



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
 Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

July 2019

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President's Corner

Brothers:

I hope your summer is going well. Thanks to all who have stepped up to sell raffle tickets. It's been very warm to be outside, but I sincerely appreciate your efforts!

I am looking forward to a great second half of the year. The State Convention promises to be a lot of fun. The Mary's Shelter Summer Soiree is always a fun and inspirational evening and of course we have the Halfway to St. Patrick's Day Party with the Colonial Tavern in September.

Please be safe and pray for one another. I will see you all at our next Business Meeting in August!

In Our Motto,
 Shawn Lenahan



On 24 June Division brothers met with Father Ziegler for dinner at Harry's Ale House. Father was presented with an engraved commemorative pint glass and copies of the Meagher Division's *The Long Road to Freedom* and the booklet *Commemorating Thirty Years of Friendship, Unity ad True Christian Charity*.

John Hogan organized the dinner which was attended by John, Shawn Lenahan, Dave McLaughlin, Neil Buttimer, and Bill Halpin



Wishing "fair winds and a following seas..." We bid farewell to Hugh and Corita O'Brien as they move on to their next chapter in Manassas, VA. Hugh has been with the General Meagher Division since shortly after it was chartered and served in many capacities including division president, historian, political education, parish liaison, and chairman of the charities committee. He also held several appointed positions on the state board and served as the elected Virginia State President for two years. In 2018 he was honored to be enrolled as an AOH Life Member.

We are Pro-Life



For the past ten years, the Gen. Meagher Division has annually donated about \$3000 to local pro-life organizations including Mary's Shelter, the Paul Stephan Foundation and Birthright of Fredericksburg. This fine organizations provide housing and social services to expectant mothers. At left, Division Vice President Dave McLaughlin is presenting a check for \$1,000 to Kathleen Wilson, Executive Director at Mary's Shelter in Fredericksburg. Checks have been mailed to the Paul-Stephan and Birthright.

Trip for Two Update

Trip for Two tickets sales are proceeding. To date we've sold after Masses at St Patrick Church, St Matthew, St Jude, Lake of the Woods and St Mary. Future sales include St Mary on July 13-

14; August 17-18; and Sept 14-15 and will need volunteers. (**Note:** The State Biennial Convention is 16-18 August and the Halfway Party in on 15 September.)



“Wild Bill” Donovan: Irish-American Hero and Superspy

Edited for space from Geoffrey Cobb, *Irish America* Contributor, *May / June 2019*



(WWI) Donovan as a lieutenant colonel with the 165th Regiment in France in September 1918.

“Wild Bill“ Donovan had many fascinating friends, including Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond. Perhaps no other Irish American served his country more daringly, yet Donovan’s largely clandestine service to America is still greatly under-appreciated.

Born in 1883, the son of a County Cork-born railroad superintendent in Buffalo, New York, Donovan combined good looks with a first-rate intelligence and inherited his father’s allegiance to the Republican party. Excelling in his local Catholic school, Donovan first went to a local Catholic college before transferring to Columbia University. There he starred as the football team’s quarterback. At Columbia Law School he

was a classmate of his future boss, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Returning to Buffalo, Donovan joined a prestigious Buffalo law firm. He was admitted as the first Catholic into the Saturn Club, Buffalo’s most prestigious club. He married Ruth Rumsey, the attractive Protestant daughter of Buffalo’s richest man.

Donovan was too restless just to practice law. Eager for military service, he and his Saturn

Club friends formed a National Guard cavalry troop, known as the Silk Stocking Boys, which was soon dispatched to Mexico, chasing Pancho Villa across the hot and dusty Mexican landscape.

When America entered the Great War in 1917, Donovan was commissioned as a major in “the Fighting 69th,” known for their heroism in the Civil War and notorious for their fist-fighting and hard drinking. Donovan weeded out the troublemakers and hand-picked 2,000 smart, athletic, and agile men.

Donovan befriended the 69th’s Canadian-born chaplain Father Duffy, whose statue still graces New York’s Times Square. Duffy admired Donovan’s fearlessness in battle. Donovan wore his medals in battle to encourage his men, even though they made him a target for snipers. On July 27, 1918, Donovan proved his valor while leading his men across the Ourcq River. Hemmed in by German machine guns on three sides, the 69th lost 600 of 1,000 men, including three-quarters of the officers. For his bravery, Donovan won the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation’s second-highest award. Soon, Donovan again displayed his courage, fighting in the thick of battle on October 14 and famously shouting, “They can’t hit me, and they won’t hit you!” Wounded the next morning, Donovan refused to be evacuated and continued commanding his men, even after American tanks retreated from the withering German fire. Awarded the Medal of Honor, Donovan’s letters about the engagement, published by newspapers, made him a national hero.

Donovan became the most decorated soldier in U.S. history, winning the Silver Star, the Purple Heart, and several foreign awards. The Fighting 69th returned to a ticker-tape parade up Fifth Avenue. Using his newly found fame, Donovan, along with Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., started the American Legion, which quickly evolved from a group of war veterans into the most influential American veteran group, with over a million members and local posts across the country. Donovan became a hero with a national following.

Donovan won appointment as a U.S. attorney in Buffalo. His Saturn Club openly flouted prohibition laws; nevertheless, Donovan declared the “law is the law,” and ordered a raid on the club federal agents. Damned by influential club members, Donovan was effectively driven from Buffalo.

He moved to Washington in 1924, he became assistant attorney general at the Justice Department where his career was blocked by anti-Catholic discrimination. Donovan then moved to New York in 1929 and established his own Wall Street law firm. He ran unsuccessfully for governor of New York in 1932. His wanderlust took him to Europe and Asia, where he wrote reports for clients on the investment climate. In 1939, he met Spain’s Generalissimo Franco and observed Nazi Germany’s frightening use of weapons and warplanes. He also visited Italy’s Mussolini. Ostensibly traveling for business, Donovan in fact gathered intelligence for a secretive private organization known as “The Room”.

Before World War II, the U.S. had no foreign spy agency (*See Halpin’s notes below*), leaving it unprepared for the upcoming world

war. In 1939, with Britain facing war, its foreign intelligence service MI6 began looking for American allies and spotted one in Donovan. In July 1940, Donovan flew to London to meet Colonel Stewart Menzies, the chief of MI6, and Winston Churchill.

Returning to Washington Donovan told Roosevelt that Britain could survive only with America's help. In January 1940, Donovan sat in a radio studio plugging *The Fighting 69th*, a new Hollywood movie. The film, starring James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, and George Brent as Donovan, put him back in the spotlight just when President Roosevelt needed someone with Donovan's European experience.

Although Donovan was a Republican, Roosevelt liked him and trusted his intelligence. In July 1941, FDR established the Office of the Coordination of Information (C.O.I.), naming Donovan its director. After Pearl Harbor, Roosevelt adopted Donovan's blueprint for a secret American intelligence service based on the British model and appointed him to run the agency, called the Office of Strategic Services. Donovan created a massive spy network fighting a

worldwide, clandestine war. With the rank of two-star general, Donovan even defied orders by landing at Normandy on D-Day. O.S.S. played a huge role in winning the war for the Allies.

At the end of the war, America was in transition. Donovan and the American Legion pushed the GI Bill. Donovan hoped Truman would appoint him to head the newly created Central Intelligence Agency. However, Truman, a loyal Democrat, did not share FDR's high opinion of Donovan, instead naming Allen Dulles, to run the CIA. Disappointed, Donovan went to Nuremberg, where he provided evidence in the prosecution of Nazis. President Eisenhower also denied him the job, instead naming him ambassador to Thailand, where Donovan first began to show signs of the dementia. Hospitalized in 1957, in his last days, Eisenhower visited him calling "the last hero." Donovan died on February 8, 1959. Today, Donovan's statue stands in the lobby of the CIA headquarters, a tribute to the Irish-American war hero who single-handedly created America's foreign intelligence capability.

Halpin's Notes: The statement that the U.S. had no foreign spy agency prior to WWII is not entirely accurate. Harvard educated Army Major Ralph Van Deman founded the "Corps of Intelligence Police" in 1917. During WW I they collected intelligence for of the American Expeditionary Force in France. In 1930 CIP expanded, recruiting men with legal, police and investigative backgrounds who possessed foreign language skills. In 1941 the CIP was redesignated the Counter-Intelligence Corps or CIC. CIC deployed detachments to Europe and the Pacific and provided intelligence from captured documents, interrogations, and para-military and civilian sources. After WW II, CIC exfiltrated German rocket scientists to the U.S. before the Soviets could kidnap them (Operation "Paper Clip").

Further, there is the myth that CIA is the "true" successor to OSS. Here are some facts:

- In September 1945, President Truman disbanded the OSS and transferred all OSS operations and sources to the Army for continued exploitation “the need for which will continue for some time.”
- By the early 1950s, Army was the leading US intelligence organization and enjoyed a larger budget and more collection operations than the CIA.
- During the Korean conflict Army intelligence was operating in North Korea to collect intelligence, rescue downed pilots and free POW (Project AVIARY). (Colonel Doug Dillard (RIP) commanded Aviary operations. Coincidentally Dillard and I served as Marshals in the 2013 D.C. St Patrick Day Parade.)
- In 1952 Army continued using the OSS training program for clandestine collectors at Fort Holabird, MD. These officers were trained to infiltrate target areas by air, sea and land and taught the art of espionage -- how to assess, develop, recruit, train and control clandestine agents. This program was shared with Army Special Forces and continued into the 1980s.
- Army established the “U.S. Army Administrative Survey Detachment” to provide low visibility/no visibility personnel and assignment management support.

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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.”*

### **BREXIT update**

The Irish Times, July 9, 2019 by Ronan McGreevy (*edited for Dispatches*)

It is extraordinary for a British politician to stand up in the European Parliament and say, “there is a pattern consistent throughout history of oppressed people turning on the oppressors - slaves against their owners colonies against

their empires, and that is why Britain is leaving”.

To complain about being enslaved, when the British did so much to promote the slave trade, or to compare England to a colony leaving an empire when you had the biggest empire of all, goes beyond irony .

Cities like Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow got rich trading in slaves to North America and Britain’s Caribbean colonies, a practice which went on with impunity for three centuries. **The British slave trade remains at the root of the issue of race - America’s original sin.**

Irish people need no reminding of the realities of the British Empire. Neither do the peoples of Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma or India to name but a few. Most of us have sought to move on from the “800 years of oppression” narrative and recognize a new era of British-Irish relations. The trouble with forgiving and forgetting is that there is a problem when one side is doing all the forgiving and the other side is doing all the forgetting.

It would be easy to dismiss Widdecombe’s ridiculous comments, but this is to ignore that historical ignorance is at the heart of the Brexit disaster. She isn’t the first Tory politician to exhibit a propensity to whitewash Britain’s past. While other countries sought to confront the truth, nostalgia for empire is implicit in the British. Germany’s behavior since 1945 has been an act of atonement for the monstrous excesses of the Nazis. French president Macron apologized for torture during the Algerian war in the 1960s. Closer to home, we have exposed the past sins of the Catholic Church and are better for it.

**Most British politicians haven’t bothered to learn about Irish history. They know nothing about the significance of the Border, how it came about and why it is such a visceral issue in the Irish consciousness.** Thus, they had no answer when the Border became the stumbling block to the implementation of the withdrawal agreement.

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Our DIVISION Prayers



Jack Grey, Committee of the Sick Chairman. Prayer requests should be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting (RHGrey@cox.net//540-373-4496).

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

- **Nolan Banks**, son of former FS Jeff Banks. Nolan is recovering from soft tissue sarcoma (RMS). *Pray for the intercession of Father Augustus Tolton*, a candidate for canonization (the prayer: <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>)
- **John Tracy**, COPD
- **Joe Daley**, COPD complicated by pneumonia
- **John Hogan**, vascular irregularities
- **Jake Ruppert's** mother, cancer -- recovering from surgery
- **John O'Brien** Hugh O'Brien's brother-- recovering from stroke
- **Jerry O'Brien**, Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- **Brian Kiernan**, VAAOH State Secretary, lymphedemic edema
- **Andy Link**, recovering from hip surgery
- **Ruth Pettinger**, Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) diagnosed with inoperable brain tumor.
- **Donna Maffeo**, Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law and his father Joseph Sr. care giver for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer)
- **Patricia Stephen**, mother of Rusty O'Brien's friend Ann-Marie Sharratt -- acute myeloid leukemia
- **Amy Whittaker** – cancer
- **Request Prayers** for the repose of the souls of Don Walters, Roxanne Kessler, Jacqueline Padgett, and Skip McMichael (friends of Bill Halpin) and Thomas Iribarren, Bill Phillips' grandson. All died within the past three weeks.



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!

July 6: Raffle Ticket Sales at Lake of the Woods – 12-5PM (John Hogan, Andy Link and Bill Halpin have already volunteered for this event. Need a few more!)

August 16-18: Biennial State Convention at the Leesburg Hotel & Conference Center, 726 East Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. Register now at: <https://aohvirginia.org/2019/02/21/aoh-va-state-convention-2019/>

August 20: Division meeting. Establish the nominating committee to identify a slate of the willing and able to serve as division officers for the 2020-2021 term.

September 15: Halfway to St Patrick Day Party @ the Colonial Tavern



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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))**

**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 waistline).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom produces a 7.5-foot sash; satisfaction guaranteed. Send a personal check for \$60. Turnaround time is about 10 days. The sash will be sent to you via Fed Ex or UPS -- signature required. Her address: Patricia Ankrom, 7400 Airport Dr., Quinton, Va. 23141-2400. Email [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)

- 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 Gen 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.**