



# ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH OGLAIGH NAISIUNTA na hEIREANN



## The Link

Issue 02/08  
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**Branch Chairman: P.O'Meara.** **Hon.Secretary : B.Downey.**  
Ph. 086 8500316 Ph. 01 8420958  
omeara.pa@gmail.com downeybp@eircom.net

**Hon Treasurer :E. Tierney**  
Ph. 01 8475206  
eamonn.tierney@gmail.com

**PRO: J.Clarke**  
Ph. 01-4670688



*Former Fighter Squadron personnel, who served together in the 1960's, met up at the Alouette stand down ceremonies in Baldonnel.*

*L to R : Paddy O'Meara, Don Brennock, BG Jerry O'Connor, Joe Clavin.*

### Secretary's Notes

The Branch AGM was held in the N.C.O's mess in Baldonnel on Jan 17th.2008.

A large attendance was present and the occasion was enhanced with the presence of the National President of ONET, Jim Nolan.

Paddy O'Meara Chairman, Ben Downey Secretary and John Clarke Vice-Chairman were re-elected to their respective positions. Eamonn Tierney was elected Treasurer to replace John Berns who has stepped down after ten years in the position.

John Clarke agreed to take on the role of PRO and events organisers will be Paddy Mc Loughlin and Mick Prince. Jim Conway has agreed to continue as coordinator of the ONE monument in Baldonnel.

A good discussion on various Branch topics followed particularly in relation to communications following the introduction of 'The New Link' and support was expressed for the setting up of a dedicated Web Site for the Branch.

Tribute was paid to John Berns for the Trojan work he performed during his ten years as Branch Treasurer.

### From the Chairman...

Following the successful completion of the AGM in February, I am pleased that the Branch approved a significant donation of €1,000.00 to O.N.E.T. headquarters in support of their provision of accommodation for needy ex servicemen and women. This payment was in addition to the annual membership contributions.

A donation to the Baldonnel Church renovation fund was also approved at the meeting.

The ability of the Branch to make such donations is a strong reflection of the strength and commitment of the members to O.N.E.T.

Our long standing Honorary Treasurer, John Berns stepped down at the AGM having held the position for ten years. John was a member of the 1952 Apprentice class and served a total of eight years in the Air Corps. After his period in the Apprentice School he worked in the Electrical Shop for a further six years.

John joined Aer Lingus in 1960 where he worked in the Avionics/Engineering Department for 32 years.

All the members appreciate the hard work carried out by John on their behalf during his period in office and wish him a long and healthy retirement. I wish our new Honorary Treasurer, Eamonn Tierney every success in the position..

Paddy O'Meara  
Branch Chairman



*Edition Sponsored by  
an Anonymous Ex-Air Corps Pilot*

# The Prize - Clive Geraghty

Nearly fifty years ago I won a prize, a flight in an aeroplane. This prize was given every year to the top half dozen apprentices graduating from the Air Corps School in Baldonnel. Overjoyed at the news, I imagined myself putting on a flying suit, donning leather helmet and goggles, and being strapped into the cramped cockpit of a Spitfire, doing loops and rolls at 450 mph behind the great Rolls Royce Merlin. The reality was a little less dashing, but no less hair raising. Parked on the tarmac, waiting to take me up in the air for the first time was an Avro Anson, No.141, a two engined workhorse far from the first flush of youth. It could hold nine passengers in minimum comfort, that is, you had a seat. Fortunately, it was a warm summers day, so the cold wasn't too bad, although one experienced member of the crew, the photographer, wore his army greatcoat.

We trundled along the runway, eventually the tail lifted, and when we hit 70mph we took off, and climbed. The purpose of the flight was to do aerial photography along the east coast, an area well known for the turbulence of the air above it, and the Anson seemed to find every air pocket between Howth Head and Tuskar



Rock. We'd drop like a stone for what seemed like ages, we bucked and ducked, we shuddered, slewed, yawed, but when we regained our flightpath the mission resumed. I had never imagined that the wings on a plane could flex so much, moving up and down as the air buffeted them, every spar of this timber and metal box seemed to have a life of its own, groaning at the pressures exerted on them. It was hairy, it was scary, but I loved it.

The first Ansons had been delivered to the Corps in 1933, but the one I was in was a relative baby, it had arrived in 1946. At that time it was reckoned to be at the cutting edge of technology because it was the first aircraft in Irish colours that had retractable undercarriage. The unfortunate

pilot had to turn a small handle a hundred and fifty times to get the gear up, and legend has it that most pilots were happy to get the wheels halfway up, thus saving a lot of handle turning.

A few years ago, on a visit to Baldonnel a friend suggested that I might take a look at a recent piece of restoration work that had been carried out. I went into number two hangar, and there, restored to near showroom if not flying condition, was Avro Anson 141. A crew had worked in their own time, using skills that were deemed redundant a quarter of a century before, to restore this very old plane. There it stood now, in its silver livery, a reminder of my bumpy, scary prize, all those years ago.

## Reunions and Anniversaries

2008 will again be a busy year for reunions.

The 1958 Air Corps Apprentice Class and the 1958 Direct Entrance Class are planning major events in October. The 6th Short Service Wings course will also celebrate their 50th anniversary during 2008 (P.Moran, E.Pearson & M.Greene RIP). We feature the 1958 Apprentice Class in this edition, details of the DE class will be featured in a later edition. *Contact Jerry Mc Carthy (01 8401045) for details of the reunion celebrations which are planned for October.*



Back: J.O'Keefe, T.O'Mahoney, J.Mc Carthy  
Front: P.Noonan, F.Oakes, M.McComish



Tony Roe presents a beaten copper shield with the Air Corps flash to the Air Corps Museum. Also present Dick Murphy. Tony bought the shield in a Dublin charity shop about 10 years ago for €2.00 and would love to hear from anyone with knowledge of the shields production.



Back: C.Sullivan, M.O'Rourke  
Front: T.Roe, J.O'Keefe



1958 Apprentice Group

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW



1953 Apprentice group taken at the 1982 reunion with Mick Prince.

Back : M.Garrett,J.Mulvey,P.J.McCaffrey,L.Tiernan,D.Kennedy,M.Derham,N.Lavers,E.McInerney RIP

Front: E.Lally, D.O'Regan, Tom Purcell. In the centre is Mick Prince

## Social Events

The Social Committee is planning a visit to the historic Newgrange Passage Graves for members of the Branch, Details as follows:

Proposed Date : April 15,2008 (To be confirmed)

Departure : From West County Hotel, Chapelizod at 0930 by bus

Arrive : Bru na Boinne Visitor Centre

Cost : €20.00 per person

*As numbers are strictly limited, tickets will be issued on a first come first served basis*

*Contact any of the following without delay to reserve a place:*

*Paddy Mc Loughlin: 01 6265156*

*Mick Prince : 01 6711610*



*A new blazer crest has been designed for members of the Roger Casement Branch.*

*The crest features improved writing and clarity.*

*The new crest is available from Jim Canavan . Price €10.00*

*Jim may be contacted at 01-4551393*

## C U I M H N I M I S

Let us remember those who  
have died recently;

Brendan (Barney) Malone

Martin Stapleton

Anthony O'Reilly

David Murphy



### BLUE MAX

As mentioned in the previous edition of The Link, considerable interest has been expressed in the proposal to organise a reunion to celebrate the Sixties Film Period. Many hundreds of Air Corps, Defence Forces and civilian personnel were engaged in the making of the Blue Max, Darling Lily and other movies.

We invite any person who participated in the making of the films to get in touch with the Branch Chairman or with any member of the committee.



## Air Corps News

AW139 24/7 SERVICE LAUNCHED

*On the 1st February 2008, the Air Corps launched a 24/7 Agusta Westland 139 helicopter 'on call' service located on base at Casement Aerodrome. The helicopter will be available at one hours notice to carry out defined Defence Forces tasks.*

*Specified tasks include availability for all operations in support of the Army and Naval Service. In conjunction with a Service Level Agreement with the Health Service Executive, the aircraft will also be available for inter hospital patient transfer utilising an integrated Lifeport technology stretcher and associated medical life support equipment. Additionally, the aircraft will be available for Aid to Civil Power and Aid to Civil Community taskings as are deemed necessary.*

*The establishment of a No 3 Operations Wing 24/7 duty aircraft and crew based at Baldonnel is a further milestone in the modernisation of the Air Corps as the Wing progresses through its fleet replacement programme and develops further capabilities and roles associated with a 21st century air arm. Previously, this role was carried out by the Alouette III before its retirement from service in September 2007, but due to aircraft limitations, the service provided was restricted to daylight hours only. The final two AW139 aircraft which will bring the fleet total to six are scheduled for delivery before end 2008.*

*Attached photo shows Lt Finbar McArdle, No 3 Operations Wing demonstrating the Lifeport stretcher system of the 'on call' AW139 to medical staff from Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children Crumlin during a recent fundraising effort for sick children in association with 98FM & OLHCC).*

