



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

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Members of the RCB with GOC Air Corps Brig-Gen Sean Clancy following the Bremen Anniversary Service.

Presentation to Apprentice Training School



On the 29th June 2017, after the passing out of the 71st Air Corps Apprentice Class a motorised PTA 6A Cut-away engine was presented to the Apprentice School by the 23rd Apprentice Class some of whom were in attendance.

The decision for the engine came after consultation with the Air Corps knowing that such an impressive training aid would be of immense benefit to the training of apprentices in the future.

The GOC Air Corps Brig-Gen Paul Fry (on his last day of service) accepted the gift and expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Air Corps.

Included in the photo are members of the 23rd Class: Chris Roche, Tom Scott, Dermot Walsh, Martin Kenny, Tom Mooney.

From the Chairman....

On behalf of the members of the Roger Casement Branch I wish to extend our deepest sympathy to the family, fellow members of the 1958 Apprentice Class and a huge circle of friends following the death of Tony Roe.

Tony was a tireless worker on behalf of the O.N.E., IUNVA AND THE Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland. He served as a senior non-commissioned officer in the Air Corps before being commissioned, continuing his military service in the Transport Corps, retiring with the rank of Comdt. He was also an active member of the Balally Community and is responsible for the provision of an impressive scout/community Hall. Tony had a great interest in Military history especially in WW1 and organised with Paddy O'Meara annual trips to the WW1 sites in France and Flanders for members of the Roger Casement Branch. Tony had made arrangements to travel with the group on 29th June but regrettably it was not to be.

Deepest sympathy to his wife Lilian his family members. Ni bheidh a léithéad ann arís.

Michael Delaney, Chairman

RSM John McCormick announces his retirement

After 40 years of service to the Irish Defence Forces, at home and abroad, RSM John 'Spike' McCormick will shortly retire. Today, the officers, NCOs, Airmen & Women of No 5 Support Wing marked the occasion. RSM John 'Spike' McCormick's final act in uniform was to present service medals to No5 personnel. Fitting, that

one with such service should be the one to pin upon others, the medal recognising theirs. RSM McCormick joined the DF in 1978 in the 4Fd Arty Regt, since joining the Air Corps in 1991 he has served in No3 and ACC before becoming Station RSM in December 2005. We wish Spike all the best and thank him for his loyal and selfless contribution to the Air Corps.

Link Editor: RSM McCormick has been a tremendous supporter of the Roger Casement Branch in Encouraging retiring members to join, circulating Branch news items and activities and approving the use of the NCO'S Mess for branch meetings and functions. The Branch which is comprised of former Air Corps members has always been impressed with the standard of turn-out which has been maintained in all of the Guards of Honour and ceremonies in which his troops have participated. This has been a source of pride to the former members and is due in no small way to the supervision by the RSM. He was highly respected by all serving and former members.

We wish Spike a long and happy retirement and know that he will remain in touch with O.N.E. through his beloved SWAN Batt.



Edition sponsored by a member of the 1959 Apprentice Class



Extract from the Eulogy for Tony Roe's Requiem Mass
which was written and delivered by Cpl. Michael Whelan, Museum Curator, Historian and Poet.

I want to thank Tony's wife Lillian and their family for sharing him with everyone, for allowing me to be close by him in the last weeks of his life and for the opportunity to speak about him today. I am holding a Peacekeeping commemorative badge produced by the Defence Forces this year on the 60th Anniversary of Ireland's commitment to the United Nations 1958-2018¹, the same years of Tony's service to the military and to Ireland – the year he joined the Air Corps as an apprentice to this year when he passed away. I think this is quite significant, he always served the Defence Forces, he served the community, and he was a peacekeeper till the final moments and still is. But Tony was greater than all these things too, he was my mentor, as he was to many, many others, and I will miss him.

For the last 10 years Commandant Tony Roe (ret^d) was a volunteer in the Air Corps Museum at Baldonnel – in the exact same place he began his military and aviation career 60 years ago this year. He helped me on many occasions and events, he was part of the heritage team. Tony and I presented lectures, exhibitions and walking tours together, we visited schools, historical associations and libraries introducing everything from World War One to Irish involvement with the United Nations. Tony had the best heart a human could possess and I will be forever honoured that he offered his friendship to me, he encouraged me and fought my corner, at times he was like a father. He was always giving me stuff. That was his gift, he gave himself to people – that most important thing – his time, and he looked at you, he saw you.

Over the last two years I managed to record his life and memories in the Defence Forces for the Military Archives Oral History Programme, something I am at this moment very grateful to him for, as will future generations.

I have wonderful memories of Tony standing among large groups of children in the aviation museum, even 40, 50, 60 and 70 year old children, while he demonstrated the theory of flight and how an aerofoil or wing flew. He would hold a sheet of A4 paper to his lips and blow – the paper would rise up under the low pressure crossing over the surface – he performed magic to young minds.

In 2011 Tony brought me to the battlefields of Gallipoli in Turkey – another gift to me, we had the same interests – the Great War and its poetry. Tony loved war poetry. He also made it possible for me to visit the Somme and Flanders, many times, where we also read poems at the graves of the war poets such as Francis Ledwidge and Wilfred Owen. At the Cape Helles memorial in Gallipoli, above the cemeteries, he once leaned against my back while I reached up, on my tippy-toes, to take a pencil etching on a sheet of paper of a dead soldier's name for an elderly couple who weren't able to touch the lettering. They wept and I think he knew it would mean the world to them. I am almost 6ft tall and Tony would have made me stand on his shoulders to take that etching if it came to it, now can you image the calamity in that scene. Tony, every year, remembered the forgotten Irish soldiers of the Great War.

Tony Roe, in case you didn't know, adopted the graves of forgotten Irish soldiers, he wanted, in a way, to bring their memories home from those distant battlefields, this was something we both held in common as did many of his friends who returned every year. I wrote this poem a few days after we returned from Gallipoli in 2011 and somewhere in Tony's man-cave, in the front room of his house in Ballally, lies the first hand-written draft. When it was published it was dedicated to Tony Roe, I think he was chuffed because in a way this poem sums him up. Tony, thank you for all you were and are to me, these words are for you.

GALLIPOLI

Today I stood above the Aegean Sea
listening for echoes I could not hear.
The silent tempo of the ground
resonates still on unnatural landscapes.

The zig-zag lines where dead men toil
dug deep into blood smeared soil,
buried now with their bones
on beaches and gullies where once
they fought the Turk,
stormed the shores and hills as if thrown
against the wind by Agamemnon himself.

The silence bade me look towards Troy
across the Straits from Helles,
I still could hear no voice,
nor thunder in the sky
except the launching waves
pushing ancient pebbles up the beach
to rest,
where once they drowned the hearts of men.

Then behind me I could feel it,
the noise of peace and echoes
of war
in a thousand monuments
to the dead,
stretched out in marching order.
And there, watching me,
my shadow
took on the spectre of a ghost and
spoke,

(Endnotes)

1 Small metal badge held aloft at the mass and later given to Tony's wife Lillian



'Like Hector I was the defender
brave and virtuous –
but of Irish stock,
I am the soldier my country
forsook.'

And in response I said

I have come at last to pay
my respects,
I have come to take you home!

Michael J. Whelan

THOSE WHO DREAM

(In Memory of Tony Roe)

Now that your time here
has come to an end,
I ponder on all the things
you have said and done,
the thousand kindnesses shown,
the lives you have created
and touched, the artful way
you noticed people's troubles.

In all the days of your life
you were and are an example
of the good that is to be found
in the human heart.
At times you watched over me
like a father.

Your life will be
remembered as a light
shining on the walls of
an ancient cave,
where we will always
wonder
on the hand-prints of
early man
discovering his place in
the world,
unknowingly leaving a
sign,
a gift of forever for his
descendants
and those who dream.

Michael J. Whelan

Anniversary of the First East-West Transatlantic Air Crossing

On the 12th of April 1928 a Junkers W33 aircraft named the "Bremen" departed Baldonnel Aerodrome bound for North America. On board was the Officer Commanding the Air Corps Colonel James Fitzmaurice and two German crew members, Captain Kohl and Baron Von Huenefeld. Some 36 hours later they landed on Greenly Island on the Eastern shores of Canada.

This was a truly remarkable achievement given the prevailing winds, the treacherous weather conditions and the multiple previously failed attempts. Colonel Fitzmaurice and the crew of the Bremen were hailed as aviation pioneers and their achievement still stands as one of the greatest chapters in aviation history.

On the 12th of April 2018, in Casement Airbase a ceremony was held at the very spot from which the Bremen aircraft departed on its epic voyage. The ceremony included music from the Defence Forces Bands, a tribute from the Artillery Corps and a Guard of Honour.

A large contingent of Roger Casement Branch members was in attendance and took part in the ceremonial parade with their Branch Banner. Also appropriately displayed, was the Banner of the defunct O.N.E. James Fitzmaurice Branch.



The Bremen memorial plaque in Casement Aerodrome

This Branch was based in Shannon and consisted of many former Air Corps members who were employed in the aviation industry in the region. The Banner was passed to the Roger Casement Branch for safe keeping and is now retained in the Air Corps Museum in Casement Aerodrome.



*RCB Members :
L/R: R. Murphy,
M..Delaney,
P.O'Meara,
N.Murphy,
Red O'Kane,
P..J..Brennan,
F.Donnelly,
P.Goodman,
P.McGlynn,
J.Nolan.*



Banners of the Roger Casement Branch and the James Fitzmaurice Branch were on display.



L/R, P.O'Meara, F.Lyons, P.Goodman, F.Donnelly.

CUIMHNIMIS ~ Let us remember those who have died. ~

PAUL ORMSBY
TONY ROE
DAN GUINEY

CIARAN SMITH
MELLA SAVAGE
DENIS LAWLOR

JERRY DULLEA
LARRY WALSH
GERRY CROSS

Air Corps News



301 Squadron spent today delivering democracy to the islands of Donegal and responding to medical emergencies in Galway.

Maritime Training Exercise, 17 May 2018

Personnel from 101 Squadron recently took part in a Major Maritime Emergency Training Exercise with their Irish Naval Service and Irish Coast Guard colleagues. This two-day simulation was conducted in the National Maritime College of Ireland, Ringaskiddy.

As well as providing their experience in air co-ordination, 101 Squadron pilots and Sensor & Airborne Radar Operators (SAROs) had the opportunity to contribute across a wide range of functions during the exercises.

The information and experience shared with other agencies underpins the close ties developed over many years of co-operation in the Maritime environment, providing a coordinated and efficient response to those in need at sea.



Maritime Training Exercise

Emergency Delivery Flight, 13th May 2018

Late Friday evening we received a call about a need for a critical piece of life-saving equipment in Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast. Unfortunately the only one available was in University Hospital Galway. In stepped 302 Squadron, and two pilots and a crewman flew an H-135 helicopter to collect the equipment, which was driven by An Garda Síochána to Athlone Barracks, and bring it to Belfast for collection.

The Airbus Helicopters H135 is the smaller of our two types; however it is highly flexible, and capable of getting airborne in seconds from tasking. The total time from launching the mission to the delivery of the equipment was just under 2 hours.



Lt Mark Doyle representing Ireland : 11th May 2018

Best of luck to Lieutenant Mark Doyle of 3 Operations Wing who will be representing the Irish Team in the Ultra Trail World Championships this weekend in Penyalgosa Spain.

The course covers a gruelling 84+km and a climb of over 5000m.

Mark is well used to covering large distances and climbs as a seasoned Ultra marathon runner, but also in his role as a helicopter pilot delivering advanced medical care and rapid transport to seriously ill patients across the country with Air Corps 112.

