



30th ANNIVERSARY

General Thomas F. Meagher Division

1987-2017



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

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

December 2017

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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)

Nollaig shona agus athbhliain faoi mhaise daoibh!

(Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all)

President's Corner

Brothers:

As we wind down 2017 I want to thank you for a very successful year. We were able to spread Irish culture and raise money for charity. We celebrated our 30th Anniversary as a Division with the AOH and we also saw our own Bill Halpin elected to the office of State President.

We have much to be proud of and much more to do. As you enjoy the holidays and the company of your family and friends, please take the time to reflect on all the good we do and why you are a Hibernian. We have many fun events throughout the year for you to take part in and I hope in 2018 to see more of each of you!

At our December meeting we will install the new officers for the 2018-2019 term and for those attending who pay their 2018 dues, you will have an opportunity to win a very special prize!

Nollaig Shona duit!

Shawn Lenahan

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*Division Officers for the 2018-2019 Term*

Congratulate these officers elected and/or appointed to lead the division in the 2018-2019 term. (Note: By-Laws changes extended terms in elected offices from one year to two years.) Bold print indicates a new incumbent

President: Shawn Lenahan  
**Vice President:** Dave McLaughlin  
Recording Secretary: Bill Vanderveer  
Financial Secretary: Bob Fitzgerald  
Treasurer: Jeff Everett  
**Standing Committee:** Jake Ruppert  
**Marshal:** Neil O'Leary  
Sentinel: Jack Gray

**Vice President Dave McLaughlin**

Dave has been a member of the General Meagher Division since 2015, received the Order's Major Degrees in 2017, and is past Chairman of the Standing Committee. He was born and raised in Washington, DC. He attended Catholic elementary school, Georgetown Preparatory School (six forms) and obtained a BS at Georgetown University. Immediately after graduating, he entered the U. S. Air Force and began an almost 25-year career with tours served around the world. The highlight of his career was flying as an aircrew member (Weapons System Officer) accumulating more than 1,500 flight hours in the F-4 Phantom II. After retiring, he remained in Las Vegas, NV supporting the Air Force's test and training activities at Nellis Air Force Base and the massive Nevada Test and Training Range. In 2004, he moved back East and supported the USMC as a contractor and Government Service civilian until his retirement in August, 2016. He has three children and their families are scattered around the country.

**Chairman, Standing Committee, Jake Ruppert**

John Robert (Jake) Ruppert joined the General Meagher Division in 2015 and received the Order's Major Degrees in 2017. Jake grew up in Philadelphia, PA and is an avid Flyers, Eagles, and Phillies fan. He served eight years in the U.S Army. He holds a Masters in Information Systems from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and B.S.in Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point. For 30 years, Jake worked at Lockheed Martin in Systems engineering and Information Technology infrastructure. In 2017, Jake was offered a position with the Booz | Allen | Hamilton Corporation where he provides information systems infrastructure expertise to various federal civil agency programs.

He and Bette have been married for 41 years; they have two children. They are active parishioners at St. Mary in Fredericksburg. Jake loves music, photography and spending quality time with his family.

**Marshal Dennis O'Leary**

Dennis joined the General Meagher Division in 2015 and received the Order's Major Degrees in 2016. He was elected division Marshal for the 2018-2019 term. Dennis is an Army Brat born in Frankfurt Germany and moved around until his father retired in southern New Mexico. He

attended High School in Las Cruces and graduated with a B.S.in Biology from the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque in 1983 where he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He served 13 years active duty and several years in the reserves. He holds a M.S. in Information Systems from Strayer University.. Following his military service, he worked more than 10 years as a defense contractor for SAIC and Skylla Engineering. In 2009, Dennis was offered a government Program Analyst position with Marine Corps Systems Command where he still works in the acquisition of Information Technology for the Marines. He and Celeste have been married for 33 years. They have three grown children. They are active parishioners at St. Jude where Celeste works part time in the Parish Office and Dennis serves on the Building Committee and as a Eucharistic Minister.

At the November meeting President Lenahan appointed **Division Organizer Jim Florio**

### **Organizer Jim Florio**

Jim joined the General Meagher Division in 2015 and received the Order's Major Degrees in 2017. He was appointed Division Organizer for the 2018-2019 term. Jim is originally from Massachusetts, but has lived below the Mason-Dixon Line since graduating from the Virginia Military Institute in 1988. He served as a Lieutenant in the United States Navy and is a Gulf War Veteran. In 1995, Jim joined the U.S. Secret Service, where he served as a Special Agent in the Charlotte, NC, Field Office and in the Greensboro, NC, Resident Agency. In 2002, he was transferred to Washington, DC where he served on the Vice President Cheney's Protective Detail. He was promoted to Supervisory Special Agent and assigned to the Criminal Investigative Division where he managed the Electronic Crimes Branch. He completed his career at the Secret Service training facility in Beltsville, MD, retiring in 2016. Jim has since been working as the Operations Manager for St. Mary Church; his job description simply reads: "all duties as assigned".

Jim and Leigh have been married for 20 years. They have four children, all of whom have attended Holy Cross Academy (two are now at Mountain View High School). They are active parishioners at St. Mary's, where Leigh was, until recently, Chair of the Welcoming Committee. Jim is a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus. He is also an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion; RCIA Team Member; Catechist for Religious Education; and has served on both the Stewardship Committee and Parish Council. Jim was invested in the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in 2009, and was recently promoted to Knight Commander. He is currently pursuing his MA in Catechetics and Evangelization at Franciscan University at Steubenville (on-line), and hopes to one day serve as Director of Religious Education at one of the parishes in the Fredericksburg area.

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Get in the Picture!



TFM Hibernians enjoyed friendship and unity over lunch at Harry's Ale House at Harrison Crossing in November. Our monthly gatherings are growing in size and there's always room for more. Next luncheon is 1PM, December 17th at the Colonial Tavern -- Home of the Irish Brigade.

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## **Annual Family Christmas Party**

The division hosted the annual family Christmas party on December 3d at St Michael the Archangel High School. President Shawn and Jill Lenahan overcame last minute hitches to assure everyone had a great time with plenty of Christmas cheer and food. Chaplain Father Jerry Wooton said the invocation followed by Grace.





Christmas music accompanied by a slide show of past and current Hibernian events added to the atmosphere.

Santa made a “surprise” appearance. Noting that very few children and/or grandchildren were present, a resourceful and ever flexible Santa innovated in ways only a real Santa might do. Every guest received age appropriate gift to take home.

State Vice President Jay McCarthy was also in attendance.



### *Did you know?*

- Almost half of Washington’s Troops in the American Revolution were Irish by birth or decent, among them 1,500 Officers, including 26 Generals
- Irish born William Thompson was the first Colonel commissioned in the U.S. Army. In 1775, he was appointed Colonel in the Continental Army and helped defend Boston. He was promoted to brigadier-general and he is buried in the Old Carlisle (PA) Cemetery.
- The Irish flag stands inside the Alamo in recognition of the largest ethnic group to give their lives defending that icon of independence - 12 native-born Irishmen
- Charles Thompson of County Derry designed the Great Seal of the United States



***“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.”***

Check out [Drogheda](#) for history information.

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The Hedge Schools of Ireland

Edited from Maura Ciarrocchi's, *ICSSA Newsletter*, Oct 1999

Teaching, an ancient and honorable profession, was once a dangerous calling in Ireland. For two centuries the English denied Irish access to both justice and education. The early 18th century parents who were illiterate through no fault of their own, and men who had somehow learned teaching skills despite the law, took matters into their own hands. Determination was their answer to frustration, and the Irish hedge schools were born.

The British government described hedge schools as guerilla warfare against the laws that prohibited education of the Irish. Anyone who sheltered or housed a schoolteacher was penalized if the secret was discovered. The family's house was burned, its crops destroyed. The Irish, however, have always been resourceful. To avoid risking family homes and property, the hedge-school teacher took his students out-of-doors. He would select a remote corner, the hidden side of a hedge or a mossy bank out of view by passing strangers and class was underway. A different student was selected each day to serve as a lookout and would give the signal if a stranger approached. The few books and pieces of

paper were quickly hidden and teacher and students scattered until the danger passed.

It is significant that in the 16th and 17th centuries about 20 colleges for Irish Catholic students were established on the European continent. Salamanca, Lisbon, Douai, Antwerp, Toulouse, Paris and Prague each boasted an Irish university. In Rome, there were at least four. From these schools the brightest or the most ambitious hedge school “graduates” found their way into the army, the Church, Foreign Service, and the legal and medical professions.

This speaks to the academic standards of the open-air schools. Elementary reading, writing and mathematics were the first lessons, later followed by Latin, Greek, higher mathematics, history, geography, bookkeeping, surveying and navigation. The itinerant hedge-school teachers are credited with preserving the Irish language and much of the poetry and legends of Ireland. Some of these dedicated teachers copied complete books by hand and then loaned them to their students. No social gathering was complete without the hedge school teacher. He was the unpaid village scribe and the parish clerk.

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## The Manchester Martyrs -- 150 Years Ago

Edited from a Wild Geese post by Robert J. Bateman, November 5, 2017

November 23d marked the 150th anniversary of the execution of the brave Fenian heroes, known as “The Manchester Martyrs.”

On 18 September 1867 Colonel Rickard Burke, Captain Michael O’Brien, Captain Edward Condon and a party of 15 Bold Fenian Men rescued IRB Chief Executive Colonel Thomas Kelly, and IRB commander for Manchester and Liverpool, Captain Timothy Deasy, as they were being transported from Bellevue gaol (jail) by British Authorities. (*Fenian Officers Burke, Condon, O’Brien, Kelly and Deasy were members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America.*)

During the rescue, Police Sergeant Charles Brett was accidently shot a killed. A number of the rescuers and dozens of innocent local Irishmen were arrested and brought to trial for Brett’s murder. On 28 October, William Allen, Michael Larkin, Captain O’Brien, and Captain Condon were convicted and sentenced to death by hanging.

As was custom at the time, after sentencing, prisoners made statements to the court.

Condon in his speech spoke these immortal words,

*“You will soon send us before God and I am perfectly prepared to go. I have nothing to regret, or retract, or take back. I can only say GOD SAVE IRELAND”.*

His companions rose and extending their hand-cuffed hands upward cried out “GOD SAVE IRELAND!”

On 23 November, Allen, Larkin and O’Brien were publicly hanged. They were buried in unmarked graves of quicklime in unconsecrated ground within New Bailey Prison. Condon was also convicted, but as an American citizen his death sentence was commuted to 20 years penal servitude; he served 15 years.

Reporter T.D. Sullivan who witnessed the trial and execution was inspired to write “God Save Ireland” which became the virtual Irish national anthem.

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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//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 forwarding email).
- **Father Wooton's** father recovering from by-pass surgery
- Paul O'Brien – recovering from surgery
- Bill Phillips' brother Robert
- Hugh O'Brien's brother, John (recovering from stroke)
- Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo and his father Joseph Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer)
- Amy Whittaker (cancer)
- Andy Link's parents Eileen and Dick (Dick is Eileen's care giver)

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***Mark Your Calendars!***

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

**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

**December 10:** Wreath presentation at City Dock to honor the Irish Brigade followed by route to battle walking tour

**December 19:** Division Meeting/Installation of 2018-19 officers

**December 25: Christmas Day!**



**January 14:** Fredericksburg Religious Freedom March

**January 19:** March for Life, Washington, DC

**February 3:** Quarterly State Meeting hosted by Msgr Bradican Div., Annandale (St Michael School). Major Degree Exemplification to follow the meeting



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 sweatshirt (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))**

**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>

This newsletter is an unofficial publication providing information to members of the General Thomas F. Meagher Division and others who may have interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is the author of the contents.