



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

March-April 2025

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Pray to Mary Immaculate Patroness of the United States for the strength of mind and heart to defend our religious freedoms, for national moral guidance, and that our country will always be “one nation under God.” This is critically important in this time of contrary moral agendas and the threats from patently evil elements.

President's Corner:

Worthy Brothers:

Each March, we celebrate Irish American Heritage Month. It is a marvelous opportunity to review and refresh our knowledge about the sometimes sad history of our people, and the marvelous contributions of the Irish immigrants to this country and the world beyond. But reminiscing about and the quest for knowledge need not be just an annual affair. I recently discovered two programs on Amazon Prime that I recommend for your consideration. The first is “Building Ireland” and the other is “Cheap Irish Homes.”

Building Ireland explains how Ireland's great building and engineering projects came to be – primarily with the introduction of the railroads and the great water projects during the 1800s. They examine these projects from the engineering, architectural and geographical perspectives. There are two seasons with six episodes each. Each episode is about twenty-five minutes long. I found them interesting and informative.

Cheap Irish Homes has a realtor (Maggie Malloy) helping buyers on a budget find reasonably priced homes. Properties range from abandoned farmhouses to bungalows to living spaces in buildings above commercial or retail space. Some are stone construction with thatched roofs, and some are block walls with slate roofs. Some are “turnkey” (move-in ready), and others not so much. There are four seasons with six episodes each spanning the years 2015 to 2023. The first three seasons are free of charge. You have to pay for each fourth season episode. I found them interesting and informative. But I am not ready to take the leap! But perhaps you are . . .

I encourage you to always be on the lookout for resources that can help you improve your knowledge and understanding of our Irish roots. Whenever you have the remote in your hand,

and you cannot find anything interesting to watch on television among the hundreds of available channels, cursor over to the “search” function and type in “Irish” or “Ireland.” I’m sure you’ll find something interesting and worthwhile.

In Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity

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At our March 18th meeting, Bill Halpin eulogized Brother John Clement Grey

Jack, as we knew him, was born in Wisconsin on October 11, 1937. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin and held degrees in Physics and Mathematics and completed graduate work at George Washington University and University of Oklahoma. For 43 years Jack was employed as a physicist, mathematician and Operations Research analyst at the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren. He and Rochelle raised four children, have 10 grandchildren and 5 great grandsons. All well done!

BUT more important Jack was a proud Irish Catholic gentleman and an inspirational Hibernian brother. He joined the General Meagher Division in 2015, received our Order's Major Degrees in 2016, and served as division Recording Secretary and later as Sentinel.

He enthusiastically enjoyed the camaraderie he found in our division. Through strength of character and dedication to Hibernian ideals, he was always present for duty at critical division events even on cold December mornings at the Irish Brigade ceremony (even when forced to use a walker).

Jack died on February 4th. He was 87 years old. As many Hibernians, Jack was a Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus.

At our March meeting, in accordance with Hibernian tradition, the General T. F. Meagher division charter was draped in black.



General Thomas F. Meagher Division 2024 Hibernian of the Year



Bob Fitzgerald's performance has been superior in every regard during 2024 and had wide reaching impact within the division and in the greater Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania communities. Bob joined the General Meagher Division in 2013 and received our Order's Major Degrees in 2016. Bob is the personification of "Hibernian Zeal". He has been integral to division formal and informal leadership and a volunteer workhorse for Division projects. He offers great ideas that facilitate success. He is first to volunteer in support of outreach programs, fund raising efforts, and charities. He is the catalyst that ignites our brotherhood to volunteer.

IAHM in Fredericksburg

Proclamations: Of course, we already know we achieved a "**proclamation trifecta**" when President Trump, Governor Youngkin, and Fredericksburg Mayor Devine all proclaimed March to be Irish American Heritage Month. But there's more ...

Community Outreach:

IAHM article sent to the Free Lance Star in February, but not published

March 2025 is Irish American Heritage Month!

by Bill Halpin

Since 1990 every U.S. President has proclaimed March to be Irish American Heritage Month. Governor Youngkin and the Fredericksburg City Council have proclaimed March 2025 to be Irish American Heritage Month. This year the Irish diaspora commemorates the 27th anniversary of the historic Good Friday Agreements that ended the "Troubles".

Sadly, some challenges from the "Troubles" continue. Chief among them is the Legacy and Reconciliation Act passed the UK Parliament in September 2023. This Act provides for immunity from prosecution for British military and militant groups accused of murders and other crimes committed between 1 January 1966 and 10 April 1998. During the "Troubles" more than 3,500 people were killed and up to 40,000 people were injured. This Act gives immunity to British soldiers, particularly Parachute Regiment soldiers who killed ten peaceful protesters in August 1971 and shot 26 unarmed civilians, killing 13 in January 1972. This atrocity is known as "Bloody Sunday".

In Fredericksburg, Hibernians from the General Thomas F. Meagher Division will be present during the afternoon hours at three area libraries: Central Rappahannock Library on March 4th, 5th, & 6th 2:00-5:00; the Snow Branch (Spotsylvania Courthouse) March 11th, 12th, & 13th 2:00-5:00 and the Salem Church Branch: March 18th (only). The Hibernian's will explain the Good Friday Agreements, discuss the United Kingdom's Legacy and Reconciliation Act, and the current political environment in Belfast. They will highlight the roles of President Bill Clinton, U.S. Special Envoy George Mitchell, Irish politicians John Hume and David Trimble who brokered the agreements in 1998. Messieurs Hume and Trimble shared the Nobel Peace Prize in 1998.

Information sheets will be available that describe Irish/Irish American contributions to the fabric of America in fields ranging from labor, politics and government, science and industry, local, state, and federal leadership, and entertainment. For example, 22 U.S. Presidents have Irish roots and the first men to walk on the moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin were proud of their Irish heritage. More than 2,000 Congressional Medals of Honor have been awarded to Irish Americans and the U. S. Navy will soon christen the USS Patrick Gallagher, a guided missile destroyer named to honor USMC Corporal Patrick Gallagher an Irish citizen killed in Viet Nam.

For more than 35 years, the General Meagher Division has represented AOH in our area. Under our motto "Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity" the Division has donated more than \$107,000 to local charities

and for scholastic awards. Funding derives from community support for the annual *Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle* and the *Shamrock Charity Golf Classic* scheduled for April 28, 2025 at Lake of the Woods.

Learn more about AOH at www.aohfredericksburg.org and www.virginiaaoh.org.



This year we are fortunate that three brothers donated their time to represent the Gen. Meagher Division at area libraries during the first two week of March. That's a total of 18 hours at the libraries in downtown Fredericksburg and at the Snow branch at Spotsylvania Courthouse. Our presence at Salem Church branch was cancelled.

On March 15th, Hibernians gathered at the "Home of the Irish Brigade" to enjoy camaraderie, great performances by a group of young Irish dancers, and a few Irish beverages.



March 30: Welcome Home Viet Nam Veterans Day!

In 2010, B. Halpin, the Virginia AOH Veterans Affairs Chairman initiated action to formally recognize Vietnam veterans in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Delegate Ed Scott agreed to champion the legislation. House Joint Resolution Number 136 designated March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day" in the commonwealth. It was March 30, 1973, when the U.S. completed withdrawal of combat troops from Vietnam. The legislation encourages ceremonies and activities that recognize the contributions Vietnam veterans. The resolution notes that 1,304 Virginians, lost their lives in Vietnam and that more than 262,000 Vietnam veterans currently reside in the Commonwealth.





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. There can be neither truce nor compromise.

During Lent salmon should be priority for Fridays and here's why:

'The Salmon of Knowledge' by Mallon Foundry



Posted on Wild Geese by Mallon, The Ancestral Foundry on April 27, 2015

In days long gone at a time that is long past, a great salmon named Bradan rested calmly in the Pool of Wisdom on the River Boyne. The salmon fed on the nuts from the nine hazel trees growing around the pool and all the wisdom of the world became concentrated in his flesh.

Finegas, a poet and teacher, lived in a hut beside the River. Watching the salmon feeding, he knew that whoever ate Bradan would inherit all his knowledge and judgement. It is not easy to catch such a beast that is endowed with wisdom, and for seven years Finegas tried and failed. One day, Finegas was sitting with his pupil Fionn on the bank of the river when he saw the great fish swimming up the river towards them. Suddenly the salmon leapt into the air in front of Finegas. Frightened, Finegas looked straight into the salmon's eyes and fell into the river and into a deep sleep. He might have been drowned, but Fionn pulled him to safety and shook him awake.

After this Finegas showed that he too had great wisdom. He ordered Fionn to blindfold him, and all afternoon he fought with Bradan, and eventually conquered the salmon. Exhausted, he ordered Fionn to prepare the fish. Fionn did as he was told. He lit a fire of peat and wood and built a spit for the fish. He turned the spit carefully and watched until everything was cooked. He then called Finegas to eat and removed the fish from the fire. As he did so, there was a splutter and fish oil dripped on his hand. It was so painful that he sucked his injury to ease the pain. He thought no more of it and brought the old man's supper to the hut.

Finegas saw the glint of wisdom in the boy's eyes and knew that his long held dream of having all the salmon's knowledge had turned to dust. But he took solace, knowing he had trained the boy well and that his wisdom would always serve for good. From that day forward, Fionn MacCumhail could summon all the wisdom of the salmon of knowledge by putting his thumb in his mouth. He became the most celebrated leader of the Fianna.



New Books!

ROT – An Imperial History of the Irish Famine, by Padraic X. Scanlan



"ROT IS ESSENTIAL READING FOR ANYONE WANTING TO SEE IRELAND'S TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE PLACED IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT."
—SEAN CONNOLLY,
AUTHOR OF *ON EVERY TIDE*

"A STUNNING NEW ACCOUNT OF ONE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPE'S MOST SHAMEFUL TRAGEDIES."
—MAYA JASANOFF,
AUTHOR OF *THE DAWN WATCH*

Hard Neighbors by Colin G Calloway, Professor of Native American Studies at Dartmouth College

This is a revisionist's "reappraisal of the early decades of American expansion". The book characterizes the estimated 400,000 Ulster Irish who immigrated in the mid-1700s and created a presence in Appalachia as blood thirsty killers. This author claims the Ulster Irish willingly became the colonial government's primary tool in an "unrestrained race war" that shaped their identity as killers of Native Americans. The author also theorizes that the Ulster Irish were responsible for the "Trail of Tears" (mid-1800s) and other atrocities perpetrated against Native Americans.



USS Patrick Gallagher (DDG 127): Built at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works construction began in November 2018, the ship's keel was laid on March 30, 2022, and the U.S. Navy christened the future USS Patrick Gallagher on July 27, 2024. At the christening, Cpl. Gallagher's sisters Pauline Gallagher, Rosemarie Gallagher and Teresa Gallagher Keegan, smashed bottles of sparkling wine on the ship's hull. A Navy band played the Irish national anthem and bagpipes performed "My Gallant Hero." Delivery is expected in Fall 2025.

The ship's namesake, U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Patrick Gallagher, immigrated to the United States from Ireland and joined the United States Marine Corps. He received the Navy Cross for heroism during the Vietnam War when he jumped an enemy grenade on and managed throw into a river to save his fellow Marines. He was killed in action just one year later. Cpl. Gallagher's name is engraved on the monument dedicated to the 30 Irish Nationals KIA in Viet Nam. The memorial column dedicated in November 2016 is located in Ennis, County Clare. (multiple sources)





UPCOMING EVENTS



March 1-31: Irish American Heritage Month

March 5th: The Fenian Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Brotherhood commenced with a futile “Rising” to rid Ireland of the English occupation

April 10th: Good Friday Agreement for peace in the north of Ireland was signed this day in 1998

April 15th: Division meeting

April 17th: Funeral for J. J. Kelly, Past Virginia State President, Past National Director, Past *Ard Ri*, Brian Boru Degree Team and retired U.S. Army. Mass and burial at Arlington National Cemetery at 10:45AM. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Fisher House (<https://www.fisherhouse.org>), honoring J.J.’s commitment to veterans and families.

April 20th : Easter Sunday

April 24th: Easter Monday 1916, the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army occupied the General Post Office (GPO) in Dublin and demanded Irish sovereignty.

April 28th: The 12th Annual Shamrock Charity Golf Classic will be played at Lake of the Woods Golf Course. Hibernian volunteers are needed to ensure success!

Future

Division Gatherings/Luncheons: May 11th, July 20th, September 25th

FredNats Ball Games: April 27th, June 29th, and August 24th

September 20th: Halfway to St. Patrick Day and T4T drawing:



Our Division Prayers



Keep our brothers, family members and friends in your prayers.

- Deacon Aaron: Recovering from complications from thyroid cancer surgery.
- Bruce Denault – Past Meagher Division president, current president at Father Judge Division. Broken vertebrae after a fall. Slow, painful recovery; cannot drive resulting in unemployment.
- Jim O'Donnell: Recovering from surgery to repair a torn quadriceps tendon.
- Bob Fitzgerald – detached retina.
- Joe Daley - COPD and hemoptysis is improving.
- Lynne Mulhern, Brother Dan's wife, recovering from back surgery.

- Russell McLaughlin: Brother Dave's brother - frontotemporal dementia
- Hill Hornung: Brother Neil's brother - dementia.
- Margaret Casey: Brother Tim Lynch's aunt - dementia.
- Mary Lou and Keith Bowers: St Jude parishioners/friends of Deacon Aaron
- Alice Wilkowski associate of PDP Shawn Lenahan - stroke

Pray for the repose of the souls of deceased Brothers and family members.

- Repose of the soul of our Brother Jack Grey
- Repose of the soul of PSP and National Director J.J. Kelly
- Ruth Pettinger: Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) died on 19 March 2024
- Linda Mulhern Smith, Dan Mulhern's sister, died on 28 April 2024
- Jack Salvo, Jack McGovern's father-in-law, died in April 2024.

Send requests for inclusion in our newsletter to billhalpin@irishcultureva.org

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Hibernian Attire

Every brother should have these articles of clothing.

Green Jacket: Brothers procure their own green jackets -- Kelly green is the color.

- One source: http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html. Visit the website; call the 800 number; tell them you are with AOH, and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.
- Second source used by Major James Dooley Division:
<https://www.uniformsinstock.com/collections/blazers/products/executive-apparel-winston-mens-kelly-green-blazer>
- Third option: <https://www.readygolf.com/trophy-club-green-blazer-jacket-by-readygolf/>

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 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, a raincoat/overcoat (and a growing waistline). Sashes are available from:

- D. & E. Morrissey (954-426-3514/ <http://www.hibernians-shamrock.com>). The National Hibernian usually has an ad for D & E Morrissey.
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and “special prices” for larger orders.
<https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>

Meagher Division shirts: Order from Minuteman Press [4122 Lafayette Blvd, Fredericksburg, VA 22408 \(540-898-7888\)](#)

General AOH Logo Items: <https://aohapparel.com>

The AOH “uniform”

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

This newsletter is an unofficial publication for members of the Gen. Thomas F. Meagher Division (44SP01) and others who may have an interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is responsible for its content.