



30th ANNIVERSARY

General Thomas F. Meagher Division

1987-2017



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

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

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President: Shawn Lenahan **Chaplain:** Father Jerry A. 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

Brothers, thank you to all who attended our 30th anniversary party last month. It was a very good time, we got hear songs of the civil war and Irish tunes from DragonFyre, had a delicious meal of corned beef or salmon from University Mary Washington Catering and heard a terrific speech from National Park Service Historian Frank O'Reilly. Frank's speech reaffirmed the good decision to honor the naming of our Division after Thomas F Meagher and the contributions to the Irish in America through the sacrifice of the men in the Irish Brigade. Reflecting on all of the good we have been able to achieve, I know our next ten years and beyond will be greater still.

I would like to thank Brother Bill Halpin for his assistance in planning the event and designing and writing the program; Brother Bill Vanderveer for coordinating and running the bar; Brother and Mrs. Bob Fitzgerald for collecting payments and selling drink tickets; and Brothers Andy Link, Jeff Everett and Dave McLaughlin for helping to set up and take down the tables and chairs. I would also like to acknowledge my wife, Jill Lenahan, for her support of the event, including designing and assembling the centerpieces.

This month we will be honoring our fallen brothers at our first annual memorial Mass. It will take place at Saint Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church on November 7 at 7:00pm and will be said by our Chaplain, Father Wooton. I hope all brothers will attend. Remember, upon your passing, the Division, in conjunction with the National Project St. Patrick, arranges to have

a Mass said for the repose of your soul, and you will be continuously prayed for by your Brothers in their daily prayers, at meetings and the annual memorial Mass. Share this information with your family and be proud of your association with the Hibernians. Be certain AOH is mentioned in your obituary!

Brothers, as we enter November, it is a time to give thanks to God for all of the gifts He has given us. All we have or will have is due to the grace of God. I am thankful for my family, my country, that I have a job to go to and a roof over my head. I am thankful for my friends and for you, my brothers. I am thankful that I am Irish and Roman Catholic and I am thankful to the Ancient Order of Hibernians where I can promote both!

May the Lord Bless you and keep you;
May the Lord make his face shine upon you;
May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace

In Our Motto,

Shawn M Lenahan

Notes from Quarterly State Meeting

Lt Col Dowd Division hosted the first quarterly state meeting in the 2017-2019 term on November 4th. Ten of our 14 divisions participated in the meeting, including two via teleconferencing. The Order's Major Degrees were conferred on 21 candidates representing six divisions. The VAAOH slogan for this term is "**Commit to the Future**". This is a call for revitalization of recruitment efforts and retention of our current membership. The role of division Organizers in this task was emphasized.

Veterans Affairs, new Forms formats (all on line and "fillable") and the new National AOH logo (see below) were discussed. The appeal to Congress to press the Library of Congress for IAHM recognition was a success: Now IAHM should appear on television, in schools, etc., during March. There is a separate effort to gain legislation in the Commonwealth to legalize the annual proclamation of IAHM. The anti-Irish article in *Newsweek* (and related articles) that were analyzed by our Brother Peter Carroll was discussed and subsequently sent to National AOH and all VA divisions.

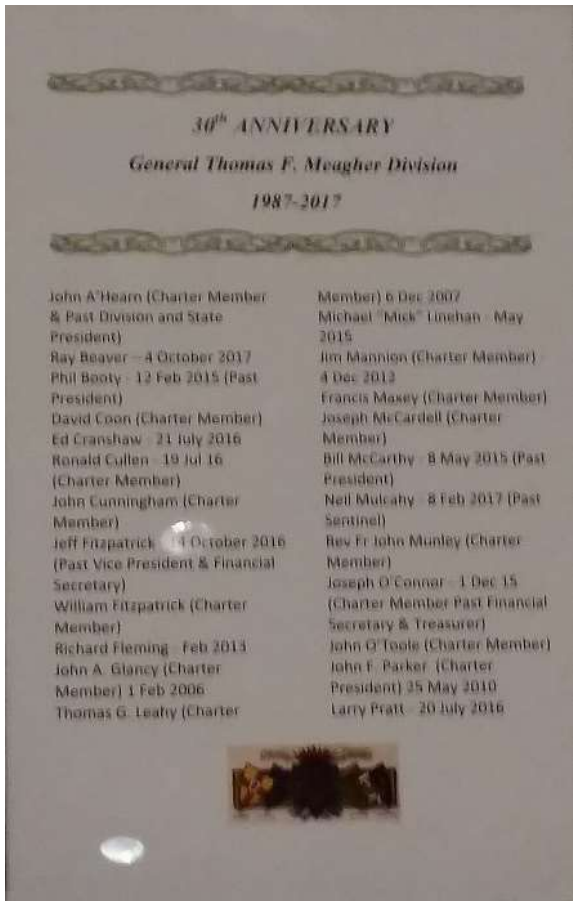


**Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS**
Irish • Catholic • American



Division Memorial Mass

On November 7th, the division honored our deceased brothers with Mass celebrated by our Chaplain, Farther Jerry Wooton at St Mary in Fredericksburg. Frank Connors and Jack Grey assisted Father Wooton and President Lenahan read the names of 23 deceased brothers. Attendance was lower than anticipated.



THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

The 30th Anniversary Celebration went off without a hitch with about 27 Hibernians and spouses in attendance (lower than anticipated). The UMW Catering Service provided excellent food and service.



Bill Vanderveer looked lonely tending bar for the evening. One might imagine a long line of sharp elbowed Irishmen and or women lining up for an Irish beverage or two on this celebratory evening. However, it seems “moderation” was the by-word of the evening.



Traditional Irish music was provided by DragonFyre. Our keynote speaker was none other than National Park Service Historian Frank O'Reilly. Ranger O'Reilly presented an inspiring talk focusing on Thomas Meagher's experience with the Young Ireland movement and the “Rising of '48”, Meagher's journey to America, and his motivation in forming an Irish Brigade

He covered Meagher's command of the Irish Brigade and the Brigade's losses on 12 December 1862 during the Battle of Fredericksburg.

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## Our Newest Brothers



The Division welcomed two new brothers in October. They are: Jim McCaffery (left) a financial advisor and Army veteran. Jim stepped forward to chair the very critical Heritage Committee. He is a St Patrick Parishioner, and Carl (C.J.) Johnson is a retired USMCR officer and government contractor at Quantico. C.J. joined the Golf Committee. He is a St Mary Parishioner.

Shawn Lenahan presided over the Shamrock Degree ceremony.

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The 2017 Trip for Two to Ireland winners (drum roll please...):



Mr. & Mrs. Armando Arvizu, St Patrick Parishioners, pictured with travel agent Mary Ford (on left). The Arvizus are the fifth St Patrick parish winners and have decided to take the trip. To paraphrase the sailors' ditty: We wish fair skies and trailing winds for their journey to the Emerald Isle.

All others – wait 'til next year!

Freedom for All Ireland Fund Raiser



Virginia State FFAI co-chairmen, Jim McLaughlin and Terry Riley organized a wonderful field trip to the Pennsylvania coal region for a look into the AOH history plus a private tour of the historic Yuengling Brewery in Pottsville. Among the 15 Hibernians and spouses on the trip were Meagher Division brothers Hogan, McLaughlin, Halpin, and Mulhern. After the tour and while en route to Girardsville we stopped briefly at the Mauch Chunk (now Jim Thorpe) courthouse where 13 Hibernians were railroaded with trumped up charges, sat through a “show” trial, were found guilty, and where seven of them were hanged, including, the last man standing, Jack Kehoe.

At left, Hibernian Joe Wayne, Jack Kehoe's great grandson and current owner of the Hibernian House in Girardsville, captured everyone's the undivided attention as he explained the frequently misguided stories surrounding the plight of Irish coal miners, the Hibernians, and the “Mollie Maguires” (see also our 30th Anniversary pamphlet).



Joe told us the Hibernian House has been in his family since about 1870. His Great Grandfather, Joe Kehoe, held AOH meetings there, as Joe still does today. He has a vast collection of AOH memorabilia, much of it still used in traditional AOH ceremonies. The walls are covered with photos, murals and artifacts. The Hibernian House is time capsule and should be on every Hibernian's bucket list.

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***“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.”***

### 2017 -- A Year of THREE Important Anniversaries

In addition to celebrating our 30<sup>th</sup> year of Friendship, Unity and true Christian Charity in Spotsylvania and Fredericksburg, 2017 commemorates 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary the death of Thomas Francis Meagher and marks the 170<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Black 47”, the start of *An Gorta Mor*.

The famine was a turning point in Irish history and its effects permanently changed the island's demographic, political, and cultural landscapes. According to one source, in 1841 8.2 million people lived in Ireland; by 1900 that number was about 3 million<sup>1</sup>, thus creating the Irish diaspora we know today.

Catholics, most living in poverty, made up 80% of the Irish population. For 200 years Catholics were prohibited from purchasing or leasing land, from voting, from holding political office, from living in or near a corporate town, from obtaining education, from entering a profession, and from doing many other things necessary for a person to succeed and prosper in society. Irish properties were owned by (primarily) absentee, Protestant landlords who used middlemen to extract rents from Irish tenant farmers. By and large these intervenors were crooks who demanded rents in excess of the authorized amount. In 1845, 60% of Irish tenant farms were less than 15 acres, too small for any crop other than potatoes, which became the family staple.

An article written by John Mitchel on "English Rule" appeared in *The Nation* on 7 March 1846. Mitchel wrote that the Irish People were "expecting famine day by day", and that they attributed it collectively not to "the rule of heaven as to the greedy and cruel policy of England." Further, he wrote that the people watched their "food melting in rottenness off the face of the earth", all the while watching "heavy-laden ships, freighted with the yellow corn their own hands have sown and reaped, spreading all sail for England.”

The famine became a rallying point for Irish nationalism and republicanism at home and in the United States. John Mitchel became a leading member of both Young Ireland and the Irish Confederation. As we know, “*Meagher of the Sword*” was a leader in the Young Ireland movement and in subsequent the rebellion of 1848.



**Jack Grey, Committee of the Sick Chairman.** All prayer requests should 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.

Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers.

Keep in your prayers our family members and friends:

- **Nolan Banks**, 3 year old son of our former Financial Secretary, Jeff Banks. Nolan has soft tissue sarcoma (RMS) which can be very aggressive. Essentially, Nolan needs a miracle. Pray for the intercession on behalf of Father Augustus Tolton who is a candidate for future canonization (for the actual prayer see my email 10/18/2017 9:37 AM).
- Paul O'Brien – recovering from surgery
- Bill Phillips' brother Robert
- 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),



**Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family!

**November 11:** Veterans Day! Originally "Armistice Day", celebrated on the first anniversary of the end of World War I. It became a national holiday 1938. President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation in 1954 to change the name to Veterans Day

**November 19:** Monthly "Lad's Luncheon" More to come on time and location.

**November 21:** Division meeting – Election of 2018 Officers!

**December 3:** Annual Family Christmas Party 4PM at St Michael the Archangel High School. Bring the family and friends who might be interested in joining AOH



## 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>

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<sup>i</sup> *An Gorta Mor – The Great Hunger*, John A Brennan, posted in Wild Geese accessed 29 October 29, 2017