



**GENERAL THOMAS F. MEAGHER DIVISION
SPOTSYLVANIA DIVISION NO. 1**

May 2013 Highlights

***Our Third Decade of Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity
in the greater Fredericksburg area!***

This is Memorial Day weekend. I believe it is fitting and appropriate that we all take a moment from our busy schedules to remember and to be thankful that we have in our great nation a multitude of citizens willing to place the safety, security, and wellbeing of others ahead of themselves. Please spend a few minutes at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKqT0-3JV5E&feature=youtube_gdata_player



VAAOH State Quarterly Meeting: We hosted the meeting at St Mary Parish Life Center. State President Chuck Curran thanked the division adding that the food was plentiful and the accommodations comfortable.

I add my personal thanks to John Hogan, who took charge of the day, Hugh O'Brien, Harry Crisp, Tommy Lyons and Patrick Fogarty for their volunteerism and support for this important meeting. I also thank Father Rooney and Rick Caporali for generously providing the venue.

Help and Hope for Meaningful Employment Project: We now have 28 participants; six have found meaningful employment!. Project leader, Brother Chuck Payne, asks that all Division brothers assist in the networking segment of our approach. At our June seminars, the guest speaker is Deacon John Hubbarth, St Matthew Parish, who is familiar with Arlington Diocese programs such as the Christians Are Networking (CAN) job ministry.

Viet Nam Memorial in Ennis, Ireland: At the VAAOH state meeting a decision was reached to formally endorse the memorial initiative in Ennis (County Clair).

Late last year, the Ennis town council unanimously approved a proposal to have a memorial erected to Irish men and women who served and died in Allied service in South East Asia during the period 1959-75. The memorial will be erected in the vicinity of Clonroadmore Park and the names of Irish men and women who served and lost their lives in South East Asia, including Vietnam, will be listed on the Memorial which will carry the inscription, *“The people of the allied nations express their heartfelt gratitude for the service and sacrifice of those above and to their families, loved ones and the Irish Nation.”*

The formal dedication will be featured as part of “The Gathering Ireland 2013” and is planned for International Remembrance Day, November 11, 2013. The estimated cost is \$275K; individual donations can be made using links on the project website: (www.TheIrishVietNamVeteranMemorialProject.org)

I drafted a letter for the VAAOH president’s signature requesting a National Ancient Order of Hibernians endorsement that would necessarily include a link to the Irish Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Project website and encouragement to AOH brothers nation-wide to help fund this monument. Both the January-February and March-April editions for the *National Hibernian Digest* highlighted this effort.

Trip for Two to Ireland: The month of May marks the halfway point for our most important fund raising effort. Right now we are about 1/3 of the way to our goal. Raffle coordinator, Jim O’Donnell, recently reminded you of the absolute necessity that every ticket is sold. The reasons we do this are highlighted below!

Freedom of Religion: One of our newest brothers, Ken Malley, gave an compelling talk and a call to action in what he envisions as a nation-wide stand for Religious Freedom and a return to basic societal and Catholic values vis -à-vis same sex marriage, the anti-Catholic HHS mandate, etc. Brother Malley believes AOH can be an advocate by distributing Religious Freedom logo items (car magnets, lapel pins, etc., perhaps as a fund raiser similar to the license plate frames PSP Tom Dunn sold years ago). Today I recommended Brother Malley be given an opportunity to address the VAAOH state convention 19-21 July.

Arlington Diocese Work Camp Program: We received a request from St Matthew Parish to support their work camp program. For the first time in 10 years St Matthew will be sending a team of 13 students to work camp. This year, in addition to our annual donations to St Patrick and St Mary Parishes, we voted to donate a like amount to St Matthew.

Annual Scholastic Awards: The faculty members at both St Patrick Elementary School and Holy Cross Academy have selected students to receive our annual stipend intended to defray the expense of sending children to Catholic High School. Again this year the St Patrick student will attend St Michael the Archangel and the Holy Cross Academy student will attend Pope John Paul the Great High School. The awards will be presented at the school graduation exercises in early June.

AOH Degrees: “*You’re not a true Hibernian until you’ve received the Major Degree*” says AOH legend, Pat Troy. The next opportunity to receive the **Major Degree will at the Virginia AOH State Convention scheduled for 19-21 July.**

We plan a Shamrock Degree ceremony at our June meeting.

Our Website: Mike Yearsley and Tom Evans are discussing significant upgrades to our website. The plan is to get division public information broadcasted to the widest possible audiences. More to come...in the meantime check out www.fredericksburgaoh.org. Let us know what you think.

The Gathering Ireland 2013: Check out <http://www.thegatheringdublin.com/>

Coming Events:

- **June 19th:** Shamrock Degree at the division monthly meeting
- **July 19-21:** The **Biennial State convention** will be sponsored by the LTC Dowd Division (Woodbridge) at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House.
- **September 21:** Trip for Two to Ireland **raffle drawing**
- **October 4:** 4-7:30PM **Annual St Mary Fall Festival**
- **October 12:** Second Annual Meagher Division **Halfway to St Patrick Day Celebration** at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House.
- **2014AD:** In September I’ll be appointing a nominating committee. The committee will solicit Brothers to determine interest in one of our eight elected positions. All positions are open for nomination; none are pre-ordained. Only the division president is required to have the Order’s Major

(Tower) Degree. So, give this some private thought through the next few months. It would be beneficial to the division to see some of our newer Brothers step to the responsibility. We elect our officers in November with our officer installation ceremony in December.

Prayer List: Please keep Pat Phillips and Brother Joe Daley in your prayers.

In the Did You Know Category: The 1908 Summer Olympics were held in London, England.. Many of the medals were won by Irish and Irish-American athletes who were members of the Irish American Athletic Club of Celtic Park in Sunnyside, Queens, and also members of the New York City Police Department.

During the "Parade of Nations," it was customary for teams to dip their nation's flags as a show of respect for the ruling monarch of the host country. Martin J. Sheridan, born in 1881 in County Mayo, Ireland was a discus thrower, on the American Olympic team. He was scheduled to carry the American flag. Sheridan immigrated to New York in 1901 and joined the NYPD in 1906. Patrolman Sheridan held a grudge against the English; he believed they were responsible for the Irish famine. Members of the Olympic committee knowing his dislike for the English replaced Sheridan with Ralph Rose as bearer of the flag.

Irish-Americans had a strong sense of patriotic pride for their newfound country. NYPD Patrolman Mathew McGrath at 6'2", 245 pounds was a hammer thrower and native of County Tipperary. As the Americans approached the Royal Box, McGrath broke ranks and stepped up to Rose and said, "Dip our flag and you'll be in a hospital tonight."

The flag was not dipped which caused an international incident. During a news conference, Sheridan spoke for the entire Olympic team; he pointed to the American flag and said, "This flag dips to no earthly king." That precedent was set which is still followed today during the Olympic Games; the American Flag has never been dipped to anyone since that day in 1908. In fact, the United States Flag Code was officially changed to read, "No disrespect should be shown to the flag of the United States of America; the flag should not be dipped to any person or thing." (See Title 4, United States Code, Chapter 1 § 8)