

30th ANNIVERSARY

General Thomas F Meagher Division (SP01) Ancient Order of Hibernians in America



FRIENDSHIP, Unity and Christian Charity



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

<http://www.aohfredericksburg.org/>

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President: Shawn Lenahan **Chaplain:** Father Jerry Wooton **Vice President:** John Tracy
Financial Secretary: Bob Fitzgerald **Treasurer:** Jeff Everett **Recording Secretary:** Bill Vanderveer
Standing Committee: Dave McLaughlin **Marshal:** Paul O'Brien **Sentinel:** Jack Grey; **Webmaster:** John Hogan **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin (sisconsulting@comcast.net)

President's Corner

I hope May finds you happy and healthy. I hope each of you found the time to reflect on the message delivered by Fr. Wooten at our last meeting. May is dedicated to all mothers, but especially to our Holy Mother, Mary. What active role does Our Lady take in your life?

Brothers, our Division is on the verge of its 30th Anniversary. Over the past 30 years we have done incredible works of charity and brought Irish culture to the fore in the Fredericksburg area. The way we've accomplished this is through member participation and growth. Ours is not an organization where paying dues each year is enough. We all need to be active in the promotion of the principles to which we pledged when joining the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

I truly believe the General Meagher Division will continue to provide financial support in the community and bring attention to Irish culture. However, this cannot be achieved by any one person or group within the Division. It must be the concerted effort of every one of us. I realize your time and treasure are finite resources but ours is a good organization with noble goals worthy of your efforts.

As we enter May, we look forward to Memorial Day, the unofficial start of summer. As we are enjoying cook-outs and parties with family and friends, let us not forget the sacrifice of those who gave all in the defense of our country and way of life.

If God sends you down a stony path,
may he give you strong shoes.

May God bless you and keep you,

Shawn M. Lenahan

The Civilian Marine of the Year

Each year the Marine Corps presents the James Hamilton Award to the Information Technology Management Civilian Marine of the Year. This year, our Hibernian brother and outstanding bagpiper, Mike Yearsley received the prestigious award.



Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Robert B. Neller presented the award to Mike at the 14th Annual Awards Dinner on April 20, 2017. Mike was recognized with this coveted award for his superb leadership, untiring drive and innovation in accomplishing the Marine Corps Cyberspace Operations Group's defensive cyber mission. He led the only NSA-certified Red Team on 33 Missions focused on improving the USMC enterprise network defenses. Mike's work directly resulted

in significant and lasting improvements to USMC cyberspace domain capabilities and to the security of Marine Corps information systems around the globe.

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## **Fourth Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Tournament**

Thirty-four golfers (34) participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic. For the third consecutive year, Meadows Farms Golf Course hosted our tourney. The winning team -- a threesome -- was Powell Holly, Paul Sisk and Dan Scherder. They played a fourth ball in accordance with golf protocol and won with a low score of 60.

Dave McLaughlin managed the 2017 tourney while Joe Daley, Dick Dowd, Jack Grey, Ed Kelly, Hugh O'Brien and Bob Stevens played essential roles on "Tourney Day" as they registered players and sold raffle tickets. We are grateful to the 10 door prize donors, seven Green Sponsors and 23 hole sponsors whose contributions significantly added to the festivities. Every Hibernian who worked on the day of the event or solicited prizes and sponsors is to be commended.



The Joe Quimper Foursome signing in



Ed Kelly, Bob Stevens, Joe Daley and Jack Grey registering golfers



***“The Celt would forfeit his title to the respect of the civilized world, did he not fight with all his heart and all his soul and all his cunning against the empire which has despoiled him and murdered his kin, now with arms, now with artificial famine. There can be no peace between the two people until either Ireland is a desert or is free. It is war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. There can be neither truce nor compromise.”***

### *The Occasional Series on Irish Heroes*

Robert Gerard "Bobby" Sands

The Revolutionary Spirit of Freedom

9 March 1954 - 5 May 1981



(Portions of this article were published anonymously in 'Republican News', December 16, 1978. It has been edited and condensed in the interest of space for Dispatches)

Bobby Sands was son of a Roman Catholic family living in a predominantly loyalist district of north Belfast. On the way to Catholic school every morning, he and his sisters ran a gauntlet of bottle and rock throwing Protestant youths. At age ten, loyalist intimidation, a reality of the Catholic ghetto, forced his family to move. By age 16 Bobby was learning a trade. Two years into his apprenticeship, co-workers with guns approached him. One of them

said: "If you don't go you'll get this". Bobby found a note in his lunch-box warning "Fenian scum" to get out. In 1972, the Sands' home was attacked and damaged by a loyalist mob. His family was again forced to move, this time into an area on the fringe of Nationalist West Belfast. Bobby later wrote: *"I was only a working-class boy from a Nationalist ghetto, but it is repression that creates the revolutionary spirit of freedom."*

Later in 1972, Bobby was arrested. He spent the next three years in Long Kesh in political prisoner status. Released in 1976, within six months he was arrested again along with three other men. The RUC searched their car and found one revolver. They were taken to Castlereagh and subjected to brutal interrogations for six days. Bobby was held for eleven months prior to his trial in September 1977. The judge admitted there was no evidence linking Bobby or the others to a crime; however, they were sentenced to 14 years each for possession of the one revolver.

In a poem written in 1980, entitled '*The Crime of Castlereagh*', Bobby tells of his experiences in Castlereagh and his fears and thoughts at the time.

They came and came their job the  
same  
In relays N'er they stopped. 'Just sign  
the line!' They shrieked each time  
And beat me 'till I dropped.  
They tortured me quite viciously  
They threw me through the air.  
It got so bad it seemed I had  
Been beat beyond repair  
The days expired and no one tired,  
Except of course the prey,  
And knew they well that time would  
tell  
Each dirty trick they laid on thick  
For no one heard or saw,  
Who dares to say in Castlereagh  
The 'police' would break the law!

Bobby spent twenty-two days in solitary confinement. When he was moved to Long Kesh he joined the blanket protest and began to write for *Republican News* and the *An Phobhacht/Republican News* under the pen-name, 'Marcella'. His articles were smuggled out on tiny pieces of toilet paper.

As noted, for decades imprisoned Irish freedom fighters were treated as political

prisoners. However, the British began a publicity campaign to re-characterize them as mere criminals. IRA prisoners refused to accept criminal status. Beatings, long periods in the punishment cells, starvation diets and torture were commonplace with the full knowledge and consent of the British administration. They imposed a harsh and brutal regime on the prisoners in their attempts to break the prisoners' resistance to criminalization. Now the Republican spirit of resistance met head-on all the inhumanities the British could perpetrate.

As political prisoners they had five demands: (1) the right to wear their own clothes (not a prison uniform); (2) the right not to do prison work; (3) the right of free association with other prisoners, and to organize educational and recreational pursuits; (4) the right to one visit, one letter and one parcel per week; (5) restoration of rights lost through the protest.

When negotiations between Cardinal O'Fiaich, the Irish Catholic primate working on behalf of the prisoners, and Humphrey Atkins, the British authority, broke down, Bobby issued a statement that as political prisoners they would not wear prison-issue clothing or do prison work. His efforts to negotiate with the prison governor were rebuffed.

Bobby volunteered to lead a hunger strike. He saw it as a microcosm of the way the British had historically treated Ireland. He insisted on starting two weeks ahead of the others so his death might secure the five demands and save their lives. While on the hunger strike, Bobby was elected Member of Parliament in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone elections.

Bobby Sands, MP, died on May 5<sup>th</sup> 1981. "*I may die, but the Republic of 1916 will never die -- onward to the Republic and liberation*



of our people.” More than 100,000 people lined the route of Sands' funeral procession and he was buried in the 'New Republican Plot' alongside 76 others in Belfast in the

north of Ireland. For more information on the life and times of Bobby Sands visit:

<http://bobbysandstribute.weebly.com>



Here's a meaningful video. *Happy Memorial Day*

<http://puttinguptheflag.com/>

### The Harp -- The Oldest Emblem of Ireland

Edited for Meagher's Dispatches from an article posted by "That's Just How It Was" in *Wild Geese*, April 6, 2017



**The oldest harp on which the 'official' national emblem of Ireland** is based is housed in the Long Room at Trinity College, Dublin. The Trinity College harp (also known as Brian Boru's Harp, although it bears the O'Neill Coat of Arms), dates from the 14th or 15th century. . A left-facing image of this instrument has been the national symbol of Ireland since 1922.

Depending on which sources one reads, Brian Boru was an accomplished harpist. He belonged to the Dál gCais clan and was the last High King of Ireland, apparently known for having harpists and other bardic arts surround him. He patronized harpists and poets in his clan. Other sources would suggest the Brian Boru Harp is not his as this harp dates long after his life and death.

There is one suggestion that Brian Boru's son gave the harp to the Pope as a penance! Then apparently, the Pope, in turn, gave it to King Henry VIII and it found its way back to Ireland when Henry gave it to the Earl of Clanrickarde (Ulick na gCeannt Burke). However, there is no evidence to substantiate Boru's skilled accomplishment as a harpist.

The origin of the legend of the 'Bloody Red Hand of O'Neill' which is also associated with the Irish Harp has been lost in the mist of time. Hugh O'Neill known as The Red Hand of Ulster and there are countless myths written about this subject. According to one myth, the Kingdom of Ulster had at one time no rightful heir. The story tells of the arrival of Heremon, Heber and Ir, sons of King Milesius of Spain [Galicia], who saw an Island in need of a king. So being the King of Spain, he recklessly pursued the idea that one of his sons would take the title of King of Ireland. His sons Ir and Heber were dispatched to conquer Ireland about 504 B.C.

Myths have transcended down the centuries with the idea that the right to the title of King of Ulster was to be bestowed on the one whose hand was first to touch the Irish shore. One myth is that one of the brothers cut off his hand and threw it onto the shore so that he would be the first to claim the land. The second myth was that a boat race took place between the brothers on Strangford Lough, a large lake in County Down. The third myth is that the hand belonged to one of two giants engaged in a battle for the title of Heir to the Kingdom of Ulster and it was this hand that was the first to reach the shore -- which left a red imprint on the coves at Strangford Lough.

However, other sources suggest the one myth that has survived above all others is that it was Hugh O'Neill's (Ui Neill Tribe) Red Hand. In early Irish history the Irish Harp did have a red hand emblazoned on it suggests that it did belong to the O'Neill clan at some point in time.

Over the centuries there have also been countless theories about the harp's ownership or indeed who actually commissioned it. All of the theories continue to pass down from generation to generation and for three hundred years there is no record of ownership. Allegedly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it resurfaced in the hands of Henry McMahon of County Clare. He gave it to William Conyngham of Slane Castle who, in turn, presented it to Trinity College in 1760 (or was it 1782?) where it remains on display.

Further back in Irish history, some sources suggest the Greek historian, Hecataeus of Miletus (ca 500 B.C.) described the Celts of Ireland as "singing songs in praise of Apollo, and playing melodiously on the harp." This indicates the Irish Harp has been the central instrument of ancient Irish culture.

The traditional harp can be found on all presidential and official documents. It is on Irish passports, on the Leinster Flag, the Euro Coins and is also the logo for numerous prominent supported organizations. The harp has been used extensively by business and other corporations, wishing to convey the "Irishness" of their product, from Guinness to Ryan Air.



Then we have the song titled, “The Dying Rebel” with the words:

*He fought for Ireland and Ireland only,  
The Harp and Shamrock, Green, White and Gold.*

### Irish Language Lesson of the Month

“**Thank you**” in Irish -- in some languages, “thank you” is a single word (“gracias” in Spanish or “merci” in French) - Not in Irish

*Go raibh maith agat* (literally “may good be at you”)

/guh rev mah a-gut/  
Audio Player

<http://audio.bitesizeirishgaelic.com/mp3/3441.mp3>

00:00



**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** President Lenahan appointed **Jack Grey, Chairman, Committee of the Sick.** He asks that prayer requests be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting ([RHGrey@cox.net](mailto:RHGrey@cox.net)//540-373-4496). It might be wise to let your spouse/family member know this too, just in case you become ill or hospitalized.

In July 2016 Pope Francis declared “*We are living in a moment of annihilation of man as image of God*”. He recalled Pope emeritus Benedict’s pronouncement: “*It’s the epoch of sin against God, the Creator.*”

Pray for the repose of the soul Brother Neil Mulcahy and all deceased Hibernian Brothers. Keep in your prayers our family members and friends:



- Bill Phillips' brother Robert;
- Bill Phillips
- Paul O'Brien
- Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo and his father Joseph Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer);
- Hugh O'Brien's brother, John (recovering from stroke);
- Amy Whittaker (cancer),
- Andy Link's parents Eileen and Dick (Dick is Eileen's care giver),
- Matthew Carroll (IVNVMP)



### ***Mark Your Calendars!***

**Multiple Dates: Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family! For Info (540) 548-8748)

***May 16: Division meeting***

***May 21: Lad's Luncheon***, Adventure –South Brewery @ 1PM

***27-28 May: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St Patrick Church***

***June 4: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St Mary Church***

***June 4: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St. Matthew Parish Ministry Fair (7:30-12).***

***June 10: VAAOH State Meeting*** – hosted by Msgr. Charles A. Kelly, Jr. Division at St. Joseph parish, Richmond, Virginia

***July 1: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ Lake of the Woods***

***July 11: Memorial Mass for Neil Mulcahy, 6:30PM, St Patrick Church***

***June/July: (Date TBD) 3d Annual family picnic***

***No division meeting in July***

***August 2: Trip for two Raffle Ticket sales @ St Mary***

**August 15: Division meeting!**

**September 16: Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle drawing at Adventure-South Oktoberfest** (Note: 2017 Halfway to St Patrick Day Celebration is cancelled)

**September 22-24: VAAOH Biennial State Convention, Virginia Beach Resort Hotel**

**October 28: Gen. Meagher Division's 30th Anniversary Dinner Party, American Legion Post 320, 8456 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania, VA 22553**



*General Meagher Division Attire*

In a perfect world every brother would have these articles of clothing:

- For **semi-formal/formal occasions**, the AOH “uniform” is green sport coat, tri-color sash, white shirt, Irish theme tie, black trousers and optional ball cap. These occasions include AOH State and National conventions, Masses, funerals, AOH dinners, parades, and other public events.
- At **informal events** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo or sweatshirts (optional ball cap) are appropriate.

**Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan ([s\\_lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s_lenahan@verizon.net))**

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**Green Jacket:** Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source: [http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens\\_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html](http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html). Visit the website; call the 800 number. Tell them you're with AOH and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.

**AOH Sash:** Brothers procure their own sashes. The AOH tri-color sash represents the national colors of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to neck/collar) crossing to the left hip. Measure from right shoulder to left hip in inches; keep in mind the sash will normally be worn over a jacket, possibly a raincoat/overcoat (and maybe a growing waist line).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)  
She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00 and guarantees satisfaction: if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund.
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and offers "special prices" for larger orders.  
<https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>