



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



**GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES**

Aug – Sept 2025

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**President:** Dennis O'Reilly; **Chaplain:** Deacon Aaron Zaccagnino; **Vice President:** Jack McGovern; **Recording Secretary:** Bill Halpin; **Financial Secretary:** Jeff Everett; **Treasurer:** Dave McLaughlin; **Standing Committee:** Bill Hallahan; **Marshal:** Tim Lynch; **Sentinel:** Neil Hornung; **Webmaster:** Bob Fitzgerald; **Organizer:** Tim Lynch; **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin ([billhalpin@irishcultureva.org](mailto:billhalpin@irishcultureva.org))

**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:

The Fall season has officially started, and there is much happening in our Division. The Halfway to Saint Patrick's Day celebration took place at the Colonial Tavern on Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>. Highlight of the celebration was the annual drawing for the Trip to Ireland. The lucky winner was Vince Willging who bought his ticket after Mass at St. Matthew. Many thanks to Brother Shawn Lenahan for heading up raffle ticket sales and to Brother Bob Fitzgerald for all his help along the way.

Our Division was asked by Brother Vince Eikmeier, the new Virginia State Board President, to host the quarterly State Board meeting on October 18<sup>th</sup>. We've made arrangements to use facilities at Holy Cross Academy for the meeting. Brother Dave McLaughlin will spearhead preplanning for the event and Brothers Bob Fitzgerald and Shawn Lenahan will assist him.

The two-year terms for the current elected and appointed Division Officers are coming to a close. Brother Bill Halpin is recruiting replacements for all officer positions. Please, consider carefully serving the Division in one of these positions. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the Order. Please contact Brother Halpin directly if you're willing to serve. Nominations will be

presented at the October meeting. Voting will take place at the November meeting. Installation will take place at the December meeting.

In closing, a bit of trivia. **Question:** Which best-selling Irish band features Larry Mullen, Adam Clayton, the Edge and Bono? **Answer:** U2.

In Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity

Dennis M. O'Reilly  
President, General Thomas F. Meagher Division  
(703) 201-6959  
[oreillyd@ix.netcom.com](mailto:oreillyd@ix.netcom.com)  
<http://aohfredericksburg.org>



## Some Admin Thoughts on Fraternal Year 2026-- Hibernian Commitment Needed

Brothers, maybe it's because I'm approaching my 81<sup>st</sup> year or because I've enjoyed our AOH brotherhood for 42 years, but it seems Fraternal Year 2026 is approaching like a tidal wave. As October draws near, we are in desperate need of volunteers in several areas, most important being leaders ready and able to serve the division in the next term.

1. **Division Officers:** The "Nominating Committee" is thankful that we have nominees for six of our eight elected positions. The two remaining are Marshal and Treasurer. Neither of these positions requires an inordinate amount of personal time, but presence at our monthly meetings is encouraged. This is a wonderful opportunity to contribute a minimum amount of time and effort to assure the future of our division and becoming an engaged Hibernian brother.
2. **Golf Committee:** We need three or four volunteers to form the Golf Committee. There are several immediate issues to resolve, including deciding on a date, booking a venue, connecting and solidifying donor relationships now as most businesses are formulating 2026 budgets. For example, Sheehy Toyota has offered a new Toyota as a "Hole-in-One" prize. This offer needs to be formalized.

3. **IAHM:** 2026 is an American anniversary year. IAHM is the perfect opportunity to highlight Irish contributions in the Revolutionary War and its Irish/Irish American heroes with large posters that can be displayed at the 3 (or 4) libraires we use to promote IAHM. In addition to display items, we need brothers at each of the libraries for three days (3-4 hours each day). Ideally two brothers per day. Please help with this important public display of our Irish heritage.
4. **Parish Liaisons:** In 2026 we'll need to fill two parish liaison positions: St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception and St. Matthew.



### The 2024 Virginia State AOH Hibernian of the Year!



At August Business meeting Virginia AOH State President Vince Eckmeier presented the **Fraternal Year 2024 Hibernian of the Year award to Bob Fitzgerald**. The citation read in part: Bob's performance was the personification of "Hibernian Zeal", superior in every regard and had wide reaching impact within the division and in the greater Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania communities. Bob joined the General Meagher Division in 2013, received the Shamrock Degree that year, our Order's Major Degrees in 2016 and served as division President 2022-23.

### Also, in August ...



Mike Keegan, Ian Grady, Bill Daly and Sean Morrow stood for our Order's Shamrock Degree, the lessons of our motto. Division Marshal Tim Lynch escorted our brothers to lessons on Friendship (Jeff Everett), Unity, (Bill Halpin) , and Charity (Dave McLaughlin). Mike and Ian volunteered to be nominated for division officer positions in the 2026-2027 term.

**The USS Patrick Gallagher (DDG-127)** an Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer, is named after Lance Corporal Patrick Gallagher, an Irishman living in the U.S.A. in the 1960s. He volunteered for military service with the U.S. Marine Corps. He was awarded the Navy Cross

after using his body to shield other Marines from a Viet Cong hand grenade. When the grenade failed to immediately detonate, Gallagher tossed it toward the advancing enemy where it exploded. Six months later Gallagher was killed in action. The AOH and other groups lobbied the Secretary of the Navy to name a U.S. Navy ship after Gallagher. Ship construction began on November 9, 2018, the keel was laid down on March 30, 2022, the ship was christened on July 27, 2024. The ship is expected to be delivered this fall (2025). It will be home based in Norfolk, VA and commanded by CDR Matthew Dryden.

## **Call to Arms: "The Soldier and the Revolutionary War" at the National Museum of the United States Army, Fort Belvoir.**

Step into history through this powerful new exhibition commemorating the U.S. Army's 250th Birthday and the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This landmark display features rare Revolutionary War artifacts from the original colonies, England, France, and Canada—brought to life through the stories of the Soldiers who became our nation's first veterans. *On display through June 2027 with free admission.*

## **Halfway 2025!**

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, the division celebrated Halfway to St. Patrick's Day at the Colonial Tavern. Many brothers and their families were there to enjoy the camaraderie, Dragon Fyre's music, and witness the 2025 Trip for Two to Ireland drawing. The winning ticket was picked by Lucas Morrow, son of brother Sean and the lucky winner this year is Vince Willging who purchased the winner after Mass at St. Matthew.



*Photos by Dave McLaughlin*







*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.*

### *News from the north of Ireland:*

**1. Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act:** On 18 September, the Tánaiste (Irish deputy prime minister) Simon Harris said the British and Irish governments agreed to a "a night and day improvement" on what is currently in place. Simon Harris said he accepted agreement "has not been easy", but the new package will provide "maximum truth, justice and accountability" to victims.

The "new framework", agreed between the British and Irish governments, was unveiled on Friday by Harris and Northern Ireland Secretary Hilary Benn. The deal seeks to heal a rift between London and Dublin created by the current Legacy Act. Speaking on Sept 19<sup>th</sup>, Harris described the framework as a moment of "imperfect opportunity ... it lays the ground for a profound transformation, but it is only the beginning. It must be legislated for, implemented, and it must deliver". He suggested this framework provides opportunity to end the cycle of "trauma and pain for another generation ... I believe, in my heart of hearts, that this is our best, and last, opportunity ... we have to grasp it. It would be very wrong not to do so."

Benn said the previous government's "flawed, undeliverable and widely opposed Legacy Act" had caused "great pain and anguish to many people in Northern Ireland ... as Secretary of State I have been determined to help those families, who lost loved ones in the Troubles, including relatives of the families of British service people who did not come home, to find the answers they have long been seeking," According to Benn this framework is "the best way forward to finally make progress on the unfinished business of the Good Friday Agreement". He added that he hoped those affected will see "this as a way forward in which they can have confidence and will therefore give this plan a fair chance".

**2. Is this similar to the recent U.S. Secret Service success in/around NYC?** Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) at Stormont are receiving threats. Some have been physically attacked in their offices and on the street. Some Stormont politicians received death and rape threats against their children. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) Chief Superintendent Stephen Murray: "It is a worrying reality that MLAs and their staff are routinely the subject of unacceptable abuse, threats and other criminality ... MLAs have been harassed or had their offices damaged but the majority of offences are related to communications. These are threatening and abusive emails, social media messages, phone calls and letters. There is a

significant 'cyber-enabled' element to much of this criminality ...when an MLA is the victim of a crime this is treated with the utmost seriousness and we will robustly investigate any offences reported to us." First Minister Michelle O'Neill has called online abuse "disgraceful and unacceptable".

3. **Racial tensions** in parts of Northern Ireland are on the increase. Stormont has been coming under pressure to explain what they are doing to handle the situation. With racial incidents at a record high, Michelle O'Neill and Emma Little-Pengelly condemned the violence. While words are important, actions matter too and there's a problem when it comes to speaking from the same page, Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) don't agree on how immigration and the asylum system should be managed.

4. **Irish language** was a major bone of contention for years between Sinn Féin and the DUP. In 2022 the Identity and Language Act lifted the 300 year ban on speaking Irish in courtrooms in the six counties in the north of Ireland. The Act granted the Irish language official status for use in courts and public services. However, implementation of the 2022 Act was not approved by Northern Ireland's Secretary of State until early 2025. Now, this month (Sept 2025) loyalist activist Jamie Bryson is challenging approval of a £150,000 plan to have Irish language signs installed at Belfast's new Grand Central Station, a public transportation hub. Bryson provided the court with correspondence from DUP leader Gavin Robinson, along with other political and Orange Order representatives, to back assertions that unionists are united in regarding the erection of Irish language signs at the station as controversial.



#### UPCOMING EVENTS



**Sep 20: Halfway to St. Patrick Day** and T4T drawing @ Colonial Tavern

**Sep 28:** Division **luncheon**, Park Lane Tavern in Spotsylvania Mall

**Oct 21:** Division meeting – **Officer nominees** for 2026-2027 term announced

**Nov 17: Division Memorial Mass at St Matthew**

**Nov 18:** Division meeting: **Officer elections**

**Dec 14: Wreath presentation** at Irish Bde memorial, city dock in FXBG (10AM)

**Dec 16:** Division meeting, officers installation for 2026-2027 term



### ***Our Division Prayers***



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

- Deacon Aaron: Suffering from complications from thyroid cancer surgery.
- Peter Carroll, pancreatic cancer
- Bob Fitzgerald, PDP, detached retina.
- Joe Daley, COPD
- Candy O'Donnell, wife of Brother/PDP Jim, diagnosed with lung cancer.
- Thomas and Kathleen Fitzgerald, Brother Bob's son and family. Their daughter Evaneline Rose was born prematurely, baptized and died shortly thereafter.
- Lynne Mulhern, wife of Brother Dan, 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

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

- Brother Jack Grey, died February 4, 2025
- Robert Eugene Tinnell, Bob Fitzgerald's Uncle, died June 11, 2025
- Rene Domingiez, Bill Halpin's brother-in-law died July 12, 2025
- PSP and Parliamentarian Brother Rich Aleksy, died April 15, 2025
- Evaneline Rose Fitzgerald, granddaughter of Brother Bob, died September 23, 2025

Send requests for inclusion in our newsletter to [billhalpin@irishcultureva.org](mailto:billhalpin@irishcultureva.org)





## Hibernian Attire

*Every brother should have these articles of clothing.*

### 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.

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

- 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 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](https://www.minutemanpress.com/locations/4122-Lafayette-Blvd-Fredericksburg-VA-22408) (540-898-7888)

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

*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.*