



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



## The Link

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Honorary Branch President: **James Nolan**

*Branch Members visit Military Archives in Cathal Brugha Barracks in February 2017.*

*L/R: Mike Whelan, Noel Murphy, Tony Kearns, P.J.Brennan, Peter McGlynn, Jim Perkins, Frank Donnelly, P.J.McCaffrey, Tony Roe, D.J.McCarthy (Military Archives).*



### ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH

In late 1979 it was decided to form a Branch of the Organisation of National Ex-Servicemen and Women (O.N.E) which would have close links with the Air Corps and have Baldonnel as its base. In this way, the Branch through the O.N.E. would provide help and assistance where necessary to the camp personnel at the time of their discharge as well as supporting the O.N.E. hostels for needy former members of the Defence Forces.

With the kind permission of the GOC Air Corps at the time, the Branch was named The Roger Casement Branch and was permitted to hold its monthly meetings in Casement Aerodrome. From that meagre beginning 38 years ago, the Roger Casement Branch has grown from strength to strength. The Branch is very prominent and is held in high regard within the O.N.E. system.

The success of the Branch stems primarily from the support and activities of the members in addition to the support and co-operation from GOC Air Corps and the personnel in Casement Aerodrome

Apart from keeping to the mission of maintaining contact with former colleagues, a number of significant events have been undertaken by the Roger Casement Branch including the following;

- The creation of the O.N.E Memorial Garden with the unique Monument to the memory of the deceased former personnel who have served with the Air Corps.
- An Annual Mass of Commemoration which is held in October each year in the Garrison Church in Casement Aerodrome.
- A Memorial Book containing the inscribed names of the deceased personnel is located in a special cabinet in the church.
- The presentation of a unit flag designed by a member of the Branch to the Apprentice Training School.
- A presentation to the GOC Air Corps of a book of copies of the letters of Roger Casement.

The GOC Air Corps allocated an office in the Museum area for use by the Branch.

Each year a number of trips to places of historical interest are arranged as well as events which provide an opportunity for former colleagues to meet and renew acquaintances. The annual Christmas Lunch creates an opportunity for retired personnel who have previously served in the Air Corps to socialise and renew acquaintances with each other. This is very popular and has become a favorite reunion of former colleagues. Over 100 colleagues and friends attend the annual event.

Personnel who have served in any part of the Defence Forces are very welcome to join the Roger Casement Branch and to attend the Branch Meeting which is held on the third Thursday of each month at 20.00 hours in the NCO's Mess, Casement Aerodrome



*The stand-down parade for GOC Air Corps, Brig-Gen Paul Fry was held in Casement Aerodrome on May 25th, 2017. We wish to extend our appreciation to Brig-Gen. Fry for the great support and cooperation which he gave to the Branch during his term as GOC. We wish him a long and happy retirement.*

Edition sponsored by a member of  
the 1959 Apprentice Class





# News Items

## JOHNNY BOYLE - REMEMBERED

Finnbar Lyons

Many of our older members who served in the Air Corps between 1949 and 1955 will fondly remember the great all round sportsman, Johnny Boyle. Our Link editor, Paddy O Meara has previously done a profile on him in the 3/07 edition of the Link and more recently in the 03/15 edition where he was listed among the select band of Air Corps members who won an all-Ireland football medal. Johnny also had 7 international Basketball caps, and was a key member of the Air Corps all-army rugby winning team in 1953.

Sadly Johnny passed away on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 2017 at his home in the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, where he has resided for many years with his family. He was interred in Australia.

A special memorial mass was held in Clane, Co. Kildare on the 25<sup>th</sup> of March to remember Johnny. He lived in the Suncroft area of Kildare prior to joining the Air Corps and played for the Kildare minor team before playing for Dublin. The ceremony was transmitted via live webcast to Johnny's family in Australia. The attendance included Johnny's extended family in Ireland, and a large representation from the GAA fraternity in Kildare, Dublin, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath, and from Johnny's old club in Dublin, Clanna Gael. Members of the Roger Casement Branch were also in attendance.

Dublin GAA County Board sent down the Sam Maguire Cup for the occasion and it was brought to the altar by the Kildare GAA legend Pa Connolly along with a Kildare and a Dublin football jersey. When Johnny left the Air Corps in 1955, he worked for his Dublin team club mate Dennis Mahony in the motor business, before emigrating. Sadly Dennis also passed away recently -on the 2/April 2017.

*Go ndéana Dhía trócaire ar a anam.*

Note; A full profile of Johnny is available in the Link Newsletter 03/07 on the Branch Website. [www.oneaircorpsbranch.com](http://www.oneaircorpsbranch.com)



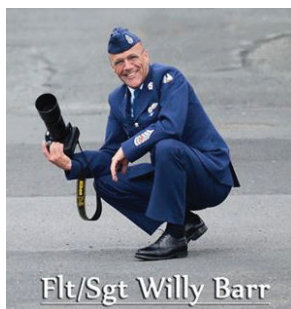
*The late Johnny Boyle with his grandson in Australia 2007*



*Branch members Finnbar Lyons and Paddy Goodman holding the Sam Maguire Cup which was on parade at Johnny Boyle's memorial service. Johnny was a member of the Dublin All Ireland winning team in 1958.*

## Flight-Sgt Willy Barr recently retired as NCO i/c Air Corps Photo Section

Willy and all the staff in the Photo section have given tremendous support to the Roger Casement Branch particularly in providing information and expertise with the production of its Quarterly Newsletter during the past 10 years. We wish Willy a long and happy retirement.



*Members of the Roger Casement Branch attended the Farewell presentation to F/S Willy Barr.*

## Collection season has commenced



*Branch Treasurer Pat Lynch and PRO Peter Mc Glynn on duty at the Branch collection day in the Mill Rd, Shopping Centre Clondalkin.*

## A.N.Z.A.C. Dawn Service



*A number of Branch members attended the ANZAC Dawn Service which was held in Grangegorman Cemetery on April 25th at 0630 hrs.*

*I/r : Noel Murphy, Denis Barry, Col. Parker, Australia, Capt Williams New Zealand, Frank Donnelly.*

## Frank Walshe recalls the visits of former US Presidents to Ireland:

The election of Donald Trump as US president was mired in controversy not least the transition of power from the Obama administration. While not intending to write a book review on a recent publication 'Three days in January' author Bret Baird serves as somewhat of a review of the Eisenhower presidency; in essence it details to some extent events surrounding the transition of power from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to John F. Kennedy.

During our service in the Air Corps many of you may remember that both of these famous United States presidents crossed our paths. At the time Irish troops were heavily engaged on United Nations overseas missions. The Eastern Command was perhaps over stretched at this time so it fell to the Air Corps to fill in on ceremonial and other duties such as Guards of Honour not to mention *Claffey parties* (funeral escorts). Around this time, we were detailed to Aras an Uachtarán to line the avenue inside the presidential compound to honour the arrival of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy. I have a distinct memory even 54 years hence, of JFK standing in his limousine passing through our ranks. He was tanned and wore a navy suit. Having passed from the public view he remained standing in appreciation of our Guard of Honour.

Kennedy was the first serving American President to visit Ireland in 1963 although he had visited briefly in his earlier years. Eisenhower visited Ireland in 1962 after his second term in office. He came on a private family visit so he was not afforded a formal welcome by inspecting a Guard of Honour on arrival. As a former U.S. President he was however surrounded by considerable security. He was like Kennedy accommodated in the American ambassadorial residence in the Phoenix Park and had a US Army helicopter at his disposal for touring the country. The helicopter was based at Baldonnell. Many who served at that time may remember that we got our first 'flip' on a chopper in that aircraft.

I was reminded of these events when the author of the book "Three days in January" was recently interviewed on AmericanTV. Kennedy succeeded Eisenhower to the White House. Eisenhower had remembered his transition to high office from Harry Truman. He had no formal or informal discussions with Truman before the take-over. In fact Truman had not even invited him to the White House for coffee. Eisenhower was determined that unlike Truman this was not his way of handing over high office to his successor. He met with Kennedy on many occasions in the transition period.

Contrast the differences in character and background between both these great leaders. Eisenhower a former five star General and Supreme



*A US Army UH-1 Iroquois (HUEY) Helicopter was based in Baldonnell during former US President Eisenhower's visit to Ireland in 1962.*

Allied Commander in Europe had commanded 'Operation Overlord' the invasion of the Normandy beaches on D- day 6 June 1944. He had under his command Field-Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery and General Omar Bradley both with enormous egos; the former at least believed he should have been the overall commander. Kennedy had served in WW 2 as a junior naval officer; commanding a small naval vessel. However he was an experienced politician and had served as the Senator for Massachusetts. He was of a very influential political family; his father had been the United States ambassador to the Court of Saint James (GB) during WW2. President Eisenhower's family had not been so influential being born in Kansas in a strongly religious household. He chose the army as a career entering West Point and graduating in the middle of the class of 1915.

Many may have forgotten events of 54 years ago when we were involved in the visit to Ireland of both of these world leaders. The consultation between Kennedy and Eisenhower did not cease with the new President assuming office. He continued to consult if in a limited way with Eisenhower on major national issues.

We trust that the present incumbent will take due regard of the good practises and courtesies which have existed between previous US Presidents.

### Obituary Brendan (Ben)Downey

Ben was a member of the Air Corps 1945 Boy Apprentice Class and hailed from Kilkenny, leaving in 1954 having attained the rank of Sergeant. He joined Aer Lingus with several other members of his class and was quickly promoted to the technical supervisory ranks. He was one of the first engineers to be sent to the Boeing Aircraft Co. in Seattle for training on the first commercial jet aircraft to join the Aer Lingus fleet- the Boeing 720. Ben was an outstanding hurler in the Air Corps and he also played Hockey having played for some of the great Air Corps and Aer Lingus Hockey Teams.

Ben was a staunch member of the Roger Casement Branch and carried out Trojan work during his ten year period as the Branch Honorary Secretary.

Ben sadly passed away in Beaumont Hospital on March 12th, 2017 after a short illness.

Members of the Roger Casement Branch provided a guard of Honour and the Branch Piper played a lament at his funeral.

He will be sadly missed by his Family, Former work colleagues and his friends in O.N.E.

Ar dheis lamh Dé go raibh a Anam dilis.



### 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.



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

**BRENDAN DOWNEY   ANDREW O'NEILL   GRAHAM GILBERT   PATRICK MCNALLY (COL)**  
**PAUL ORMSBY (RESCUE 116)   CIARAN SMITH (RESCUE 116)**



*Our deepest sympathies are extended to the families and colleagues of the crew of Rescue 116 following the tragic incident in Blacksod.*

*Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of our two former Air Corps colleagues Paul Ormsby and Ciaran Smith, we pray that their remains will be returned to their families soon.*

## Air Corps News

**6 May 2017**



We in the Irish Air Corps have a very special relationship with those working in the Emergency Medical Services, dating back to our first Air Ambulance flight in 1964. Today we continue to provide an inter hospital aeromedical service, carrying out almost 100 such transfers every year and the Emergency Aeromedical Service is providing advanced medical care and rapid transport for critically ill and isolated patients across the country.

We are extremely proud of the work we do with our colleagues in the National Ambulance Service (NAS), combining the expertise of both services resulting in better outcomes for patients.

This week saw a group of us attending the excellently organised EMS Gathering in Kinsale, bringing multiple stakeholders in the EMS family together with the goal of *Inspiring, Learning and Enjoying*.

On Thursday two Crew Resource Management instructors facilitated a Learning With Leisure session in Kinsale Harbour, teaching some principles of CRM and its application in emergency medicine.

On Friday one of our EC135 helicopters provided the centre piece for a medical scenario in James' Fort.

Well done to all involved in organising such a fantastic EMS G17 and thanks to Kieran Minihaue for the photos.

Irish Defence Forces, National Ambulance Service (NAS), EMS Gathering, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC)

**6 May 2017**

The Ox Mountains are currently ablaze and we are helping to battle the flames along with local crews. Our Bambi Bucket can accurately deliver over 1000 litres of water, taken from local water sources, offering a unique weapon when battling wild fires in rural locations.



**19 May 2017**



Today, #1 Operations Wing and "#Charlie253" made a piece of history by passing 20,000 flying hours while on a Maritime Patrol of Ireland's Exclusive Economic Zone. It continues to extend its status as the hardest working Casa CN235 within the Airbus Defence and Space worldwide fleet. Our technical and support crews across the Irish Air Corps have earned a reputation for excellence and this achievement is testament, especially, to the dedicated personnel of #103 Squadron who have ensured that this old aircraft continues to perform its duties for the State. Indeed, after landing and posing for some pictures with Brigadier General Paul Fry and personnel from #1 Operations Wing, "#Charlie253" took to the skies again with a fresh crew to carry out the second Maritime Patrol of the day.

Since they entered service in 1994, both Casa aircraft have proven their capability, flexibility and value to the State as a surveillance platform, air ambulance, logistical transporter and more. We are very proud of what we continue to achieve with them and we are excited about the fleet renewal programme underway to ensure that the Irish Air Corps continues to provide the State with capable aerial platforms.

**22 May 2017**



Another busy day yesterday for Air Corps 112, one mission involved bringing an injured kite surfer from Achill Island back to University Hospital Galway.