



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



The Link

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FROM THE BRANCH CHAIRMAN . . .

Denis Barry

"What a Strange World We Live In" were the opening words of a popular song of some years ago. These same words have a particular connection with the world we live in today.

As we approach the festive season and the end of another year, perhaps we should take stock of what has happened over 2020.

Firstly, as an organisation's our activities have been seriously curtailed with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we haven't been able to hold our regular branch meetings or to organise any get-togethers of any description, in fact if I'm totally aware the only ONE events that would have involved the Roger Casement Branch were the Leinster Council AGM and the National Council EGM both of which were held virtually. We had representatives "attend" both of these meetings. Locally, as I've said we couldn't have held branch meetings and of course of particular regret we had to cancel our Annual Mass of Remembrance and our only social event of the year the Christmas Lunch. We look forward with hope that all these events can be reinstated sometime in 2021, provided that Covid can be conquered.

Despite me telling you of all the things that we couldn't do, O.N.E at a National level has been performing tremendous work in doing what it was set up to do, namely, to provide help and/or accommodation to those ex-members of our Defence Forces who may have fallen on lean times on exiting the service. They do this by offering warm safe accommodation in various centres around the country. To offer this service the organisation has to raise funds and one of the main methods to achieve this is by the collection of membership subscriptions.

I would encourage all our members to submit their subs at the beginning of the year. While on this subject I would ask if any of our members know of any of our ex-Air Corps veterans who may need assistance to let any of our committee members know, in complete confidence, and we will take it from there.

As you all know, with the cooperation of the GOC Air Corps, we have in place a dedicated room to enable us to operate a drop-in Veterans' Support Centre in Casement. This centre enables us to keep in touch, again in complete confidence, with any of our ex-members who may need advice or help. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 out-break this service has been curtailed but will function again when things get better.

To any Air Corps members who might be departing at the end of their service I would appeal to them to consider joining the ONE if for no other reason than keeping in touch and of course keeping our membership alive. In conclusion, as chairman of the Roger Casement Branch I would like to

send festive greetings to all our members and their families and hope that everyone has managed to stay safe and healthy over what has been a trying year and to remain so throughout the coming year.

I would also like to send greetings to the General Officer Commanding Air Corps, Brigadier General Rory O'Connor and all serving members of the Air Corps and to thank you all for every assistance that has been offered to us.

To all members of the Irish Defence Forces serving overseas I hope that each and every one of you will stay safe and healthy over 2021.

On behalf of the Roger Casement Branch I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Prosperous New Year.

Denis Barry



Christmas Message from GOC Air Corps, Brig-Gen. Rory O'Connor.

I would like to take this opportunity to send my best wishes to all members of the ONE Roger Casement Branch on what has been and continues to be, a very

challenging and certainly different year. Events of 2020 have affected so many of us in so many ways, and it is most unfortunate that at a time when ONE Roger Casement Branch would be most needed, is so restricted in what it can do.

We have had to forego celebrations, ceremonies, memorial services, the Annual Mass and all such occasions that mean so much to so many, and have been restricted in our ability to meet and engage with serving and former colleagues.

As we rapidly approach the end, of what has been the most challenging of years for everyone, I would like to thank you for your continued support and commitment to the Air Corps and all who have served here. As we look forward to 2021, we must be hopeful that things will improve and that we will get the chance to meet and rekindle those friendships.

On behalf of the Air Corps and the Office of General Officer Commanding, I would like to wish everyone a Merry & Peaceful Christmas, and a Happy & Healthy New Year.

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

Niall McGarry
Tom Coveney
Eamonn Mulcahy

John Digan
Bill Conway
Pat Mulcahy

Jim Davis
Dan O'Sullivan
Mons. Edward Dunne CF,DSM

Liam Gavin
Philip Russell

Eamonn Moriarty
Thomas McCormack

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DH DOVE ACCIDENT

The Dove aircraft with 5 persons on board took off from Shannon Airport at 0430 hrs on Jan 27th, 1961 to participate in a joint training exercise with Shannon ATC;

On its final approach to the airport at 0605 the aircraft impacted trees in Killula near Newmarket on Fergus. Four of the occupants were tragically lost including two Air Corps pilots. Lt. Brian Corr and Lt. Donal Brady.

Two trainee ATC assistants were on board and were also lost. The sole survivor of the accident was Capt. James Liddy.

A memorial service was held on the site on the 50th anniversary of the accident by the Roger Casement Branch which was attended by some former Air Corps members and some retired members of the Department of Transport.

A wooden memorial cross was placed on the site and has continued to be maintained by members of the Roger Casement Branch. Some interest has been raised in placing a more permanent marker on the site in line with similar sites in Tramore and Cornamona.



A wreath laying service was held on the DH Dove 188 crash site in 2011 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the tragic accident.

Cessna FR C172H R210 delivered to the Shannon Aviation Museum

Wednesday 19th August 2020 marked O.N.E Member Eddie Ryan's 87th Birthday and also the arrival of FR C172H R210 to the Shannon Aviation Museum. The Reims Rocket was recently retired after 47 years of service along with four others in the fleet. Eddie on the other hand, having started his career as a Direct Entry Apprentice Class of 1950, has never retired!

Now, R210 has a new life ahead, inspiring future generations of aviators and also educating them about the Irish Air Corps and the opportunities that it offers for young people. Not resting for long, the aircraft is currently being utilised for practical training for over 40 EASA Cat A students from Atlantic Aviation Group.

Edward Ryan, Founder of the Shannon Aviation Museum said, "We are very pleased to have this fine aircraft donated by the Air Corps to our Museum in Shannon. It represents the rich history of the Irish Air Corps and the important contribution of its men and women to Aviation in Ireland and internationally". Eddie was a former member of the Air Corp's 1951 DE Class. He also served with the RAF for a short period and later worked with the English Electric Aircraft company and the Air Ministry where he was involved in the development and testing of a number of iconic Jet fighter aircraft including the Blackburn Buccaneer Nuclear bomber.

An actual Buccaneer aircraft is on display at the museum in Shannon.

Following the delivery, Brigadier General Rory O'Connor GOC Air Corps said "Shannon Aviation Museum is a learning and development experience for all, bringing the fascinating world of flight to both young and old. As GOC Air Corps, I was delighted to see R210 go to the Shannon Aviation Museum where I know it will be enjoyed by all who visit there. The Air Corps has a strong and proud history of association with Shannon and I've no doubt R210 will enjoy its well-earned retirement, where it can sit proudly amongst the many fantastic exhibits on display."



Former Air Corps member Eddie Ryan founder of the Shannon Aviation Training Centre and Museum as pleased to accept delivery of R210

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.



Phoenix Squadron By David Mellon Vickers Supermarine Seafire LF IIIs of the Irish Air Corps

Having requested through the British Air Attaché in Dublin Spitfire Mk. IXs, and following this request being denied by the UK Ministry of Aircraft Production a dozen 'de-navalised' Seafire LF IIIs (Vickers Supermarine V.S. 506), all of which had previously served with the Fleet Air Arm were offered instead. With a unit price of £6000 agreed with Vickers Supermarine and the Admiralty it was agreed the aircraft would be delivered in any colour scheme and markings requested by the IAC.

Modifications meant the Irish Seafires were more akin to late mark Spitfire LF Vc types but entered Air Corps service fitted with Browning machine guns and Hispano cannons. They were delivered in 1947, stripped of their naval equipment such as arrester hook, catapult gear and other naval equipment. Whereas they might have been received with the wing folding mechanism locked by Vickers beforehand it is evident from photos that IAC fitters soon had wings folding again. Cameras that could be employed to take oblique photographs were also installed in a compartment in the mid-fuselage section of each Seafire, with a small porthole for the camera lens on either side of the fuselage.

The Seafires were issued to No.1 Fighter Squadron to replace their aging Hawker Hurricanes of which only one was still in service by the time the Seafires arrived. This variant of Seafire was powered by the 1,470 h.p. Rolls-Royce Merlin 55M engine driving a four-bladed constant speed propeller. It subsequently turned out that the Seafires were the last single-seat fighter type to enter service with the IAC.

From 1948 to 1954 the Irish Defence Forces were involved in a highly detailed coastal survey of the Irish coastline and as part of this survey aerial photography was undertaken by the Air Corps. The F.24 cameras installed in the Seafires were employed to obtain oblique photographs by flying at 800 feet straight and level parallel to the coastline at a precise speed. During the period in which the north-west coastline was being photographed the Seafires were given permission by the British Government to operate from RAF Ballykelly and RNAS Eglinton respectively. The aircraft used these airfields for refuelling and for reloading the aerial cameras with new film. Shannon Airport was also



Seafire 157 at Weston Aerodrome

used as a base from which the survey of the south-west coast of Ireland was undertaken.

The Seafires were very popular amongst both air and ground crews, the last of them, No. 150, being retired from flying service in 1955. By then, sadly, five had met untimely ends, Nos. 147, 148, 151, 152 and 154, No. 147 having suffered a landing accident in 1947. Meanwhile, six two-seat Spitfires were ordered to help train more pilots on the type and served until the arrival of de Havilland Vampire T.55s in 1956.

The cessation of flying duties did not mean the end of the Irish Seafire's working life. For a seven-year period, they were used as instructional airframes and to train apprentices. In fact, it was only a shortage of hangar space due to accident investigation work and the arrival of the Blue Max film aircraft that caused a general tidy-up and disposal of the survivors. In 1960, Seafires 149, 150 and 155 were in the scrapping compound whilst Seafires 146, 153, 156 and 157 remained hangered. Seafire 152 was at that time doing duty at Dublin Airport in the hands of Dublin Airport Fire Service, but had gone by 1962. In 1962, the aircraft in the compound were scrapped and replaced by Seafires 146, 155 and 156, Seafire 157 having gone to Bolton Street College of Technology, Dublin. was disposed of. The remaining airframes at Baldonnel were eventually scrapped by 1965, and with their demise, the Irish Seafire became extinct.



Seafires in formation over Co. Meath



Seafire start-up by Capt Bill Glenn (later Brig-Gen)

Air Corps News

PC12 Update

Our four PC-12NG aircraft are operated by 104 Squadron, as part of No.1 Operations Wing. To date, this aircraft has seen significant utilisation throughout Europe and North Africa providing support to the HSE, An Garda Síochána and the wider Defence Forces. The aircraft is a Swiss built single-engine, turbo-prop, multi-role aircraft, which offers significant mission versatility across a wide variety of roles, including passenger, cargo, medical and surveillance operations. These are facilitated by a large cargo door, special mission platforms and air ambulance equipment. The aircraft can be reconfigured rapidly for various operations, carry large loads over a long range and operate from short semi-prepared runways. The aircraft is equipped to operate day and night. Its pressurised cabin enables it to operate above-weather and improves fuel economy.

If you have been impressed by the capability of the PC12 since its arrival in the Air Corps at the beginning of the COVID-19 response in Ireland, then check out S2EP9 DF Podcast featuring Comdt Mick Barcoe, OC 104 Sqn, takes us through the aircraft's characteristics, roles and operations. There is even an explanation as to why IRL280 is white!!! <https://bit.ly/35X3BYY>



3,000 airlifts in 8 years for Air Corps 112

The Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS), or call sign Air Corps 112 has been in operation since 2012. Air Corps 112 is a joint service project between the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Defence Forces. Air Corps 112 recently airlifted its 3,000th patient which was a farming accident in rural Co. Clare. The Athlone based Air Corps 112, located in Custume Barracks, which is a central location within the island. The National Ambulance Service (NAS) provides command and control so that calls for assistance come directly from those who deem it necessary for EAS to provide the most immediate care. Air Corps 112 with its crew of 2 pilots, a NAS advanced paramedic and an Air Corps emergency medical technician (EMT) is also the crewman on board are then airborne. Two remaining Air Corps technicians remain on station in Athlone. Air Corps 112 has been a key player in the rapid emergency responses throughout its eight years of service to the State.



Overseas Rotations

Recently 101 Squadron completed a troop rotation of our Defence Forces colleagues from the NATO-led peacekeeping mission Kosovo Force - KFOR. Irish personnel first deployed to the Balkan region in 1999, providing a Transport and Logistic Company based in Camp Clarke. Currently, we provide a number of personnel to occupy multiple roles in support of the mission, including Air Traffic Control, Force Protection and Logistics, based in Camp Film City, Pristina.



Recruits and Apprentices in training

Training continues for both the staff and our newest recruits of the Military Training School. Staff took part in SERE (Survival, Escape and Evasion, Resistance to



Interrogation and Extraction) recurrence training, while members of the 18th Recruit/78th Apprentice Platoon fired the Steyr AUG assault rifle for the very first time. To learn more about SERE, listen to Captain Barry Jones of the Military Training and Survival School, based at Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnel in S2EP4 DF Podcast. Captain Jones has been a pioneer in formalising SERE training in the Defence Forces. He covers tactics, techniques and procedures on the topic, and how the Defence Forces trains personnel to survive in hostile environments, evade capture, resist interrogation, and extract. <https://bit.ly/2J4me11>

MERRY
Christmas
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR