



# Roger Casement Branch

## Óglaigh Náisiúnta na hÉireann



# The Link

[www.oneaircorpsbranch.com](http://www.oneaircorpsbranch.com)

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Finnbar Lyons

Hon. Secretary:

Noel Murphy

Hon. Treasurer:

Patrick Lynch

PRO:

Peter Mc Glynn

Honorary Branch President:

James Nolan



Members of the Roger Casement Branch paid an interesting visit to Dail Eireann in December 2014.

A 100 year old garden seat has been dedicated to the memory of the late Mick Prince. The seat is located in the garden of IUNVA Post 1 in Arbour Hill. Mick played a major part in the introduction and development of the memorial garden



### ONE LOTTO CAN NOW BE PURCHASED ON-LINE

As you know the Weekly Lotto is a very important element of our fundraising programme in support of our Homeless Initiative for ex-service personnel. To make it easier for you to take part in our Lotto you can now purchase your entries via our web-site [www.oneconnect.ie](http://www.oneconnect.ie) Entries still cost €2 and you can make as many as you wish.

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### Branch Committee 2015

Chairman:	Finnbar Lyons
Deputy Chairman	Paddy O'Meara
Hon-Secretary	Noel Murphy
Assistant Hon-Secretary	Mick Lally
Hon-Treasurer	Pat Lynch
Asistant Hon-Treasurer	Martin Murphy
PRO	Peter Mc Glynn
Health and Safety	John Clarke
Parade Commander	Tony Roe

#### Members

Michael Delaney/ Richard Murphy/ Gerry McCann  
Michael Reddy/Niall Jordan/P.J.Brennan/Matt Kennedy

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

ANDREW PAUL (GALTEE) SULLIVAN.  
PAT CRANFIELD LUKE O'DONOGHUE  
CHARLES HOGAN JAMES O'NEILL JIMMY BYRNE  
TOM KEOGH BRENDAN FLANAGAN  
JOSEPH FINEGAN NIALL ROCHE  
DANNY DOYLE



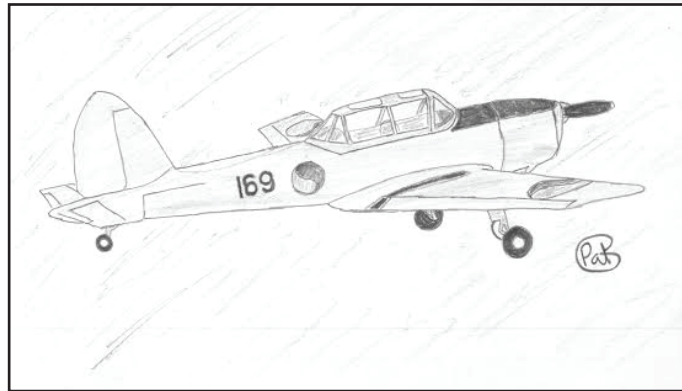
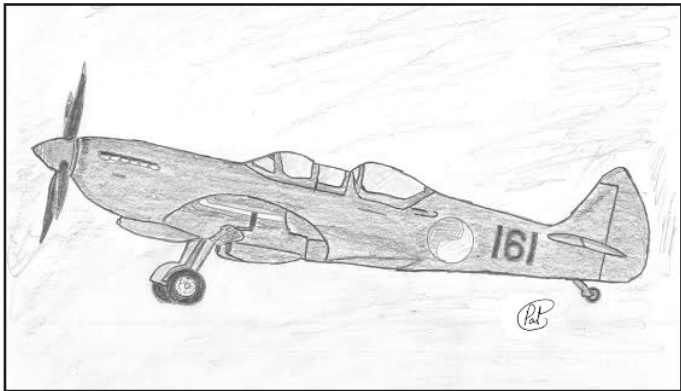


## Pat Lynch is also a talented artist:

The drawings of Spitfire T9 No. 161 and Chipmunk No. 169 are from the pencil of our Branch Treasurer Pat Lynch. Pat, originally from Kells Co. Meath but now living near Tallaght joined the Air Corps in Sept 1978 as a member of the 42nd Apprentice Class and he served in several different locations in Baldonnell until his retirement in 2002 after 24 years of service.

Pat has been an aircraft enthusiast since the early 70's when he first saw an Alouette III hovering near his home during a search following a bank robbery. This enthusiasm led him to making Airfix models of aircraft which he hung from his bedroom ceiling and him frequently being in trouble for drawing doodles of aircraft on textbooks and copy books. The first model he ever made was a De Havilland Chipmunk and the most challenging to build was a Vickers Vimy biplane.

Following his retirement Pat rediscovered his love of drawing and sketching, and he also started to paint with Acrylics and more recently Watercolours. In the coming year Pat intends to do some more Aircraft sketches and some paintings also, so "Watch this space"



## Christmas Lunch 2014

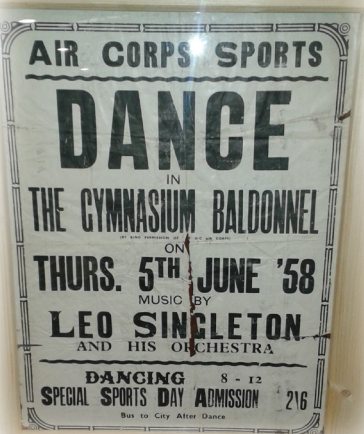


L/R Finnbar Lyons, Martin Murphy, Bernadette Nolan, Jim Nolan, Lt-Col Moloney, Fr. Robert McCabe, Ben Downey, Pater Mc Glynn.



The traditional toast to the pudding is carried out by Lt-Col Maloney

This poster may bring back some old memories



The International Veterans Day Parade will again be held in Limerick on May 17, 2015. RCB Deputy Chairman Paddy O'Meara attended the Launch of the event by the Mayor of Limerick Cllr. Kevin Sheahan in the City Hall on March 4th.



Members of the 1955 D/E Class Christy Hogan and Charlie Wren



# The Sergeant Pilots of the Air Corps

In the summer of 1943 advertisements appeared in the national newspapers and on army notice boards for the position of sergeant pilot in the Air Corps. It was open to civilians and serving members of the Defence Forces. The usual requirements of good health and educational standards would apply. There was an application fee of 2/6 (half a crown) old money.

This was a very radical departure from normal in the Air Corps, as never before nor since, has anyone outside commissioned rank worn the much coveted pilots wings.

The precedent of N.C.O. pilots was well established in the RAF and in the Luftwaffe. It is speculated that the scheme was imposed upon the Air Corps at the behest of the Department of Finance as an economy measure.

At least 1000 hopefuls bought their postal orders and applied. Subsequent screening and medical tests reduced these to the 30 who were finally selected.

The trainees reported to Baldonnel on 9th November 1943 to commence the most exciting experience of their young lives. The contract was for five years regular service and seven years on the reserve.

The training course was fairly demanding and consisted of ground school in the morning and flying in the afternoon. This could be changed to suit the weather.

Flying training to wings standard was on the Miles Magister. It was a low winged monoplane powered by a 130HP Gypsy-Major piston engine and had two open cockpits in tandem. The open cockpits required the use of warm flying suits, helmets and goggles. The parachute which was strapped to their bottoms acted as a seat cushion. The Magister had good aerobatic capability though inverted flying was restricted by oil feed and fuel flow problems.

The initial rank was that of Private. After some months, promotion to Corporal was achieved.

Of the thirty who started ten failed to make it to wings level for medical and other reasons. One of them, unfortunately, crashed when paying his family a flying visit in the Phoenix Park. The other nine returned to civilian life.

The 20 who qualified were presented with their wings by the Chief of Staff at a big do in Baldonnel attended by relatives and friends.

The new pilots were promoted to Sergeants and moved into better quarters in a fine centrally heated building (later apprentice hostel).

The advanced flying trainer was the Miles Master Mk2 a low wing monoplane with retractable undercarriage and powered by a Bristol Mercury radial engine of about 870 hp with a 3 blade variable pitch propeller which made it capable of 250 mph. The pilots were trained in formation flying combat tactics and air to air and air to ground firing. They eventually progressed to the Hurricane, the Spitfire, the Avro Anson and the Martinet. which was a target towing version of the Master.

The Sergeant pilots played a full part in the social and sports life of the Corps. They were well represented on the Gaelic, Soccer and Rugby teams, all of which competed in the army and civilian competitions.

When the war ended and the Defence Forces scaled down there did not seem to be any career prospects for the pilots in the Air Corps.

The Sergeant Pilots organised a course in Kevin Street Technical College to study for the civil aviation 'B' (commercial) licence. On completion, most of the pilots were now qualified for civil aviation though rather inexperienced.

At the end of their five years in the Air Corps the pilots were allowed to put on something of an air display which they performed with great enthusiasm.

Sadly the only Sergeant Pilot who stayed on after the initial five years was killed in a crash the following year.

Of the original twenty who got their wings ten joined Aer Lingus, of whom eight retired as Senior Captains. Others took up positions with various international airlines the Irish Civil Aviation Department and with the RAF. One became a dentist, another a journalist and others had business careers.

Most of the pilots duly completed their seven years annual reserve training at Gormanston or Baldonnel. At the end of this period they were commissioned to the Reserve of Officers and were well received in the Officers Mess.



*Rear Row : C.O'Grady, W.Briscoe, S.Treacy ,D.Goggin, G.Headon, J.Sheehan, D.McLoone, J.Gibney,M.Geoghegan,T.Keogh, M.McLoughlin.*

*Centre Row: S.Conway, J.Ryan, G.Turley, P.Whyte, B.Lewis, R.Kelly, N.Brennan, G.Cullen, R.O'Keefe.*

*Front Row: Lt. L.Treacy; Lt.T.Healy; Capt.M.Higgins, Capt.L.O'Toole; Capt.P.Swan, Comdt.F.O'Cathain; Capt.M.Quinlan; Capt.A.O'Byrne; Lt.B.Cagney, Lt.B.Flanagan.*

## Editors Note:

The above article was first published in the August 2008 edition of the Link Newsletter and was adapted from a paper written by Sgt Pilots, Gerry Headon and Tom Keogh. Regretfully Capt, Keogh passed away in January 2015.

There have been many enquiries regarding the Air Corps Sgt Pilots and requests for the article to be re-published.

Capt. Gerry Headon was the Captain of the Aer Lingus F27 which carried the remains of Roger Casement into Baldonnel on 23rd March, 1965. The Co-pilot on the occasion was Capt. Darby Kennedy. POM.

# Air Corps News

The following is an excerpt from the End of Year Statement for 2014 as provided by the Air Corps Press Officer, Capt. Brendan O'Dowd.

The Air Corps is a constituent element of the Irish Defence Forces and is the State's organic military air asset.

Since its foundation in 1922, the Air Corps has a proud tradition of service to the State and the citizens of Ireland. It fulfils all defence and security roles assigned to it by the Government and actively supports other State agencies and bodies in delivering services beyond their current capabilities.

In 2014 the Air Corps has proven itself again to be flexible, adaptable and fit for this purpose. During the course of the year it flew over 10,000 hours on over 6,000 missions in support of the people of Ireland, and conducted missions throughout Ireland, Europe and even to Africa, the Middle East and the United States.

As a learning organisation the Air Corps used 2014 to continue to develop its potential to respond to the changing demands and needs of its role. During the year personnel were deployed on NATO courses, International Airspace Management courses, multinational training exercises around the world, and even deployed an AW139 helicopter to the UK to take part in an International Helicopter Handling Instructors Course with the RAF.

## Air Ambulance

2014 was a busy year for air ambulances for the Air Corps. We completed over 100 air ambulance missions, including 64 national and 47 international transfers of patients. The Air Corps' unique ability to conduct multiple mission using fixed wing and rotary wing assets meant that there were several days in 2014 when numerous air ambulances were completed at the same time.

There were also several times when crews of one air ambulance meet with another one at a hospital helipad, or even an international airport such as on the 5th November when the crew of the CASA met with the crew of the Learjet in Northolt after two priority one air ambulances came in quick succession.

The Air Corps also had the privilege of welcoming some of our VIP passengers back to Baldonnel during the year to meet with the crews who flew them when they were in need. One such visitor was 5 year old Hannah, from Donegal, who came to say thank you to some of her heroes in August.

On the 26th November 2009 she first met with the Air Corps when she needed urgent transport from Letterkenny to Dublin. Thanks to the speedy transfer from her helicopter crew and the support from Air Corps ground staff, she got the treatment she required and has made a full recovery.

The increase in demand for air ambulances has given rise to the Air Corps maintaining dedicated crews on stand-by 24/7 for fixed wing and rotary wing with the ability to cover:

- Transport of Neonates;
- Inter-hospital transfer of patients with spinal or other serious injury;
- Transport of patients requiring specialised emergency treatment in the UK;
- Transport of Organ retrieval teams in Ireland ;
- Transport of patients from the islands where the Coastguard is not available;
- Transport of paediatric patients requiring immediate medical intervention.

Missions, such as the rapid transfers to London, are especially important to Irish children requiring transplants. These time critical patients are included in the UK's donor pool and so rely on the speedy transport of the Air Corps when they receive a call to the UK for a transplant.

Air Corps helicopter crews can also utilise specialist Night Vision Goggles (NVG) for night time missions and are the only pilots in the State with the capability to fly using NVG. In addition to these inter-hospital transfers the Air Corps are continuing to support the HSE National Ambulance Service (NAS) in the pilot project to provide dedicated aeromedical support to the West of Ireland. The pilot Emergency Aeromedical Service (EAS) operates from Custume Barracks, Athlone and 2014 were tasked 446 from the NAS.

## Search and Rescue

The Air Corps conducted 12 SAR missions in 2014.

Of these missions 11 comprised of SAR top cover provided by the Air Corps' fixed Wing assets, which included the CASA providing cover for the medical evacuation of an injured fisherman from a fishing vessel approx 230 miles off North West of Sligo on the 26th of October.

During SAR top-cover missions the Air Corps will arrive on scene ahead of the rescue helicopter and make contact with the vessel to ascertain the condition of the patient, check the weather on scene and pass these details back to the helicopter. They also pass on relevant instructions from the helicopter crews to the vessel so they can prepare for winching.

The crew monitor the helicopter and target vessel and pass on constant updates of bearing and range so the helicopter crews can work out performance calculations and fuel planning.

The flight crew also keep communications with the Coast Guard and Air Traffic control to advise them on the status of the mission.

When in range the aircraft monitors the operation and when the patient has been transferred the flight crew will then co-ordinate with Air Traffic control once a destination has been decided upon.

Finally the Air Corps keeps a watchful eye over the helicopter as it routes ashore.

The Air Corps' rotary wing were also involved with several rescues this year. This included mountain rescue SAR taskings from Croagh Patrick during Reek Sunday, flood relief during the severe storms in February and an urgent request from Mine Rescue to transport rescue crews from Lisheen Mine to Tara Mine on the 5th of April.

The Air Corps is constantly adapting to meet the demands of an ever-changing environment and this increased demand for aerial capability is consistent with Ireland's remote geographical location as an island on the western extremity of Europe.

The diverse nature of the Air Corps missions continues to attract talented young Irishmen and women to an interesting and challenging career.

Our motto is just as apt today as it was 92 years ago:  
"FORFAIRE AGUS TAIRISEACHT"



Cessnas at sunset!

Another ambulance mission completed successfully.



AW 139 carries out a rescue on Croagh Patrick.