chain of survival and meet those who responded in their time of need. It also provided a chance for the crews that support the service to meet the patients who have benefitted from their hard work.

#WhenMinutesMatter

