

Dublin Airport Fire & Rescue Service

75th anniversary – The Leitrim Connection!



Charlie Boyle Watch Commander



Dublin Airport Fire & Rescue Service (DAFRS) was established in 1943 with a part-time Chief Fire Officer, two assistants, a carpenter, and a storeman, who were presented with a fireman's belt, an axe, and military helmet.

Today, Dublin Airport Fire Officers are highly trained and specialise in the fire-fighting skills required for a full-scale aircraft emergency and all other fire-related incidents including RTC's. **Road Traffic Collision?** Fire Officers work full time, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, including Christmas Day. The Fire & Rescue Service has grown from very humble beginnings 75 years ago when Dublin Airport had about 15,000 aircraft movements and less than 100,000 passengers. Today there are 224,000 aircraft movements and in 2017 we had 30 million passengers.

President Michael D Higgins attended a ceremony to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Dublin airports emergency services and mark the milestone. He was welcomed to Dublin Airport's Fire Station by the Chief Executive Mr Dalton Philips who stated that 'It was a tremen-

dous honour to welcome President Higgins to the 75th anniversary... **daa** is proud of the central role that Dublin Airport plays in the national economy and without its fire & rescue service, the airport simply could not operate.

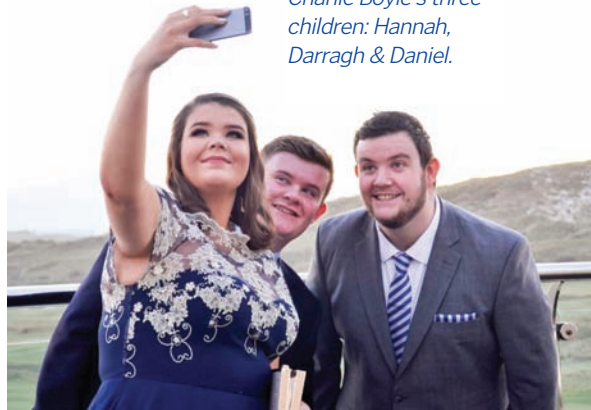
President Higgins presented a specially commissioned medal to all serving 120 Fire Fighters and Fire Officers. During his address to those gathered, President Higgins spoke about the crucial and specialised role of the Airport's Fire & Rescue Service, the continuous rigorous training required and the constant need to be on standby should an aircraft incident occur. He went on to say, "the service that you provide here is greatly impressive. I know that many of you are trained paramedics and also that Dublin has been designated a Heart Safe Airport by the Irish Heart Foundation due to its successful defibrillator programme — a programme which has seen 31 lives saved at this airport in the past 15 years. I am also aware that the Dublin Airport's Emergency Fire & Rescue Service work very closely with the Dublin Fire Brigade, providing additional support to the city's service, as needed, and have provided invalu-

able help with a number of large fires in the surrounding areas in recent years."

There is a Leitrim connection involved in the present day management of the Dublin Airport Fire and Rescue Service. Mohill man, Charlie Boyle, is now in his 38th year of service with the force, and to quote him he is "on the run" into retirement. Second youngest in a family of eight and the youngest son of Jimmy and Jeannie Boyle — (now deceased), he was born and reared in No 7 St Patrick's View. Educated in the local national schools he went on to attend Marion College in Mohill. Charlie also represented Mohill, Marian College, Eslin and Mohill town on the sporting field.

According to Charlie his time with

Charlie Boyle's three children: Hannah, Darragh & Daniel.





daa, previously Aer Rianta, has been a wonderful experience and it has provided him and a good standard of living. He is immensely proud of his three children Daniel, Darragh, and Hannah who thoroughly enjoy their regular visits to Dromod and Mohill. Charlie relocated back to lovely Leitrim and for the last four years, he has resided in the picturesque village of Dromod.

Holding the rank of Watch Commander, Charlie is responsible on a shift basis for the operational management of the Fire & Rescue Service personnel, ensuring that their training and resources are maintained at the required level for immediate response to all incidents. The fire crew operates out of a modern 12 bay fire station (the largest in Ireland) at Dublin Airport. He is also the Medical Services manager and is responsible for the operation of daa's emergency ambulance, making sure it complies with all PHECC (Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council) rules and regulations. The role of Watch Commander shoulders other responsibilities including looking after the welfare of all passengers, (30 million) staff (20 thousand) and all "meeters and greeters" who come to Dublin Airport on a daily basis through the year. As part of his role, Charlie assumes the role of Operational Commander at all aircraft related incidents and at any other serious incident as required, determining the deployment of available personnel and equipment to deal with incidents as they arise, with particular reference to the Dublin Airport Directions. As well as liaising with relevant other services as needed, including Emergency Services, the Watch Commander must ensure compliance with the Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act in relation to all fire and rescue activities

and investigate incidents or accidents which may be in breach of the Act. It is also within the remit of the Watch Commander to organise and supervise training/exercises as appropriate.

Dublin Airport's Fire & Rescue Service comprises Chief Fire Officer Mr Gerry Keogh, seven Watch Commanders, seven Station Officers, and 120 firefighters. The Fleet constitutes eight major 33-ton fire appliances each of which hold 11,500 litres of water and 300 litres of foam and are capable of a top speed of 78mph, an emergency ambulance, a Bronto Hydraulic platform with an extended height capability of 32 metres, and two domestic Class B fire tenders which look after all building related incidents and RTC's. The firefighters are divided into four Watches or Crews (A/B/C/D) who work a 12 hour shift basis both day and night. Charlie describes them as, "A great dedicated bunch of professionals."

The force can also boast of having among its members, Dublin All-Ireland football medal winners including Paul Clarke, who is also a member of the present day Dublin Senior team coaching staff, governed by manager Jim Gavin, and Lyndsey Davey a member of the successful two in a row Dublin ladies All-Ireland winning team.

Like all fire services, DAFRS have been involved in fund raising for children's hospitals and in 2006 raised €52,000 for Temple St Children's Hospital by their production of a charity calendar.

With just two years and nine months to go until retirement, Charlie is looking forward passing on his great responsibilities in the job to someone else and enjoying the more time in his native lovely Leitrim.