



# IRISH VETERANS

December 2018

## Irish Vets' Medal of Honor Exhibit Florida-bound

**Breaking News:** Our Medal of Honor Exhibition, currently on-show in Kinsale, Co Cork, will relocate to Tampa, Florida, in March in time for Saint Patrick's Day. Details are currently being worked out with our sister-Chapter there (Major Kevin Kelly Chapter #2), and we anticipate an Opening Ceremony on Friday, March 15.

More information coming in our next newsletter, along with details of the new exhibition coming to our space in Kinsale.

## The year in review

## Medal of Honor Exhibit nets Tidy Towns Honour

On Nov. 8 our exhibition exploring Ireland's connection to the Medal of Honor -- the highest award for combat valor bestowed by the United States on its military members -- was itself honoured with a "Highly Commended" citation from Kinsale Tidy Towns for a Best New Business of the Year.

The Irish Veterans Medal of Honor Exhibition, which opened in March at the Irish Veterans Museum at The Glen, Kinsale, includes the medal awarded in 1898 to Michael Gibbons for action during the Spanish American War. Gibbons, originally from County Mayo, was a U.S. Navy sailor when he was awarded the medal for

courage under fire during a mission to cut an underwater communication cable leading from Cienfuegos, Cuba.

Of the more than 3,500 Medals of Honor awarded since it was established during the Civil War, more than 2,000 have gone to men of Irish descent, among these more than 250 born in Ireland. Declan Hughes, founder of Irish Veterans, which established the exhibition, said it was a huge surprise simply to be nominated for a Tidy Towns ward, and to come away with the commendation was “absolutely extraordinary.”

“There were three businesses in the running, and I understand the [Highly Commended citation] was made to us because of the quality of the exhibition



New York City firefighters pose outside the Medal of Honor exhibit in May. The firefighters donated glass and steel salvaged from the Twin Towers destroyed on 9/11. Courtesy of Irish Examiner. Dermot Ryan, photo

space and the fact that, as a tourist initiative, we have seen several thousand people visit us,” Hughes said.



As of December the museum and exhibit was showing an almost unanimous 5-star rating among visitors posting reviews on the [TripAdvisor](https://www.tripadvisor.com) website.

Two months after the exhibit opened members of the New York City Fire Department, Ladder 43, visited the museum and donated salvaged items pulled from the World Trade Center towers felled by a terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001.

The exhibition includes profiles of many Medal of Honor recipients of Irish descent, from Ireland-born U.S. Army Pvt. Michael Madden during the Civil War to U.S. Navy SEAL LT. Michael P Murphy, for actions in Afghanistan in 2005. Irish Veterans Chapter 001 in Kinsale was commissioned in 2015 and named in memory of Murphy, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2005. Murphy's heroic actions in Afghanistan were the basis of the film "Lone Survivor".



The earliest Medal of Honor -- by date of action - was awarded in 1894 to Bernard J.D. Irwin of County Roscommon for overseeing a rescue mission during a campaign against Apache Indians in 1861, shortly before the medal was established.

Irish Veterans is a registered charity (number CHY 14643) dedicated to historical research and telling the stories of Irish men and women and their descendants who have served in militaries across the world.

For more information, contact Declan Hughes [declan@irishveterans.org](mailto:declan@irishveterans.org)

Follow Irish Veterans online at [www.irishveterans.org](http://www.irishveterans.org) and on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/IrishVeteransOrg>. You can also follow the Irish Veterans Museum on Twitter @IrishVetsMuseum and online at [www.IrishVeteransMuseum.org](http://www.IrishVeteransMuseum.org)

## Medal of Honor Exhibit Opens



Ribbon-cutters for the opening were, left to right, Jeff & Dianne Falkel of Colorado Springs, Colo. and County Carlow native and Vietnam chopper pilot Nick Collier. Jeff served in U.S. Army Special Forces (the Green Berets) and Dianne is a U.S. Air Force Veteran. Photo: Dermot Ryan

On March 10 the Irish Veterans Medal of Honor Exhibition opened in The Glen, Kinsale. This exhibition, which is discussed at greater length in the story above, explores the Irish connection to the highest award for combat valor bestowed by the United States on its service members. The exhibition is also unique in that it features the only Medal of Honor Medal on display outside the U.S. The Medal was awarded to County Mayo-born Michael Gibbons for action in 1898 during the Spanish American War.

## “El Barrio’s Bravest” pay a visit

On May 26 firefighters of New York Fire Department, Ladder 43 -- “El Barrio’s Bravest” -- arrived in Kinsale to visit the 9/11 Garden of Remembrance at Ringfinnan and the Medal of Honor Exhibition in The Glen. U.S. Navy SEAL LT. Michael Murphy, who was raised in Patchogue, Long Island, about 60 miles from New York City, wore the patch of “El Barrio’s Bravest” to remind him and his comrades of why they were in Afghanistan. The men and men and women of Ladder 43 returned the honour by travelling to Kinsale to meet the people behind Irish Veterans Chapter #1, based in The White House, and named for Murphy.



Firefighters from Ladder 43 in New York City gathered in Kinsale on May 26 to visit the Medal of Honor Exhibit established by Irish Veterans. The organization named its first chapter after Navy SEAL LT. Michael Murphy, who wore the Ladder company’s patch on his uniform in Afghanistan.



At an informal ceremony sponsored by our partners Blacks Brewery & Distillery in Kinsale, the firefighters of Ladder 43 presented us with three pieces salvaged from the World Trade Center -- a rivet, or bolt, that was picked up on the day of the attack by Danny Manning (of Innishannon descent), and a piece of window glass and a piece of steel from the South Tower.

In a presentation that was tinged with both humour and emotion, retired Fire Chief Tom O'Connor brought the connections that bind it all together to life. Cork County Mayor Declan Hurley reciprocated, bidding them all "100,000 welcomes" and warmly thanking them for making the trip to Kinsale.



U.S.Navy SEAL LT. Michael Murphy is seen here in Afghanistan wearing the patch of FDNY Ladder 43.

U.S. Navy photo

The visitors earlier visited with the family of the late Kathleen Murphy, who planted the trees created the Garden of Remembrance in memory of the firefighters

who died on 9/11. Kathleen had worked as a nurse in New York and knew many of the firefighters.

Like people the world over, she was appalled by the carnage wrought on 9/11.

On her land at Ringfinnan she planted a tree for every one of the 343 firefighters who perished on that day, including one for their Chaplain, Fr. Michael Judge. The Garden has become a place of pilgrimage, solace and commemoration, and sees a steady stream of visitors throughout the year. After a meal in The White House, the Firehouse group reluctantly departed the town to continue on their travels.

## West Point Alumni Glee Club visit

On June 12 more than 50 members of the West Point Alumni Glee Club and their significant others arrived in Kinsale, where the singers performed a benefit for Irish Veterans in the thousand-year-old Church of St. Multose.

The visit and performance by the club, most of whose members are combat vets, was another deep and warm engagement for us.



West Point Alumni Glee Club image

Once again, Blacks Brewery & Distillery sponsored the reception in the exhibition centre, which proved to be a very intimate setting for so many. Many strong bonds were formed, and

with this group you know a song was never very far away. They burst into song while in the museum, then headed off to the White House for a meal.

Next, an extremely appreciative audience warmly received them in St. Multose. And an unexpected highlight was the club's guest performer, [Tenor David Martin, who was performing for the last time as an Irish Army Sergeant](#). David now performs as a Irish Veteran, and the quality of his singing is simply superb! Our thanks to our friend and Board member Ron Howko for being so proactive on the day, even helping out as 'roadie' for the group!

## Spitfire cockpit donated to Irish Veterans

Tuesday, July 10, saw us deliver a Spitfire cockpit into the care of our friends at Atlantic Flight Training Academy (AFTA) at Cork Airport.

The cockpit was hand-made from original plans by Dubliner Gerry Hand. Gerry generously donated the recreated WWII cockpit to Irish Veterans.





Gerry Hand photo

This extraordinary donation feeds into the next exhibition coming to The Glen in 2019, and which will explore the Irish connections to Allied Air Forces of World War II..

AFTA will house the cockpit and put on the finishing touches before it is displayed as part of the museum's 2019 exhibition.

We're very grateful to Conor Ryan of The Folk House, Kinsale, for providing the transport to get it down to us, and to our driver, Nick, for giving up a Sunday to deliver the precious cargo to us on July 8.

## SEAL Retirement at Irish Veterans MOH Exhibit



Former Navy SEAL marked his retirement with a bash at the Medal of Honor Exhibition in Kinsale.

Saturday, Sept. 15, saw a significant gathering in the Medal of Honor Museum of 60-70

people, comprising the family and friends of a valued Irish Veterans member and retired Navy SEAL.

We invited him to hold his unofficial retirement bash here in Kinsale. For obvious reasons, we cannot identify him, but many serving SEALs, Special Forces operators, Irish Defence Forces friends and Veterans joined us to mark the occasion.

Blacks Brewery of Kinsale supported the event and, as usual, blew everyone away with its stunning product selection. Our good friends at PSE Composites, makers of hunting rifle stocks here in Kinsale, provided freshly barbequed venison. Conor Ryan, our friend from The Folk House/Malt Lane, gave us a tremendous reception in his wonderful pub. We would like to thank everyone who helped us mark this great event."

## A glimpse inside the MOH Exhibit





# Join The Irish Veterans Today



## For Veterans

For Veterans or family members of Veterans who would like to purchase a membership on behalf of a Veteran.

- A handmade framed plaque from the Wild Goose Studio in Kinsale, individually inscribed with the Veteran's name and membership number.
- Connecting the global population of Irish Veterans
- Regular blogs
- Notification and invitations to Irish Veterans events, ceremonies and activities

\$280.00 (USD) - €220.00 (EUR) - £175.00 (GBP)

## Friends of Veterans

Friends of Irish Veterans is designed to cater for people who may not be veterans themselves, but who nevertheless want to become involved

- Connecting the global population of Irish Veterans
- Regular blogs
- Notification and invitations to Irish Veterans events, ceremonies and activities

\$250.00 (USD) - €205.00 (EUR) - £160.00 (GBP)

Application at <https://www.irishveterans.org/vets/Membership/Join-Up-Today>

## Thank you to our Sponsors



The Folk House, Guardwell, Kinsale, Co. Cork



Farm Lane, Kinsale, Co. Cork, Ireland



Barrack Lane, Kinsale, Co. Cork



## **[Pledge a Donation Today](#)**

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As you may be aware, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect on May 25, 2018, replacing existing data protection laws. It strengthens data protection within the European Union and makes it easier for you to access any personal data we may hold on you. The protection of your personal data is a key priority for Irish Veterans and your data will be processed in line with GDPR.

Since beginning compilation of our email list some years ago, it is undoubtedly the case that some individuals will have either changed email address, or passed away. In many cases, we are not informed of these changes. Therefore, in an effort to bring our list up-to-date, we ask that people engage with us this one time. If you wish to remain on this email list, no further action is required and you will continue to receive email updates. If you wish to be removed from the list simply send an email stating 'Remove' and your details will be removed. If an address comes back to us as 'undeliverable', we will automatically remove that address from our list.

Thank you most sincerely and we look forward to hearing back from you in the near future, either as Members, Friends or interested supporters.