



# Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

*May 2021*

**Brother Hibernians** \_\_\_\_\_



I hope this update finds you and your family all well. Over the last month, there has been a lot of good news on the re-opening front – hopefully, this means a bit more normalcy for all of us.

To that point, our next division meeting will be held **in person this Friday, May 21 at 8:00pm**. For those unable to attend 'live' we will provide a Zoom link via email the day of the meeting.

Congratulations to Sean Walsh and the Golf Committee for a very successful Member Only golf day last Thursday. Many thanks to the hard-working team who created a great afternoon of barbeque and refreshments at the Hibernian House, and much appreciation to Mike Gorman and the staff at Blue Hill Golf Course for creating a smooth running and beautiful day on the links. As a number of people noted, John Gannon and a number of the other members we've lost who have been fixtures at past events were looking down on us, and I'm sure that influenced the weather.

As venues continue to increase capacities, we will look for opportunities to get our membership together – whether it be tried and true events like the golf outing or for new options. One item we discussed at the last meeting was Irish Heritage Night being held at the NY Boulders game on Saturday, July 24<sup>th</sup>. More to come about event details but pencil it in on your calendars now.

Note the item below regarding the Pearl River Memorial Day parade – please make some time in your holiday weekend. We need to '*Never Forget*'.

**Good & Welfare** – There are a number of members who are on the mend from a variety of ailments – please keep them in your prayers. Also, note that this is **National EMS Week** - please send out a special prayer or two for our Emergency Medical Specialists. And let's not forget our law enforcement professionals, healthcare workers and members of the armed services in your prayers.

As always, we pray that you and your family are healthy and safe.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

**Chuck Parnow**

## Charities



If you have a charitable event or know of a charitable event that Division 3 should support financially, please get in touch with Kieran Cummings, our Charities Committee Chairman, at [Kmanshc@gmail.com](mailto:Kmanshc@gmail.com) and provide information, including any fliers, etc., about the charity and the event.

## Memorial Day



Brothers, it has been announced that the Memorial Day Parade in Pearl River will be held; this is the first physical parade to be held since the COVID crisis and is a welcome sign of a return to 'normalcy'. However, there is one bit of 'normalcy' we want to change. In the past, we have had some meager Division 3 participation in the parade. Sadly, since the last time we marched we have lost several members who regularly made the effort to march on Memorial Day: Phil Sheridan, Rich Lenihan, George Lahey, Jack O'Connor to name a few. It would be a shame if we did not put out a contingent on Memorial Day in their honor and representative of the size and influence that Division 3 has in Pearl River – please find the hour or so, if you could show up. It's a great opportunity to model what's important to our children, too.

Memorial Day should hold a special meaning for us: 257 awardees of the Medal of Honor list "Ireland" as their birthplace, including 5 who were awarded the medal twice. We have an obligation to remember the thousands of Irish Americans who wear their green every day – the sod above their graves for America. We form up at Key Bank the morning of Memorial Day, and we do ask if people would respect the solemnity of the day wearing business casual attire of shirt and slacks rather than jeans. We'll confirm timing via email in advance of the weekend.

## Ladies' AOH



The Ladies have been having consistent meetings the last couple of months. Now that some of the restrictions are being lifted in New York; we hope to continue conducting business as usual. We are planning a few fundraising events for the fall.

The Ladies are keeping everyone in our prayers for those who may be struggling and suffering with illnesses.

May God continue to Bless everyone and please stay safe!

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,  
**Teresa Hartey-Adametz, President**

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# Irish History: The Ballymurphy Massacre



On August 9, 1971, British Army Saracen armored cars rolled out at 4:00 AM onto the streets of Belfast to begin *Operation Demetrius*, the forcible internment of Irish Catholics suspected of being involved in paramilitary activity without charge or trial. Ironically, the British Army was now interning members of the community that they claimed upon their arrival to be protecting against the violent pogroms of the Unionist community; attacks motivated by protests against the endemic prejudice against Catholics upon which the Northern Irish state was founded. British

soldiers had initially been welcomed by Northern Ireland's Catholic community in the hope that they would be an impartial counter to the exclusively protestant and loyalist Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC).

However, it soon became clear that the army was not there to provide a peaceful, stable environment in which reform could occur, but to aid in restoring a prejudiced civil authority and maintaining the status quo. Many of the regiments, particularly the Paratroopers, were coming to Northern Ireland fresh from dealing with revolts and counterinsurgencies in Britain's crumbling empire. As "Queen's Men," they had a natural sympathy with those calling themselves "Loyalist," even if they used violence to demonstrate their loyalism and a natural antagonism to anyone who could be labeled a rebel. Tensions continue to grow between the British Army and the Catholic community; soldiers became increasingly frustrated in dealing with a civilian population that would "not lie down." The army had been embarrassed when they attempted to barricade the Falls Road, only to be swarmed by women and children who broke the blockade. One senior British commander complained that "too much deference was being shown to women" protestors. British Military leaders were looking to apply sterner measures.

The British Government of Prime Minister Heath was concerned that if a show of force were not made, the current Northern Ireland Government would fall in a Loyalist backlash. The army was given orders to begin internment, but once again, the bias of British policy was manifest. The army used a list of 450 names supplied by the discredited RUC; on the list for apprehension, 348 were Catholics, the two Protestants were known to have Republican sympathies. Despite ample evidence of violence, there was not a single member of a Protestant paramilitary on the list. As in 1916, when the British Army mistakenly interned members of the cultural Gaelic League, many on the internment list were members of non-violent civil rights groups such as the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association. Worse yet, to implement this flawed and unjust plan, they decided to let loose on civilians the Parachute Regiment, a regiment that prided itself as an elite regiment founded on aggressiveness. The results were as foreseeable as they were tragic.

As the internment operation began, the Catholic enclave of Springfield Park came under violent attacks from loyalist mobs from the adjoining Springmartin housing project. Catholic families began to flee the area, among them Bobby Clarke, who was helping families with children evacuate. This was unfolding under the eyes of members of the Parachute Regiment who had taken an overwatch position from the protestant Springmartin project. As Clarke attempted to cross an area of open ground, he was shot by a British Army sniper. Amidst cries that a man had been shot, Fr. Hugh Mullan, who lived in the area, ran into the field waving a white handkerchief and while Clarke's wound would not be fatal, was seen anointing him. As Fr. Clarke turned, again waving his white handkerchief, he was shot twice by the same sniper; he would be left there to bleed to death. Francis Quinn, a boy of 19, who had run out to help the priest, was shot in the head and died instantly.

Over the course of the next three days, eight more innocent civilians would be shot by the British Army. Among them was Joan Connolly, a 44-year-old mother of eight. Another was John McKerr, 49, a carpenter working at Corpus Christi Church and who had stepped outside as he paused working while a Mass was being performed. In a tragic irony, Mr. McKerr was himself a former British Soldier who had lost a hand during WW II.

For fifty years, the British government and army have attempted to cover up the actions by some of its soldiers on that day; inhumane killings arising through the imposition of an unjust act. They slandered those they shot as being gunmen and gunwomen. For half a century, their families have fought to have their day in court. That day finally came. On May 11, 2021, a long-delayed coroner's inquiry stated, "*What is very clear, is that all of the deceased in the series of inquests were entirely innocent of any wrongdoing on the day in question.*" The Justice also criticized "the state's failure to properly investigate."

Yet, still the British government continues to stall and deflect on its commitments under the Good Friday Agreement and its obligations to basic human decency. Use the pretext of the passage of time, a passage it has created through its prolonged obstruction. The British government is proposing the extraordinary measure of granting a statute of limitations for murder to members of its forces who served in Northern Ireland. The British army continues to obstruct, saying it has lost the cipher list which would provide evidence of who shot these people whom their own courts have found "*entirely innocent of any wrongdoing on the day in question.*" While thankfully, the families of the victims of Ballymurphy can celebrate the good name of their relatives being restored, justice demands consequences for it being wrongly taken away from them.

While we have vindication of the truth of Ballymurphy, we are still waiting on the truth for the massacres at Loughinisland, Dublin/Monaghan, Sean Graham bookmakers, and hundreds of others.

*"The dead cannot cry out for justice. It is a duty of the living to do so for them."* - Lois McMaster Bujold