Ancient Order of Hibernians

JOHN CARDINAL D'ALTON DIVISION 3

October 2026

Brother Hibernians

Welcome to Autumn! We hope your Fall or school-year routines have fallen into place.

Our next division meeting will be at the Hibernian House this **Friday, October 23rd at 8:00pm**. Key agenda items include accepting nominations for divisional representatives for Rockland Parade Battalion Commander and Aide to the Grand Marshal. Note, the joint AOH/LAOH County Board Meeting is on Tuesday, 11/17 and we'll have to get organized around that (and our candidates for parade honors). We'll also organize around a number of upcoming events including the Thanksgiving Senior Luncheon and the Pot of Gold ticket sales and parties.

We're a month away from Division Officer nominations and an ideal time for 'new blood' to step up and assume some roles. I would identify our primary organizational risk to be a lack of any depth in succession planning. We need to start to develop the next slate of leaders – not only for the Division but for the County AOH and for the Parade Committee. We'll share a brief summary of Offices / roles in an upcoming email.

On that topic, congratulations to the Hibernian House Officers re-elected last month with Dennis Madigan taking on another term as President and Chris Power assuming the Treasurer role for another term.

There's an extended list of upcoming events – make sure to read through them all. We also cover a variety of topics via articles. Please read through, as there are opportunities to volunteer for charitable activities (see: Meals on Wheels), meet your AOH obligations (see: Major Degree), and help our fundraising endeavors (see: Pot of Gold).

Good & Welfare – Please pray for the repose of the souls of former Grand Marshal Mary O'Sullivan and Gil Lynch, brother-in-law of Eddie O'Dea – may they rest in peace. Also continue to keep John Crilley and John B. Kelly in your prayers as they battle health challenges.

We hope you're enjoying your summer and that you and your family are healthy.

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,

Chuck Parnow

Upcoming Events

Event	Time / Location	Details
Veteran's Appreciation Breakfast	Sun., 11/8, 11am-2pm	Veterans and their families welcome. $20 per person, and Veterans are free. Music by Dan Lopez
Hibernian Comedy Night	Fri., 11/13; doors open at 7pm	Another great night of comedy at the Hibernian House hall in support of Wreaths Across America. Tickets are going fast! See the flier for details: https://praoh.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/PRAOH_Comedy_261113.jpg
NYS AOH Board Meeting & Testimonial Dinner	Sat., 11/14	At Eisenhower Hall at West Point. The day's events include the Fall state board meeting, as well as a joint President's testimonial dinner for both the AOH & LAOH NYS Presidents. Talk to Chuck or Dermot if interested in attending.
AOH/LAOH Joint County Board	Tues., 11/17	Meeting at 8pm; elections for 2027 Parade honoree elections including for NYC Aide to Grand Marshal (GM) and Rockland GM – we have candidates for both.
Thanksgiving Seniors' Luncheon	Sat., 11/21, 12-2pm	We'll need volunteers starting at 9am for set up, some shuttle drivers and cleanup help at 2:00 – see article.
1st Pot of Gold Drawing Party	Sun., 11/22, 2-4pm	At the Hibernian House hall; Cocktail party and drawing for $1,000 prize, $500 prize and 10 $50 prizes. See article.
Freeze Ur Arse Off Golf Outing	Fri., 11/27, 12-5pm	Annual golf outing at Broadacres to support Hibernian Family Fund. Nine holes, three clubs – and a great time for all!
Final Pot of Gold Drawing Party	Sun., 12/20, 2-6pm	At the Hibernian House hall; drawing for grand prize of $10,000 along with $1,000 prize and 10 $100 prizes. Again, see the article for details.
Wren Night	Sat., 12/26, 6-9pm	A favorite night of Irish traditions (St. Stephen's Day), with Irish music, dancing, storytelling and great craic!

Stay connected! At our website: www.praoh.org and on Facebook: PearlRiverAOH.

Seniors' Luncheon

On Saturday, November 21st from 12-2pm at the Hibernian House - We are once again hosting this great day of food and Irish culture. Seniors in the community are invited to full meal of Roast Beef with all the fixin's, and as always, we will need volunteers, whether it be members or if you have teenagers who need community service hours! Set up starts at 9am with clean up done shortly after 2:00. For questions, please reach out to Larry DeGennaro at ldegenn931@aol.com.

Pot Of Gold

The first Pot of Gold drawing party is right around the corner on Sunday, November 22nd starting at 2pm ($2,000 of prizes will be awarded), so don't get left behind! There will be tickets behind the bar at the pub, and we'll have tickets available at our division meeting. Tickets are available to all, so please consider grabbing a few and selling them to friends, neighbors and your friends at work.

Tickets are $100 dollars and not only give you the chance to win a variety of cash prizes including the grand prize of $10,000, but the ticket affords you entry to two Sunday afternoon drawing parties. The second party features the grand prize drawing will be Sunday, December 20th from 2:00 to 6:00pm.

As noted, this is one of two major fundraisers we have each year, so we need our members to support it – not only by making sure to buy your own ticket but, more importantly, by helping sell tickets to our friends and the community. Our charitable giving does a lot of good work throughout the year, but we need the money to do it, so our fundraisers have to be successful.

We continue to need to get newer members involved in efforts like this. If you would like to get more involved in supporting this effort and join the committee or you need a ticket, please contact Sean Walsh at aohpotofgold@gmail.com.

Hibernian Hunger

We've added several volunteers to our Meals on Wheels team Thanks to Larry DeGennaro, John Edwards and Chris Power for jumping in! ***If you're looking for an easy local volunteer opportunity –*** we've always got room for additional delivery drivers and could use the help of one or two new team members. All it requires is roughly an hour once a month, a driver's license and a smile! Please get in touch with Dennis Madigan if interested at (914) 714-8287.

Also, in conjunction with our focus on *Fighting Hunger*, we're collecting food regularly in support of St. Aedan's Food Pantry. You're encouraged to drop food goods to a box at the bar.

Hibernian House

We are looking forward to the Comedy Night on Friday, November 13th – we hope to see everyone there. We've also got an NFL Pub Sunday planned upstairs on Sunday, December 13th – it should be a great day!

Special note: the Hibernian House (and all of Railroad Ave.) will be **CLOSED** for a movie shoot on Friday, November 6th all day. We'll make sure to send a reminder as we get closer to the date. Also, we are also looking at adding an ATM in the pub – more to come in the near future!

Veterans Support

The Pearl River AOH, along with a number of other Pearl River civic associations, is once again supporting the ***Wreaths Across America***, a national initiative to ensure no veteran who has passed is forgotten at Christmastime. The local effort will pay respect to our heroes by placing a wreath on all veteran gravesites at St. Anthony's Cemetery in Nanuet.

We are focused on fundraising now, and we had a successful weekend at ShopRite last weekend, collecting $800+. Thanks to Hibernians Jack Coyle, Mike Mulcahy, Helen Griffin, Christine Madigan, Mary Mulcahy, Linda Sheridan and Christine Younghans for stepping up! We'll be collecting again at ShopRite the weekend of November 6-8th. If you'd like to help, there is a sign-up sheet at the pub. Note, our Comedy Night will support this, too, but if you can't make it, you can still support by buying 50/50 tickets at the pub or making a donation – info at the pub!

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Ireland’s WW II Neutrality: The Lie that Refuses to Die



THE IRISH AIR CORPS IN 1939

Whenever Ireland takes an independent stand on international affairs, particularly one that displeases powerful interests, a familiar accusation resurfaces. Ireland, we are told, was sympathetic to Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Its neutrality was supposedly evidence of moral cowardice, if not outright support for fascism.

More than eighty years after the war, this accusation remains a convenient weapon against Ireland.

At the center of that accusation is one incident: Taoiseach Éamon de Valera's visit to the German minister in Dublin in May 1945 to convey condolences following Adolf Hitler's death.

It was a serious failure of political judgment, reflecting de Valera's rigid adherence to diplomatic protocol, a compulsive need to show that Ireland act as a mature nation. Yet those who portray it as proof of Irish sympathy for Nazism overlook Ireland's very different response to the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt just weeks earlier.

De Valera paid tribute to Roosevelt in the Dáil, adjourned proceedings as a mark of respect, had official flags lowered, sent a sympathetic message to President Harry Truman, and attended a memorial Mass. American Minister David Gray did not open a formal condolence book, so there was no equivalent diplomatic visit. More on his motives later.

One response was a public national tribute to an Allied leader; the other, a tone deaf pro forma diplomatic gesture. Neither should be confused with Ireland's actual wartime record.

Neutrality Born of Necessity

When Britain declared war on Germany in September 1939, Ireland was a young state, less than two decades removed from a devastating civil war and still confronting partition.

Ireland simply lacked the military resources to fight a modern war. Its small army had little heavy armor, its air corps possessed no modern fighter force, and its antiaircraft defenses were woefully inadequate. Entering the conflict would have exposed Irish cities to German bombing without the means to defend them effectively.

There was also the question of sovereignty. After centuries of British rule, Ireland was not about to surrender its independent foreign policy simply because London had entered another European war. Ireland's only substantial military resource was its manpower, and committing Irish soldiers to a war under British command was hardly acceptable for a nation still establishing its independence.

Neutrality was both a practical necessity and an assertion of independence.

But neutrality did not mean indifference to the outcome. De Valera understood that a Nazi victory threatened Ireland's own freedom. He assured British representative Sir John Maffey that Ireland would provide every conceivable assistance short of openly joining the conflict.

What emerged was public neutrality accompanied by extensive, often secret, cooperation with the Allies.

The Hidden Allied Partnership

In February 1945, Viscount Cranborne, Britain's Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, prepared a confidential memorandum identifying fourteen areas in which neutral Ireland had assisted the Allied war effort.

This was not an Irish nationalist defending de Valera. It was a senior British minister privately documenting assistance his country had received.

In 1941, Ireland permitted Allied aircraft based in Northern Ireland to cross Irish territory through the Donegal Corridor. This shortened their journey to the Atlantic, extending patrol time and improving their ability to protect convoys and hunt German submarines. On May 26, 1941, a Catalina flying boat that transited the corridor helped located the German battleship *Bismarck* leading to it destruction.

Irish assistance was not confined to the Donegal Corridor. British rescue vessels operated from Irish ports, while Ireland's eighty-three coastal lookout posts monitored shipping and aircraft. Information about German submarine movements and other suspicious activity was shared with British authorities.

In June 1944, twenty-one-year-old Maureen Flavin, working at Blacksod Point in County Mayo, recorded a sharp fall in atmospheric pressure warning of an approaching Atlantic storm. Her observations helped Allied meteorologists recognize the approaching storm, prompting General Dwight D. Eisenhower to postpone the Normandy invasion from June 5 to June 6, when a brief improvement in conditions offered an opportunity to proceed.

The treatment of military personnel offered another revealing contrast. An April 1944 Irish government memorandum acknowledged that Allied airmen landing in Ireland were "*presumed to be on non-operational flights unless proven otherwise".* German airmen, in contrast, were interned for the duration.

Ireland's intelligence cooperation was equally significant. Irish Military Intelligence, G2, worked closely with Britain's MI5 to identify German agents, intercept communications, and disrupt espionage operations.

Dr. Richard Hayes, Director of the National Library of Ireland, played an important role in breaking German intelligence codes. His work and that of G2 helped British intelligence exploit communications that German agents believed secure.

Following the war, senior MI5 official Cecil Liddell praised the vigor and integrity of Irish counter-espionage efforts.

Such cooperation was hardly the conduct of a nation sympathetic to Nazi Germany.

A Tale of Three Neutral Countries

Critics of Ireland's neutrality seldom apply the same critical standards to Sweden and Switzerland, both of which possessed substantially stronger military forces.

Sweden supplied Nazi Germany with iron ore, specialty steel, and precision ball bearings essential to its aircraft, tanks, and weapons production.

Switzerland helped Nazi Germany convert vast quantities of gold, including gold looted from occupied Europe and victims of Nazi persecution, into the foreign currency needed to purchase war materials.

Contrast that with Ireland, which provided the Allies with intelligence, airspace, weather observations, and operational assistance while releasing Allied airmen and interning German crews.

Sweden and Switzerland have faced historical scrutiny, but their wartime conduct is not routinely resurrected to discredit them.

Why, then, does Ireland's neutrality remain a recurring accusation of Nazi sympathy?

The Making of a Political Myth

Two figures helped shape the hostile narrative: American Minister David Gray and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Gray, a political appointee related to Eleanor Roosevelt, was deeply antagonistic toward de Valera and concerned that Irish American influence might pressure Washington to challenge partition after the war.

In 1943, Gray proposed demanding access to Irish ports and airfields. Though strategically located, the ports lacked the infrastructure to serve as major naval bases, and American military planners questioned whether they would be needed. But Gray had another motive: an Irish refusal could be used to portray Dublin as unwilling to assist the United States **and undermine Irish American efforts to challenge partition after the war.**

In February 1944, Gray demanded the expulsion of Axis diplomats, claiming their presence endangered Allied security. De Valera refused.

Yet British intelligence opposed the expulsion. Ireland had already confiscated the German legation's radio, forcing communications onto channels MI5 could intercept. Working with Irish intelligence, MI5 was monitoring the diplomats and feeding misinformation to Berlin. Expulsion would jeopardize this valuable operation.

Gray knew this. Remarkably, he even proposed wording for the American Note intended to prevent de Valera from citing the confiscated transmitter in Ireland's defense.

Was Gray protecting Allied security, or manufacturing a politically useful Irish refusal?

Churchill reinforced the narrative in his May 1945 victory broadcast, condemning Irish neutrality while praising Northern Ireland's loyalty. Yet his government possessed the Cranborne memorandum documenting Ireland's extensive assistance to the Allies.

The result was a damaging public narrative that concealed Irish cooperation while undermining de Valera's standing and Irish American efforts to challenge partition.

A Smear That Will Not Die

The consequences of this smear campaign did not end in 1945.

More than eighty years later, accusations of Irish sympathy for Nazism continue to resurface when Ireland's foreign policy displeases its critics. Contemporary disputes deserve to be judged on their merits. Reviving an eighty-year-old specious accusation of Nazi sympathy does nothing to resolve them. Ireland opened its airspace to Allied patrols, supplied naval and coastal intelligence, assisted Allied airmen, shared German espionage information, and provided weather observations vital to military operations.

A nation that quietly assisted in the defeat of Nazi Germany should not be condemned as a friend of fascism, but applauded for doing the most it could do with what it had.

It is time the historical record received as much attention as the accusation.