



Roger Casement Branch of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hEireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

www.oneaircorpsbranch.com

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Branch Chairman:

Finnbar Lyons

Hon. Secretary:

Noel Murphy

Hon. Treasurer:

Eamonn Tierney

PRO:

Peter Mc Glynn

Honorary Branch President:

James Nolan



Annual Mass 2014. Wreath bearers
Tony Mc Cormack and Eamonn
Tierney with the Colour Party at the
ONE Monument.

From the Chairman:

As 2014 draws to its close we can look back at another successful year for our branch. We were successful in keeping our membership level high, monthly meetings at Baldonnell were well attended, and our annual ONE charity fuchsia collection programme during the month of July realized a very substantial figure. In the secretary's report, it will be noted that our branch was represented at numerous commemoration ceremonies, other branch Annual Masses, anniversaries, festivals, and other social events throughout the country, and abroad. This year we had an added burden due to the large number of events commemorating the start of World War 1.

At the Annual Convention held in Tullamore in late September, our PRO Peter McGlynn was elected to the Board of Directors. Jim Nolan our President is also a Director and Derek Ryan B.L., who was a former Branch Member who is now a member of the Mullingar branch is also on the Board. On behalf of the branch I would like to congratulate Peter on his election and wish him well in his new role in the organization.

During the convention, The CEO Mr Ollie O'Connor, pointed out that the past year was very challenging due to bad media reports on a small number of the larger charities. This had a knock-on effect on how all charities are viewed. The ONE has decided to publish on its website its audited accounts and a frequently asked questions (FAQ) section, thereby giving full transparency to ONET's accounts.

The Government has now decided under the provisions of the Charities act 2009 to establish a Charities Regulatory Authority (Charities Regulator) and this came into effect on the 16/ Oct/2014. Among its main functions are to:-

(1) Increase public trust and confidence in the management and administration of charitable organizations.

(2) Establish and maintain a register of charities.

Finally, I would like to thank all members for their loyalty, hard work, and support throughout the year and best wishes to all for 2015.

Finnbar Lyons

Secretary's Report

Members have attended a number of recent events including:

18 Sept: Unveiling of WW1 Memorial at Woodenbridge Co, Wicklow

3 Branch members attended with reps from RAF and the Royal British Legion.

21 Sept: Deansgrange Co. Dublin Memorial Mass

21 Sept: St. Patricks Cathedral, Dublin, Annual Battle of Britain Commemoration –invitation extended by RAFA. 3 members attended and laid a wreath at the RAF Memorial.

23 Sept: Annual RAFA dinner at the National Yacht Club, Dun Laoghaire –

3 members attended, Brig-Gen Paul Fry and British Ambassador Dominick Chilcott were guests of honour.

27 Sept : Annual ONE Convention in Portlaoise – 3 delegates and 2 observers from RCB attended. Peter Mc Glynn (RCB) was elected to the board of ONE.

28 Sept: Post 1 Arbour Hill, Dublin – Annual Mass, members attended.

06 October: Rua Red, Tallaght. Members attended an exhibition and poetry reading given by Michael J Whelan, Curator of the Air Corps Museum.

12 October: RCB Annual Mass in Casement Aerodrome. Over 250 members, families and invited guests attended which was followed by a wreath-laying ceremony at the ONE Memorial. Wreaths were laid by Brig-Gen Paul Fry, Jim Nolan (RCB President), the Irish Naval Association and the RAFA. Light refreshments were served in the dining complex. The museum was open and manned by RCB members during the afternoon.

18 October: Annual Defence Forces gala concert in NCH. RCB members and families attended.

01 November: St Barbara's Branch, Kildare, members of the RCB attended the last Annual Mass of St Barbara's Branch. The Branch is being closed due to the low number of members with the existing members transferring to other branches.

04 November: Stand down parade for F/Sgt Jim Perkins in Casement Aerodrome. Branch members invited to attend. Jim has been invited to join the RCB.

08 November: Niemba commemoration at Cathal Brugha Barracks, members attended.

09 November: Remembrance Parade in Newtownkenedy, Co. Wicklow. The organisers requested the RCB Flag Party to participate in the Parade.

09 November: National Remembrance Service in St Patricks Cathedral, Dublin. RCB represented.

11 November: RCB represented at the WW1 Memorial Service in Ennis, Co. Clare Cathedral.

16 November: Glencree Reconciliation Centre, Co. Wicklow. Ecumenical Service and wreath-laying at the German Military Cemetery.

23 November: Invitation to attend City Quay Church, Dublin for the Annual Commemoration Service for the Irish Maritime Services followed by wreath laying in the River Liffey.

23 November: Branch represented at the WW1 Memorial Service in the Church of Ireland, Athy.

29 November: The Mill Shopping Centre, Clondalkin annually request the RCB to provide a piper and Honour Guard for the arrival of Santa Claus. 9 members in attendance who were joined by a Dublin Fire Brigade fire tender.

The Branch is keen to promote the work of the Branch and ONE and regular public appearances by members in uniform is invaluable in this regard. In order to keep up the standard we need as many members as possible to attend forthcoming functions which are usually announced at the monthly meetings. Many thanks to all the members who have participated during the past year.

Noel Murphy Hon-Secretary





Thoughts on Class Reunions Clive Geraghty



One of the most impressive examples of the bond that was created by serving in the Air Corps is the fact that every year at least one reunion takes place. Why do so many of us feel the desire to meet members of our class of apprentices or D.Es, usually once every five years, to gather together to eat, drink, talk, reminisce? Reunions, in my opinion, are not about remembering good times. Even with the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia the good days in the Corps were at least equalled by the bad ones, as the poet Paddy Kavanagh described Ireland in the middle of the last century as being 'more lousy than savage'.

Life could indeed be pretty miserable in the Corps of the 50s and 60s when I served. The food wasn't too bad, but our clothing was deplorable, heavy without being warm, rough and uncomfortable. Class distinction was an ever-present insult to one's humanity, and with a few honourable exceptions, was widely perceptible in those who should have known better. The billets were cold comfortless places, money was always scarce, an apt description of the country in the middle of the 20th century. But life went on in, camaraderie took root, lifelong friendships were established despite the rigours of the life.

Many guys who don't go to reunions say "why should I go to an Air corps reunion, I hated the place". They are missing the point, most of us hated the place, many of us couldn't wait to buy ourselves out. We don't hold reunions to say that the Corps was a great place to work, or to pretend that all the guys were close friends, that harmony ruled all over, or that we enjoyed spending our formative years in the sometimes terrible conditions that prevailed. But we survived, that is what we celebrate. We were there, we salute our former selves. We learnt many things, how to put up with bad treatment and say nothing, how to live and let live.

For the life of me, I cannot remember now who I liked and who I didn't like amongst my workmates, and it doesn't matter, because that was then and this is now, with fifty or sixty years separating the two. So why waste time and energy harbouring old enmities.

Let them go.

The next reunion of my class, the '57 class of Apprentices, will be to mark the 60th anniversary of our setting out on the journey into adult life. We will all be over 75 years of age by then, and with the help of God we will all assemble again to celebrate our friendship, to break bread together, to listen to our old jokes, to say a word of encouragement to someone who is having a harder time than he deserved. We will remember that we were there, we survived, most of us thrived and made good in later life, in no small measure due to the everyday experiences, good and bad, we shared and enjoyed in the Air Corps.

Editor (Clive was a member of the 1957 Apprentice Class. He recently retired from the Abbey Theatre Company where he appeared in many productions. Clive has also appeared in TV and Radio programmes. He is a regular contributor to The Link Newsletter)



Notice of AGM Members are advised that the Annual AGM will be held in Casement Aerodrome on Thursday 15th January at 2000 hrs. A full attendance is expected.



Summary of Fr. McCabe's homily at the Branch Annual Mass

The annual Mass in memory of deceased members of the Roger Casement ONET branch was offered by Fr Robert McCabe CF (Gormanston Camp) who has been covering chaplaincy duties during Fr Jerry Carroll's deployment in UNIFIL.

In his homily, Fr McCabe explored how "the worst ink is better than the best memory" and described the increased value of written words and letters in the years which follow a person's death.

Our memory of deceased family, friends and colleagues is rekindled and strengthened when we re-read their letters, their photographs or a memorial plaque of their work. This is perfectly true in the chapel in Baldonnel where stained glass windows recall the different units who have worked across the years. The arrival of email, text messages and other means of social communication is limiting our ability to maintain written records of those with whom we work.

Fr McCabe described the altar in Baldonnel as a point of reference at Mass where we gather our thoughts and memories of family and colleagues and present our deceased members to the merciful embrace of God. We "do this in memory" so that we may support each other with signs of Christian goodness.

He prayed for the young men and women of all ranks who on completion of their training in Baldonnel made an immense contribution to the work of the Air Corps, the Defence Forces and the United Nations. Some have moved on to work in other areas of the aviation industry but still cherish their connection with colleagues in Baldonnel.

Fr McCabe concluded his homily by reminding people to deepen the connection between the families gathered in Baldonnel and to look out for those in our communities who might not enjoy the same support systems or sense of support which we enjoy through our daily prayer and annual wreathlaying ceremony. A commemorative booklet prepared by Fr McCabe is available on the Roger Casement ONET website.



All photos: Armn Michael Whelan
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Annual Memorial Mass, 2014

The Annual Mass was held in Casement Aerodrome on Sunday 12th October. Celebrant was Fr. Robert Mc Cabe CF.



Fr. Mc Cabe with members of the Colour Party.



View of the congregation.



View of the Church and congregation during the Consecration



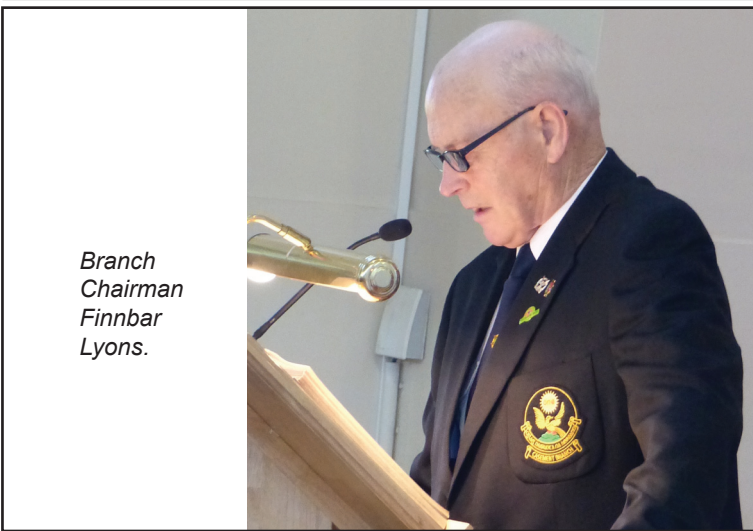
Fr. Robert, Blessing the candles which have been lit in memory of the deceased members.



Presentation of gifts by family members of the deceased.



Richard Murphy reads the names of the deceased members.



Branch Chairman Finnbar Lyons.



View of the colour party in the Church.

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

KEVIN MAGUIRE, MICHAEL HORAN, JOHN CARTON

Branch Annual Visit to Flanders and the Somme 2015

Members will be aware that representatives from the Roger Casement Branch have attended various Memorial Services, visited Battle Fields and Cemeteries in both Flanders and the Somme for the past six years.

In 2014, the 100th Anniversary year of the commencement of WW1 a group of 19 Members and friends participated in the visit.

We would now like to get some feedback from members in order to plan the 2015 visit as outline planning is required early in order to reserve the necessary hotel rooms. There is extra pressure on accommodation as a result of the 100th Anniversary Services of the Great War 1914-1918. This pressure will be more intensive in 2016 when the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme will be celebrated.

The following options may be considered:

A :Visit to the leper (Ypres)area only, duration two nights. Based in leper Menen Gate, Island of Ireland Peace Park, , Flanders Fields Museum etc.

B: Visit to the Somme Region: Duration two nights. Based in Albert Guillaumont Service, Thiepvalle, Ulster Tower, Various Battle sites

C: Visit to both locations as in 2014. Duration 4 nights based in leper.

Please contact, Noel Murphy 087-6342941; Tony Roe 086-3664120;

Paddy O'Meara 086-8500316.

Your confirmation of interest will be appreciated before End of December 2014 to enable the preliminary hotel arrangements to be made.

Air Corps News

Air Ambulance Activity

On Saturday the 15th November the Air Corps aircraft call sign 'Irish 253' transferred a young patient from Casement Aerodrome, Dublin to Heathrow Airport, London, completing their 100th Air Ambulance Mission of 2014. The CASA CN235 fixed wing deployed at 5.30 pm Saturday and landed in the busy London airport at 7 pm, where the patient was transferred to an NHS ambulance crew to complete the patient's journey to hospital by road. This mission was a significant milestone for the Air Corps, in what has been a busy year for both national and international transfer of patients. The Air Corp's ability to conduct multiple missions using fixed wing and rotary wing assets meant that on several occasions in 2014 multiple Air Ambulance missions were completed simultaneously. In the last fortnight the Air Corps transferred 3 patients to hospitals in Ireland and 4 patients to hospitals in the UK and have been called on for international transfers to other European Countries during 2014.

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Over recent months Casement Aerodrome has played host to the deployment and repatriation of our troops from overseas missions.

On Tuesday the 7th of October 2014 the 46th Infantry Group left Baldonnel for its six months deployment to the Golan Heights, Syria, and in the early hours of Wednesday morning troops from the 44th Infantry Group were reunited with family and friends in Casement Aerodrome.

On the Friday 21st of November the Air Corps hosted the rotation from UNIFIL with 181 personnel from the 45th Infantry Group returning from Lebanon, having successfully completed its 6 months deployment, while their replacements, the 47th Infantry Group departed to its area of operations to continue Ireland's ongoing commitment to restoring peace and security in the region.

Air Corps working with Ordnance Survey Ireland

Recently the Air Corps have been working closely with Ordnance Survey Ireland in a unique operation to verify the size of Ireland's footprint.

Utilising Air Corps helicopters the National Mapping Agency have been able to place surveyors in previously inaccessible areas and create a new measuring point for the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured.

A Country's Territorial sea is a measure of 12 nautical miles from mean low-water line along this baseline and an exclusive economic zone (EEZ)

extends 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. Currently the island of Ireland itself covers 20,863,360 acres of land and over 220 million acres of marine and undersea territory. This marine environment is a fantastically valuable resource and, by using the Air Corps, Ireland's Territorial sea and EEZ will increase, as will the State's rights over the exploration and use of marine resources of this area.

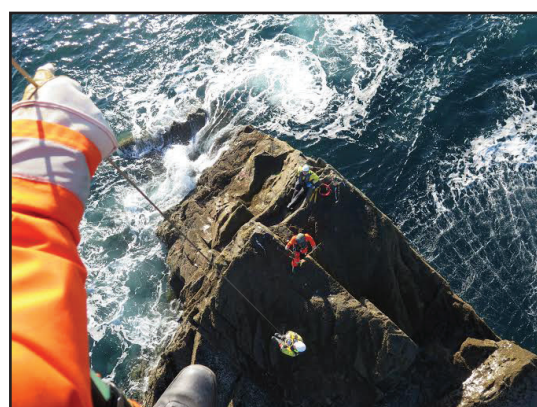


Casa Ambulance Mission:

A Casa CN235 recently completed the 100th Air Ambulance mission of 2014.



Troops boarding the Aircraft in Casement Aerodrome for deployment to the Golan Heights.



Ordnance Survey Operations

An Air Corps crew carrying out mapping duties in co-operation with the Ordnance Survey Office.

