



Empire State Hibernian

Published Quarterly by the New York State Board Ancient Order of Hibernians In America
Organized in New York City - May 4, 1836



Volume 5 No.5 Issue 4

December 2006

between the ladies and men. Let's try to do better this year, remember these make great Christmas gifts that give all year long. I already have one of our state officers who sold all of his calendars in one week. I think the rest of us can do the same thing by the end of the year. This is a much needed fund raiser for both the Ladies and the Men's State Boards to carry on the work of the Order.

My wife and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Historian

Mike McCormack

IS IT HISTORY OR NEWS?

It is often said that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. If that be true, the questions raised by Sinn Fein regarding their acceptance of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) show they know their history. The questions follow the recent published results of an international investigation which uncovered considerable and credible evidence of British Army and police collusion in 74 sectarian murders during the 1970s. The murders are history, but Republicans today are concerned that history could repeat itself, especially if there remain senior officers in the PSNI who were involved in the collusion reported. They argue

that these officers need to be identified and removed from the PSNI if there is to be a new beginning to policing in the North.

The investigation was done by a panel of human-rights experts from around the world, headed by University of Notre Dame human rights law Professor Douglass Cassel who registered shock at the extent of collusion uncovered. They found that senior officers of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (now renamed the PSNI) were aware of, and approved of, collusion with Loyalist paramilitaries while officials in London had enough information to intervene, but didn't. The panel's report called on the British Government to appoint an independent inquiry to examine how high up the chain of command collusion went. Professor Cassel said, "Personally I was shocked. The British Government has a reputation around the world as one of the leading democracies and one of the longest histories of the rule of law. To find this extent of collusion in murders we investigated was shocking." Among the incidents investigated were the May 1974 Dublin Monaghan bombings which claimed 33 lives and the Miami Showband massacre in July 1975.

While Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams told Irish-American supporters in New York on Nov 9 there was still more work to be done on the policing issue,

DUP leader Ian Paisley insisted Sinn Fein's attitude is a "major stumbling block". "I have conveyed to the prime minister", he said, "the view that there will have to be delivery from Sinn Fein on supporting the Police Service of Northern Ireland, courts and the rule of law. Until this happens there will be no progress made." Apparently the reverend wouldn't object to repeating the history of Loyalist violence! So you see, knowing your history is important. Check the Washington-based Irish American Information Service at www.iais.org for more information.

In a classic example of history getting its due, Britain pardoned 26 Irishmen executed during World War I. According to the Irish Shot At Dawn campaign which sought this pardon, the men were "brutally gunned down by British military authorities, not in the name of justice, but as a stupid, spiteful and shameful example to others; most were clearly suffering from shell shock. Treatment of enlisted men tended to be harsher and more punitive and were seldom used on officers whose treatment consisted of rest and encouragement usually accompanied by withdrawal from the war zone for a period of rest and rehabilitation." Many were stubbornly refused the mercy of a pardon by the British Government until Mr. Justice Anthony Babington, an acclaimed expert and the first to gain access to official records in

the early eighties, observed that the military courts hadn't the foggiest idea how to sentence, and that their decisions were arbitrary, inconsistent and irregular. On November 30th 2000 he publicly urged the British Government to look again at some 300 of these cases. In June 2002 the Shot at Dawn Campaign (Irl) was founded in Dublin to lobby the Irish Government and to invite Irish communities at home and abroad to pressure the British Government to grant pardons to these soldiers who were executed for minor military offences which ceased to be punishable by death in 1929. Some were only guilty of disobedience but were executed as an example to enforce discipline. The pressure worked. As a result, relatives of the 26 Irish of the 300 pardoned gathered for a wreath-laying ceremony in the War Memorial Gardens at Islandbridge, Dublin on November 12. They praised the work done by The Shot at Dawn campaign, led by Peter Mulvaney. Foreign Affairs Minister Dermot Ahern welcomed the pardon saying it showed the men met a fate they did not deserve. The names of the 26 Irish volunteers will be added to the Irish National War Memorial Records. See www.shotatdawncampaignirl.com for more information.

Congratulations to Bill Kreamer of AOH Div 7, E. Islip, Suffolk who was presented with the Legion of Honor Award by the Chapel of the Four Chaplains,

named for four chaplains – one Jewish, two Protestant, and one Irish Catholic – whose selfless courage saved four sailors when they gave their life jackets away on a sinking ship torpedoed by a Nazi sub in 1943. See www.fourchaplains.org for the full story. The Legion of Honor Award publicly recognizes persons who exhibit the selfless service to community, nation, and neighbor so dramatically exemplified by the Four Chaplains. Some notable recipients have been Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Carter, and Reagan as well as Bob Hope, John Glenn, Martha Raye, James Michener, Marian Anderson, C. Everett Koop, Tommy Lasorda and Shirley Chisolm. And now, Bill Kreamer. Walk proud, Bill, walk proud!

Commodore Barry Mike Kearney

My sincere thanks to President John Hennessey and the State Board for selecting me for the Burns/Hayes award. It was a great honor and pleasure for me to receive this prestigious award at President Hennessey's Testimonial Dinner on October 7, 2006 at the Marriott Melville.

I am in contact with the Massachusetts State Board to rectify the situation at the USS CONSTITUTION Navy ship and Museum at the US Naval Station in Charlestown, just north of Boston. During the

National Convention in Boston this past July, I visited the USS CONSTITUTION Navy ship and Museum. It was Commodore John Barry who built and commanded that first United States Navy, one of whose ships, "Old Ironsides", the USS CONSTTUTION, is still in commission, and may be visited at this US Naval Station in Charlestown.

Despite Barry's integral role in the USS CONSTITUTION, the museum personnel had no knowledge of Commodore Barry. After I expressed my disappointment, I proceeded to the book area and picked up a booklet titled USS CONSTITUTION and there in the first chapter "Birth of the U.S. Navy" was a picture of President Washington and Commodore John Barry. I returned to the information counter with the booklet and now there were three museum personnel discussing the issue. I expressed to them that a resolution was passed in the US Congress recognizing Commodore Barry as the First Flag Officer of the United States Navy and signed by President Bush on December 22, 2005, **Public Law 109-142 of the United States**, and that it was to Commodore John Barry that George Washington turned to build and command the USS CONSTITUTION. They were very interested and thanked me for my information - It would be very appropriate that the AOH do its best to have a Memorial to Commodore John