



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



## The Link

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10<sup>TH</sup>  
Anniversary  
EDITION

### Message to the members of the Roger Casement Branch from the GOC Air Corps, Brig-General Paul Fry.

It is with great pleasure that I send my greetings to all members of ONE Roger Casement Branch and also record my congratulations to the Branch on their ten years publishing the LINK Newsletter. For any organization, effective communications are the lifeblood and lifeline to keeping members informed, engaged and ensuring the continued relevance and

survival of both the organization itself and its members. The Link has achieved this standard and you can be rightly proud of this achievement. Another source of pride is the sponsoring of each edition by a member thus allowing ONE funds to be channeled directly to the benefit of the ONE Hostels. Well done one and all!!

My warmest compliments also go to ONE Roger Casement Branch on embracing the social media concept and capability and using their online Branch website to publish its newsletter as well as using the traditional paper form to circulate it, thus ensuring its availability and relevance to all who live in this digital age! More than forty editions have been issued by the time you read this – go online and check the website as they are all available there. It is with confidence that I look forward to reading the next forty editions as I know that the editorial team will maintain the high quality that has been a hallmark of the Link throughout its life.

At the end of this year of significant year of 1916/2016 commemorations and events in which the Roger Casement Branch ONE have played their full and honorable part, I take this opportunity to acknowledge your continued commitment to the Air Corps and its former personnel, congratulate you on the strength and key activity of your Branch and send from the Office of the GOC on behalf of the Air Corps best wishes to all readers of The Link for a Peaceful, Merry Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year! Beir Bua!! Paul Fry, Brigadier General, General Officer Commanding the Air Corps and Director of Military Aviation.



### From The Chairman

2016 was a very special year for me personally, firstly being elected as Chairman of the Roger Casement Branch and secondly, honouring the 100th anniversary of the 1916 Rising by marching past the GPO with a number of RCB members, all extremely proud to be representing and wearing the RCB insignia and sharing the parade with our Air Corps Colleagues and the other veterans organisations.

We have had a very successful year to date, with a number of our branch members attending many events, including ceremonies in Europe at the site of the Battle of the Somme and in Flanders.

We achieved the best attendance to date at the Annual Mass and wreath laying ceremony held in Casement Aerodrome for our deceased Air Corps members and I would like to thank Brigadier General, Paul Fry, and the RSM and Mess President for the use of the NCO's mess for refreshments after the ceremony along with its availability for our monthly meetings throughout the year and finally, for allowing visitors to experience the wonderful Air Corps Museum.

Our Fuchsia fund relief programme was slightly down on previous years which we hope to correct in 2017 and beyond.

Christmas is a time for remembrance and this year we regretfully lost some very dear friends from our Air Corps family. We wish their families and those RCB members recovering from illness, a speedy recovery and peace and happiness at this time.

Finally, my sincere thanks to the committee for all their hard work during the year, and my Best Wishes to all RCB members and their families for a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year.

Michael Delaney, Chairman, RCB

### Editors Note

The Link has now reached its 10th anniversary. I wish to thank GOC Air Corps for his kind comments and best wishes as published in his letter above. Indeed our thanks is also due to the many serving members of the Air Corps who have provided tremendous support to the Branch during the past 10 years in particular to the various Press Officers and staff and also to 105 Sqdn. Photo Section for its valuable cooperation and assistance in supplying and digitising photos for the various editions of the Link. As a result of the increased communications systems which were introduced in early 2007 and the introduction of the Air Corps style head gear the Branch membership has steadily increased. We note that recently retired Air Corps members are joining the Branch recognising the close relationship with the Air Corps, they are happy to continue as members of ONE while retaining strong links within the Air Corps family.

Increased Branch membership ensures that the Branch can play a more important role in raising funds to support the primary objectives of the ONE in supporting disadvantaged former members of the Defence Forces.



Edition sponsored  
by a member of  
the 1956 DE class  
and a member of  
the 1956  
Apprentice Class





## ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH, CENTENARY YEAR VISIT TO THE SOMME AND FLANDERS.

A group of twenty RCB members and guests departed Dublin Airport and arrived in Brussels Airport in the afternoon of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016. The plan was to attend the Last-Post ceremony at the Menin Gate that evening, but due to delays on the journey to Ypres this was not possible.

The next day Saturday, we left the hotel to travel south to the Somme to attend the centenary remembrance of the liberation of Ginchy and Guillemont. The ceremony was co-ordinated by the Somme Association of Northern Ireland and the Royal Irish Regiment commanded by Lt-Col Kenny. This was the seventh year that the RCB participated in the memorial service.

The Branch standard bearers were Noel Murphy and P.J. Brennan. Frank Walshe carried the Association Standard of the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment. Other standards on parade apart from the French were the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers the Royal Irish Fusiliers Association and the Portadown Royal British Legion from Co. Down. An Irish Army colour party carried the National Flag. The Royal Irish Regiment colour party carried the Queens Colour and their regimental standard. French veterans carried an assortment of standards.

There were various dignitaries in attendance which included Ms. Heather Humphries Minister for the Gaeltacht and Law reform, Mr John Kennedy from the minister's office as was the representatives of the Glasnevin Trust. The Northern Ireland executive was represented by the Secretary of State. The M.C. paid tribute to all the people who worked to make this day possible from Queen Elizabeth II to President Mary McAleese and Mr Tom Burke MBE, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers Association and Mr Glen Barr.

During the service the exhortation was delivered jointly by Lt-Gen. David The O'Morchoe, President RBL, Ireland and by the RCB Deputy Chairman Paddy O'Meara who recited the prayer in Irish at the request of the Somme Association. The ceremony concluded with the playing of the National Anthems of Ireland, Great Britain and France.

At the conclusion of the main ceremony a wreath was laid at the French war memorial nearby and a memorial stone was unveiled in remembrance of the Channel Islanders who fell at Guillemont and Ginchy, many of whom served in the Irish regiments.

Our battlefield tour continued with various highlights. The impromptu singing of 'The Green Fields of France' at the grave of 'Willie Mc Bride' was impressive. In the Somme region the group also visited the Somme's principal memorial at Thiepval, the Ulster Tower memorial to the 36<sup>th</sup> Ulster Division, the Newfoundland Memorial at Beaumont Hamel, the Lochnagar Crater and the Devonshire Trench Cemetery in Mametz where Mike Whelan read a poem at the grave of poet Noel Hodgson.

Later that evening the group returned to Ypres after a long but rewarding day in the Somme.

The following day Sunday, back in Flanders, the group travelled to the Island of Ireland Peace Park in Messines and to the site of the 1914 Christmas Truce football match.

Ms. Fran Kenny from Co. Wexford came on the trip primarily to visit both her grand-uncles graves, being the first in the family to do so, which proved emotional but very fulfilling for Fran and all present. Her uncles were Ptes. Peter and Michael Cush 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment. Both brothers are buried in cemeteries approximately 5 Kms apart. Her initiative was prompted in her home village of Cranford by projects which researched local soldiers who died in the Great War. The RCB Branch members in uniform performed a dignified service at both graves and piper John Brennan played an appropriate lament at the gravesides.



*The Celtic Cross erected by the people of Cork in memory of all Munster men killed in the Great War which is located in the grounds of Ypres Cathedral.*

In the afternoon the group visited several sites in Flanders and performed graveside ceremonies including the grave of Francis Ledwidge, the Field Ambulance station where John Mc Crea, the author of the most popular WW1 poem 'In Flanders Fields' served as a doctor. We also visited the Tyne Cot Cemetery and the trenches located at Hill 62 near Sanctuary Wood.

The Flanders part of our tour was a particular highlight which concluded with the Menin Gate ceremony. The Roger Casement Branch standard was paraded as was the flag of the Four Provinces. Frank Walshe carried the 18<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Regiment standard. The band of the Grenadier Guards provided the music and their OCS laid a wreath at the Grenadier's memorial panel at the memorial. The Grenadier's band having amongst other pieces played Elgar's solemn 'Nimrod' and both the Belgian and British National Anthems before marching-off with their regimental march 'The British Grenadiers,' saluting their memorial plaque and the colours on parade as they marched past.

On Monday, on the final day of the visit, after checking out of the hotel, the coach proceeded to the Le Toure monument in Northern France where many Irish soldiers are remembered. This memorial is very close to the site where the Royal Munster Fusiliers went over the top a hundred years ago having had a General Absolution and blessing from Father Gleeson the evening before. Over 800 troops were in attendance and are reported to have sung the Hymn, 'Hail Queen of Heaven' during the service. The following evening not much more than 200 'Munsters' were alive and fit to attend a service at the same spot.

The RCB group, in honour of the dead Irishmen, sang 'Hail Queen of Heaven' at the same spot.

The group then continued to Brussels Airport for the flight back to Dublin after a memorable and enjoyable visit to Flanders and the Somme during the Somme centenary year.



# Somme/Ypres Annual Visit 2016



Group at the Island of Ireland Peace Park, Flanders.



Graveside service at Bailleul Communal Cemetery for Peter Cush KIA March 22, 1915 age 29.



Graveside service at Westoutre Military Cemetery for Michael Cush, KIA August 18, 1918 age 17.



The memorial to the 16th Irish Division located outside the church in the village of Guillemont, Somme



The Exhortation was delivered jointly by Lt-Gen David The O'Morchoe and by Paddy O'Meara Deputy Chairman, Roger Casement Branch.



Michael Whelan reading a poem at the grave of WW1 poet William Noel Hodgson in the Devonshire Trench Cemetery, Mametz, Somme.



The Irish Colour Party provided by members of the P.D.F.



Frank Walshe on parade at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres.



## FROM THE ARMY TO THE ABBEY..... Clive Geraghty



The two questions which actors are most frequently asked are, "How do you remember the lines and How do you become an actor?". The first question is difficult to answer, and the second nearly impossible to answer to the questioners satisfaction. When it is explained that there is no simple straightforward route into our profession, and that nearly every actor had a different way into it, and that a large amount of luck is also required, disbelief and suspicion of one's motives are usually to be seen on the face of the aspiring actor. This suspicion is intensified when the young person is advised to continue their education at all costs, if possible to university level, thereby ensuring at least an ability to read.

While I cannot say that a coverless Penguin paperback started me on the path to the stage, one certainly provided me with a nudge in the right direction by complementing my already strong interest in literature, books, plays, and poetry.

One day while I was serving in the Air Corps, I was billet orderly, and I found a copy of John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men" and "Cannery Row", two great novels in one volume. It bore its owner's name on the fly-leaf, a chap I didn't know, and who had recently deserted, so I knew he wouldn't be looking for it back. His name was written in a fine copperplate hand, David L O'Driscoll, Technical Wing, Air Corps, Baldonnel.

"Of Mice and Men" stunned me. It was the first real adult book I had come across, and Steinbeck's tragic tale of the two down and out pals, who dream of owning their own small farm was read in one sitting, the sweeping of the billet was hurriedly done before the Orderly Officer came to inspect our dingy home from home, then on to the comic masterpiece Cannery Row.

If memory serves me right I next bought "The Grapes of Wrath", Steinbeck's history of the Joad family among the migrant fruit pickers of California, and week after week, by buying and borrowing, I moved on to Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, and Waugh, and the other great writers readily available in paperback. I spent my annual leave one year reading "War and Peace", and even though the pronunciation of the characters names and patronyms eluded me, I devoured Tolstoy, and later Dostoevsky.

Time passed, and I became increasingly disenchanted by Army life, so to help pass the time, and, I suppose, to give me some more active participation in matters artistic, I joined an amateur dramatic society, and this is where luck comes into the story. The play we did was "The Heiress", and I had a small part. However, the producer was a professional actor, Ivan Hanly of the R.T.E Players, and he advised me to join a school of acting. So off I hied me hence to a renowned Academy of Theatre Arts, and enrolled. After a month or so one of the teachers, Ray McNally, mentioned that extras were required in the Abbey

Theatre for their next play, and hastily organising some leave from the Defence Forces, I presented myself at the Queen's Theatre (then the home of the Abbey) for inspection. On entering this old theatre I was nearly knocked over by the pungent smell of size, but the aura of magic was nearly tangible, and I was hooked.

I never went back to the Academy, and soon a School of Acting was set up in the Abbey under its head Director, Frank Dermody. For a couple of years I played with the Abbey Company and attended classes in the school, until eventually I bought myself out of the Army and became a full time professional actor.

Frank Dermody's greatest attribute as a director and teacher was his ability to pass on his love of the skills involved in great acting, and to inspire young actors to create for their audience evenings of great joy in the theatre. And if the audience is given some food for thought as well, then that's a bonus.

The bonus for me is that, not only have I made my living from doing what I like best, but I have done it in the company of some of the best actors and directors of my generation, in some of the best plays ever written.

Now maybe this would all have happened even if I had not found Davy O'Driscoll's book in that dusty Flying Wing billet, but it's yellowing pages will always sit on my bookshelves, as a lucky charm maybe, or a reminder of how a simple serendipitous event lead me to a life-long love of books and fine writing. And sometimes, seeing it on the shelf among it's more imposing looking companions, I wonder whatever happened to David L O'Driscoll, the chap from the 1955 class of apprentices, who felt it necessary to desert from the Air Corps, to leave his friends, and his book, behind him.

Clive was a member of the 1957 Air Corps Apprentice Class and is a regular contributor to the Link Newsletter. Clive has appeared in numerous stage, radio and TV programs including Sunday Miscellany and Fair City.





## Annual Mass 2016

There was a large attendance at the Annual Mass for deceased members of the Roger Casement Branch which was held in the Garrison Church in Casement Aerodrome on Sunday October 9<sup>th</sup>. The Celebrant was Fr. Jerry Carroll CF who was assisted by Rev Addie Patterson. Music was provided by the Newcastle choir and the salutes were delivered by Piper John Brennan.

The Mass was attended by Brig-Gen Paul Fry, GOC Air Corps and by a large number of representatives from other O.N.E. Branches from the Leinster Region.

During the Mass individual candles were lit in a dignified and moving service in memory of the 25 former members of the Air Corps who passed away during the past 12 months.

The offertory gifts were presented by family members of the late Brig-Gen Jerry O'Connor, the late Michael Reddy and the late Niall Jordan.

The Memorial Book was presented by Paddy Goodman.

The wreath laying service took place at the O.N.E. Memorial adjacent to the Church immediately after the Mass.

A wreath was laid on behalf of deceased members by Brig-Gen Fry and Branch Chairman Michael Delaney. A wreath was also laid in memory of Roger Casement by Branch President Jim Nolan and Michael McDonald, Mullingar Branch, representing Mick Carroll the O.N.E. National President. Other wreaths were laid by the members of the Naval Service and for the deceased members of the 1956 Air Corps Apprentice Class who were celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary over the Mass weekend. The 1956 wreath was laid by Paddy Mullen, Mary Mahon, widow of the late John Mahon and Maureen Walsh widow of the late Des Walsh.

Refreshments were available after the ceremonies in the NCO's Mess.



*The Colour party and wreaths at the O.N.E. Memorial.*



*The Guard of Honour included members from various ONE Branches at the wreath laying service.*



*Paddy Mullen, with Mary Mahon widow of the late John Mahon and Maureen Maher widow of the late Eamonn Maher laying a wreath on behalf of the 1956 Apprentice Class who were celebrating their 60th Anniversary.*





# PICTURE GALLERY



**Leopardstown Hospital fund raising event with the RAF Association.**  
L/R. John Connolly RAF, Noel Murphy,  
Pete Mc Williams RAF, Tony Roe, Frank Donnelly



**FUCHSIA COLLECTION.** Branch Members, Eamonn Tierney,  
Frank Donnelly, Finnbar Lyons taking part in the annual Fuchsia collection  
at the Swords Shopping Centre.



Branch members John Clarke, Chairman Michael Delaney, Pat  
Lynch, Robert O'Brien, attended the **ONE Members Dinner**



**VETERANS DAY 2016** Branch members Peter McGlynn, Chairman  
Michael Delaney, Frank Walshe and Frank Donnelly attended  
the Annual Veterans Day Ceremonies on Sept. 20th in McKee Barracks.



**MILITARY ARCHIVES** Branch members visit Military Archives in  
Cathal Brugha Bks. L/R, F. Donnelly, R. Murphy,  
Capt. Daniel Ayotis, M. Murphy, G. McCann, PJ Brennan.



The annual  
clean-up of  
DH Dove 188  
Crash site near  
Shannon. L/R.  
Terry Kelly  
(1965 Apps)  
Mick Rushe  
(1966 Apps)  
Bill Ryan  
(1958 Apps)



Dove 188 Crash  
Site Clean-Up. L/R :  
P.O'Meara,  
B. Ryan,  
M. Rushe.



Niall O'Connor with Lt Eoin Troy,  
12Bn, Limerick at the 1916 unveiling  
ceremony in Ennis on 26 June, 2016.



## RARE DH VAMPIRE PHOTOGRAPH.

The photo of DH Vampire Air Corps 185 was taken on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1963 and appears to be the only air to air photograph of an Air Corps DH Vampire aircraft in existence. Vampire 185 was flying as Red 2 with Lt. Jim Casey as pilot, who was undergoing formation flight training with Capt. Tom McBennett.

The picture was taken from Vampire 193 the Red 1 aircraft, by Flight-Sgt Paddy O'Meara who was flying with the flight leader Comdt. Jerry O'Connor (later GOC Air Corps). Red 2 was called forward briefly by the Flight Commander to the lead position to facilitate the photograph. F/S O'Meara was the Senior NCO in Fighter Squadron at the time.

The photograph has appeared in several magazines and Air Corps publications. The original photograph which was in 35 MM slide format was taken with a German Regula King K G camera. The camera was presented by Paddy O'Meara to Flt. Sgt. Willy Barr, Senior NCO 105 Sqdn (Photo), No 1 Operations Wing in the Air Corps museum on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2016, 53 years after the event.



*Rare photo of an Air Corps Vampire T55 aircraft in-flight.*



*F/S O'Meara with Lt. Lar Smith in 1965*



*Paddy O'Meara presents the Regula Camera which he used to take the picture of V185 to F/S Willy Barr of 105 (Photo) Sqdn. In the Air Corps museum in October 2016, 53 years after the event.*

## Air Corps Reunions 2016

### 1966 CLASS 50TH REUNION.



*Members of the 1966 (30th) Apprentice Class celebrated their 50th Anniversary*



### 1956 CLASS 60TH REUNION.

*Members of the 1956 (20th) Apprentice Class celebrated their 60th Anniversary*

*L/R Back, P. Donnelly, P. O'Meara, J. Carpenter, P. Mullen, Front L/R, N. Madigan, N. O'Kennedy, E. Byrne, B. Kane, J. Martin, P. McDonald.*



### 1956 DE CLASS

*The 1956 Direct Entrants Class celebrated its 60th Reunion.*





## Air Corps News

### Air Corps Cadet Training

The Air Corps Cadetship is an intense period of training and personal development, designed to produce the highest quality pilots capable of delivering the Air Corps' mission.

We would like to give you a small insight into this process by following the progression of the 33rd, 34th and 35th Air Corps Cadet Classes.

The 35th Class have recently joined the Irish Defence Forces and have commenced their Military Training with their Army and Irish Naval Service colleagues in the Military College in the Defence Forces Training Centre.

The 34th Class are completing their Ground School syllabus. They have successfully passed 6 of the 14 Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL) exams, the most recent being: Operational Procedures, Meteorology and Human Performance & Limitations. This theoretical foundation is crucial to achieve before beginning their flying training.

After much preparation, including military training, theoretical study, simulator sessions and 20 hours of Flying Training, the 33rd Class have reached the seminal milestone of "Wings Course Flight 020", better known as the first SOLO! This sees the Cadet "signing out" an aircraft for the first time and becoming an Aircraft Commander.

Following a pre-solo check conducted by the Chief Flying Instructor, the solo flight consists of flying three circuit patterns around the aerodrome. This marks the first significant "Gate" in the Wings portion of the Cadetship. The class will now progress to the Aerobatic phase, designed to improve their handling skills.



Front: 33rd Cadet Class: Centre, 34th Cadet Class;  
 Back, 35th Cadet Class.

### 9th Oct 2016

102 Squadron was tasked with an urgent air ambulance mission this morning, the infant patient travelling for an organ transplant operation.



Learjet 258 of 102 Sqdn.

### 16th Oct 2016

Yesterday 301 Squadron completed an urgent neonatal Air Ambulance to London. The flight time from Casement Aerodrome to London Heliport took 1 hour and 40 minutes. The transfer time from the helipad to Great Ormond Street Hospital was a mere 15 mins.



Much planning required before, during and arrival of each Ambulance mission.



Air Corps AW139 At  
 The London Heliport

### 19th Oct 2016

This week No 3 Operations Wing conducted a Defence Helicopter Landing Site Manager (DHLSM) course for nineteen students across the Irish Defence Forces. The purpose of the course is to provide Landing Point Commanders (LPC's) with the skills to manage complicated landing sites, involving multiple aircraft and extended load operations during both day and night.

The course was instructed by 3 members of the UK's Joint Air Delivery and Evaluation Unit ensuring Defence Forces LPCs operate in accordance with best international practices. Well done to all!



### 6th Oct 2016.

**Casa**  
 Stunning shot from the photographer's window on 101 squadron's Airbus Military CASA CN235 as it approached the East Coast following a Maritime Patrol. Thanks to Sgt Paul Maguire for the photograph!

