



Roger Casement Branch

of Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann Teoranta (ONET)



The Link

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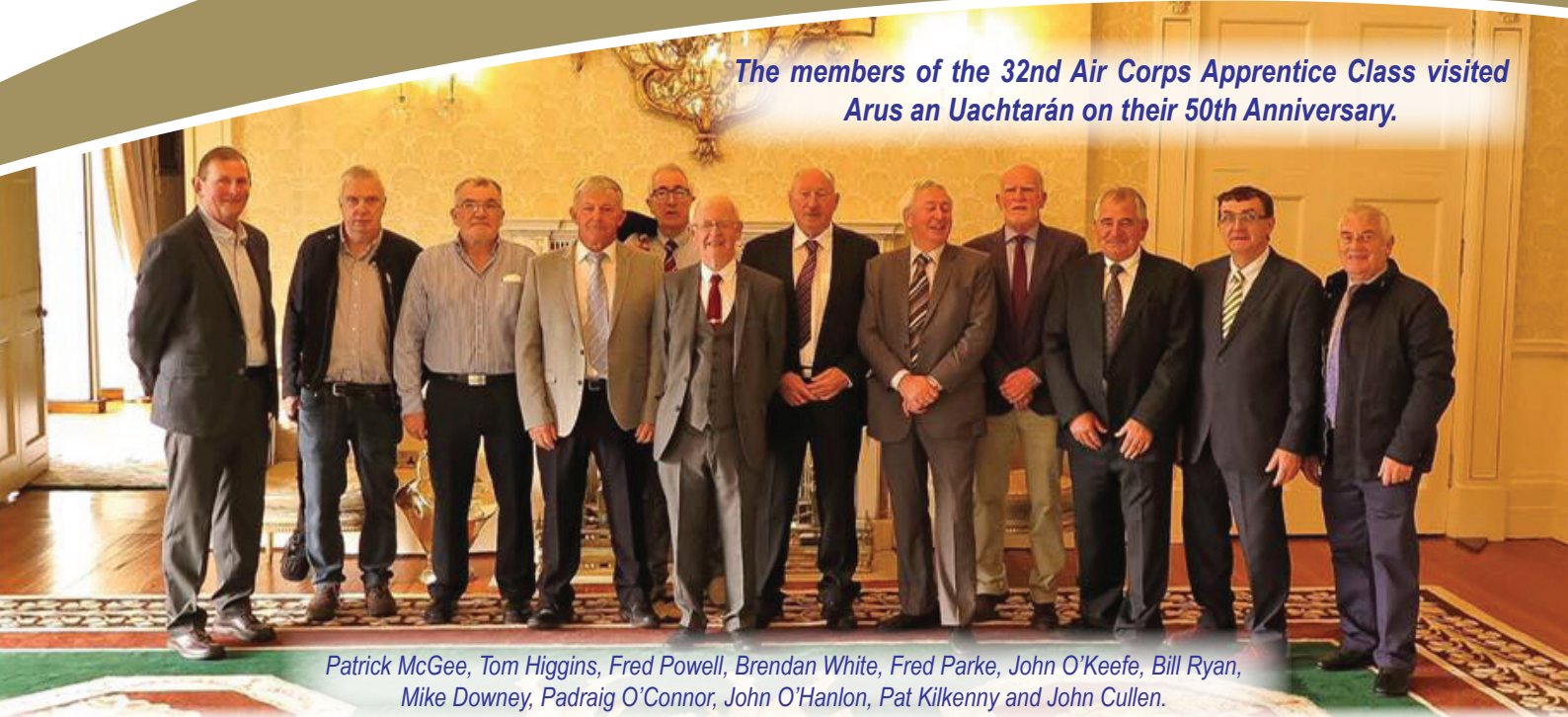
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Honorary Branch President: James Nolan



The members of the 32nd Air Corps Apprentice Class visited Arus an Uachtarán on their 50th Anniversary.

Patrick McGee, Tom Higgins, Fred Powell, Brendan White, Fred Parke, John O'Keefe, Bill Ryan, Mike Downey, Pdraig O'Connor, John O'Hanlon, Pat Kilkenny and John Cullen.

ROGER CASEMENT BRANCH

In late 1979 it was decided to form a branch of the ONE which would have close links with the Air Corps and which would have Casement Aerodrome as its base.

In this way, the branch through the Board of Directors of ONET would provide help and assistance where necessary to the personnel in the Air Corps at the time of their discharge from the Defence Forces.

With the kind permission of the GOC Air Corps at the time, the Branch adapted the name Roger Casement and was permitted to hold the meetings of the Branch in Baldonnel.

The Branch has grown in the past 39 years to have the largest membership of the Branches in ONET and is held in high regard within the organisation.

In 2007 the Branch was honoured when a member of the Branch Jim Nolan was elected National President for a two year term. In recent years the Branch was awarded the annual 'Best Branch' award on two occasions.

The Branch arranged for the erection of the ONE Memorial Monument and Garden in Casement Aerodrome to the memory of deceased former personnel who have served with the Air Corps. The annual Mass for deceased members is held in October each year and is well attended by former members and the families of the deceased members. A Memorial Book containing the inscribed names of deceased personnel who have served with the Air Corps is maintained by the Branch and is located in a glass cabinet in the church. A team from the Branch also provides advice and assistance in the Air Corps Museum.

In 2008 the Branch was successful in negotiating approval for the wearing of an Air Corps type head dress by its members. The Branch has also launched a website and social media and produces a

quarterly newsletter which is distributed to the members. Full details of the Branch and joining instructions are provided on the website (WWW. ONE Air Corps Branch.com)

Former Branch Chairmen.

W. Walsh	1979/1980	J. Nolan	1996/97/98/99
J. Nolan	1981/82/83	W. Duggan	2000/01/02
F. O'Toole	1984/85	J. Conway	2003/04/05/06
J. Lynch	1986/87/88/89/90/91	P. O'Meara	2007/08/09/10/11
J. Conway	1992/93/94	F. Lyons	2012/13/14/15/16
W. Walsh	1995	M. Delaney	2017/18

Death of former Chairman

A former Chairman of the Roger Casement Branch Finbarr O'Toole sadly passed away on September 17th. 2018. He was a member of the 1955 DE Class and served as Branch Chairman in 1984 and 1985. Finbarr was residing in Ennis prior to his passing. He will be sadly missed by his wife Kate his brothers and his extended family.
Ar dheis lámh Dé go raibh a anam dílis.



Edition sponsored by a member of the 1959 Apprentice Class



ANNUAL MASS FOR DECEASED MEMBERS

The Branch Annual Mass for Deceased Members was held in Casement Aerodrome on Sunday October 14th 2018. The church was filled to capacity with former Air Corps members and families of the deceased. A record number of 47 former members were recorded as having passed away during the 12 months since the previous Mass in October 2017. Candles were lit in memory of each of the deceased. The Mass was celebrated by the recently appointed Air Corps Chaplain Fr, Bernard McCay Morrissey CF.

Music was provided as usual by the excellent folk group from Newcastle church.

The Mass was attended by Col. Rory O'Connor representing the GOC Air Corps and Mr. Tom James General President of ONE. Members of other ONE Branches and from the Irish Coast Guard Service also attended.

After the Mass a wreath was laid in memory of the deceased jointly by Col O'Connor and Branch Deputy Chairman Paddy O'Meara. Other wreaths were laid by the Naval Service ONE Branch, The Royal Air Force Association and by previous Air Corps classes. Refreshments were available after the ceremonies in the Air Corps catering centre.



Annual Wreath Laying ceremony for deceased members.



Col Rory O'Connor and Branch Deputy Chairman Paddy O'Meara laid a wreath for all deceased members.



Gerry McCarthy and Mrs Lillian Rowe laid a wreath on behalf of the deceased members of the 1958 Air Corps Apprentice Class.

Upcoming Events

1. The annual Christmas Lunch. Will take place on Thursday December 6th 2018 In the West County Hotel, Chapelizod at 1300 hrs. Early booking is advised.
2. Branch AGM will be held on Thursday January 17th 2019 in the NCO's Mess Casement Aerodrome at 2000 hrs. All members are invited to attend.

Bringing Finucane Home

By Imelda Conway-Duffy writer of 'Spitfire Paddy' The Ace with the Shamrock

"Britain, 1942. A twenty-one-year-old Irishman is a living legend. With a shamrock emblazoned on the cockpit of his iconic Spitfire, he has flown through the battle of Britain unscathed and into the hearts of an adoring and grateful British public for whom he is a symbol of hope and pride".

This is the opening narrative in a new television documentary, Spitfire Paddy, The Ace with the Shamrock about the life of Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane, one of the Ireland's little-known heroes. It was acquired by Foxtel History, Australia because of Finucane's close association with the Australian pilots during the war.

In April this year it had a very successful screening on Foxtel and is soon to be aired on RTE Television in Ireland, paying tribute to a man whose passion for flying was ignited in Baldonnel, home of the Irish Air Corps and aptly described by one former GOC as 'the doctrinal home of aviation in Ireland'.

Producer Gerry Johnston, whose film career began in 1965 on 'The Flying Films', made at Baldonnel in the 1960s has many cherished memories of Baldonnel and hopes that the documentary will restore Finucane to the annals of Irish aviation history.

Brendan Éamon was the eldest of five children to Andy and Florence Finucane on October the 16th 1920, in Rathmines, Dublin at a time when Ireland was on the brink of civil war. Violence could explode on the streets at any time. On one occasion, as Florence, pregnant at the time with her second child, Raymond pushed Brendan home in his pram, she had to take cover from IRA and Black and Tan crossfire. As children, Brendan and Raymond played with aeroplanes made from Meccano sets re-enacting the aerial battles of their favourite World War I fighter aces. In the summer of 1932, Andy surprised them with a visit to Baldonnel Aerodrome. Here the boys got to experience the thrill of their first ever aeroplane ride. Those ten minutes in the air would define the rest of Brendan's life.

When the family emigrated from Dublin to London, in 1936 Brendan found work as an accounts clerk on Regent Street, but the memories of that day in Baldonnel were never far from his mind. War was imminent. The RAF was issuing short service commissions and in June 1938 Brendan applied. However, his father, Andy had fought against the British in Dublin during the 1916 Rising. How would he respond to his firstborn son's desire to join the forces of the Crown? To his relief, Brendan received his blessing. Andy and Florence even cashed in their life insurance policies to pay for their son's training.

Spitfire Paddy is an hour-long documentary chronicling the brief yet epic life of Brendan Finucane, a man with his roots in Ireland, who grew to become a national hero in Britain. Brendan was one of eight Irish fighter pilots to fly with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during World War II. From the cockpit of his shamrock-emblazoned Spitfire (nicknamed The Flying Shamrock) he met the German threat head-on and soared through the ranks to become the youngest Wing Commander in RAF history, leading his squadrons to unprecedented victories.

By the age of twenty-one, this handsome and charismatic young Irishman was a household name. His achievements were such that the propaganda machine thrust him into the limelight as a shining example of the British fighting spirit.

It traces Brendan's origins from his youth, growing up in Dublin, through to his joining the RAF at the tender age of seventeen where in the space of four short years, he rose to become one of the most celebrated fighter pilots in history. It follows his career from its ignoble beginnings, where his inability to land a plane almost led to his being

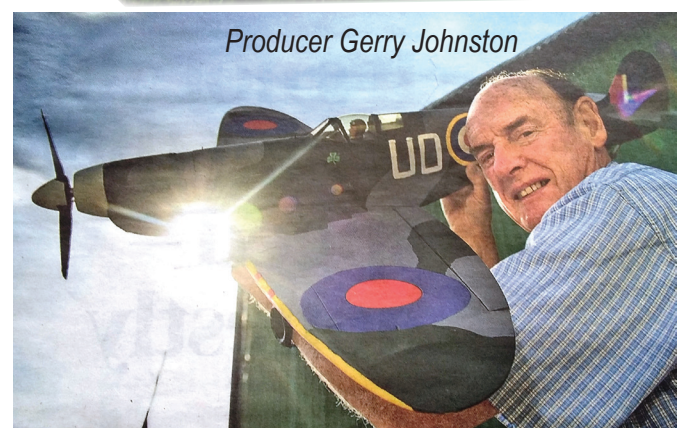


expelled from the air force, to its dizzying apex, gilded with awards and celebrity. Between July the 15th 1940 and his tragic death on July the 15th 1942, Brendan shot down over thirty-two enemy air craft, ranking him one of the top five fighter aces of World War II.

Sadly, fate and luck conspired against the young Irish man on July 15th, two years to the day after his first posting to Hornchurch. As the squadron returned from a strafing mission over Étapes, a burst of machine-gun fire from the beach at Le Touquet hit Brendan's starboard wing. His wingman, Alan 'Butch' Aikman, called to him over the radio, "You've had it, Sir; in your radiator." The squadron had just reached the open water of the English Channel when they heard his last words: "This is it, chaps" as The Flying Shamrock levelled off and dropped its tail then disappeared beneath the waves. It was an abrupt end to a spectacular career and to the blossoming love between Brendan Finucane and Jean Woolford.

Although the 'living legend', Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane, the youngest Wing Commander in RAF history made front page news from Britain to America to Australia, the censorship imposed by Éamon de Valera's wartime government in Ireland meant that the Irishman is practically unknown in his home country. In his adopted country, over 2,500 people attended his memorial service at Westminster Cathedral and tributes poured in from around the world.

Wing Commander Brendan 'Paddy' Finucane's name adorns roads, housing estates, and a hospital wing in England. His uniform and medals are on display in the RAF Museum. A rose named 'Spitfire Paddy' was planted alongside a plaque dedicated to his memory in the remembrance garden at Baldonnel Aerodrome, where Brendan's dream of flying first became a reality. This moving documentary is a celebration of a true Irish hero. The man, Finucane is revealed through his letters home, his address on BBC Radio in 1941, his fleeting appearance before the cameras on behalf of the Duke of Kent RAF veterans' benevolent fund appeal and through interviews with relatives, RAF veterans and with Leonie Watson the sister of his fiancée, Jean Woolford. It is an inspirational story of one man's remarkable achievements that have gone untold for too long.



CUIMHNIMIS ~ Let us remember those who have died. ~

David Cassidy
Colm Moriarty

Hugh O'Donnell
John Joe O'Regan

Niall O'Connor
Noel Keogh

Sean Hennessy
Patrick Bruen

James Brady

Air Corps News

A Very busy week in No 3 Op's Wing 302 SQN completed:
Special Forces parachuting and reconnaissance work
Casualty evacuation (Casevac) exercises with the 113th Infantry Battalion, who are preparing to deploy to Lebanon
Advanced Night Vision Goggle (NVG) training
Garda Air Support Unit (GASU) pilot training
Along with other missions of a secure nature.

Meanwhile 301 SQN responded to 9 critically ill patients, transporting them to medical centers around the country, and 304 SQN continued to provide 24/7 security to the state in the form on the GASU H-135 (Garda)

This variety of disciplines and tempo of training and operations is what is required every day for this small unit to provide this state with vital contingent capabilities.

20th Oct 2018

Yesterday evening, the Air Corps won the award for "The best not for profit organisation" in the South Dublin Chamber awards. Well done to all personnel involved for making this happen. Picture shows Minister Katherine Zappone presenting the award to Lt- Col Michael Moran.



16th Oct 2018

Over the weekend Betty McBrearty dropped into to say thanks to the EAS (Emergency Aeromedical Service) crew. We're all delighted to see that Betty has made a full recovery after assisting her in February this year. . . . The cakes were delicious too!



03rd Oct 2018 Congratulations to Lieutenant Kevin Fitzgerald, who today completed his Flying Instructors' Course on-board our EC 135 Airbus Helicopter. Kevin is pictured here with the chief helicopter instructor & rating examiner, Captain Oisin McGrath.

Having completed the course, Kev will now be posted to 302 SQN in No 3 Op's Wing, where he will join the instructional team for the upcoming Helicopter Conversion Course (HCC).



29th Sept 2018

A fine Picture of the two CASA CN235 maritime surveillance and intelligence platforms captured off the west coast of Ireland yesterday evening.



04th Oct 2018

In the last 24 hours Air Corps crews have been busy completing 5 Air Ambulance missions. The emergency medical helicopter AC112 has responded to 3 extremely short notice taskings, one of our CASA's has successfully completed an international air ambulance and an AW139 was reconfigured at short notice to conduct a neonatal medevac.



Kieran Minihane