ORDER OF MALTA
IRELAND

30 September 2026

Autumn Newsletter

Ambulance Corps | Irish Association | Headquarters | Hospitaller | First Aid Training

National Services Day 2026



National Services Day 2026 took place on Saturday 5th September to celebrate Ireland's frontline, emergency, security, and voluntary services.

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(for more info click on the photo)

On 5 September 2026, people across Ireland were given the opportunity to show their appreciation for the work carried out by our frontline emergency and security services, statutory, auxiliary and voluntary.

Parades and static displays were held in Cork, Dublin, Dundalk, Naas, Kilkenny, Galway, Limerick and Wexford. The National Director attended the commemoration service in the Garden of Remembrance before taking the salute at the reviewing stand alongside dignitaries from the participating organisations, members of the Oireachtas and Dublin's Lord Mayor.

National Services Day is organised each year by an entirely volunteer-led board, committee, and regional representatives. They work hard to provide opportunities for the public to meet and engage with the emergency and security services, helping to foster stronger relationships and demonstrate appreciation for the vital work these services carry out, as well as the continuing support they receive from the public.

Thank you to all our members who took part in, supported or helped organise National Services Day 2026. Your commitment and support helped ensure that the Order of Malta was once again proudly represented on this important national occasion.





Events

National Senior First Aid Competitions 2026
19th September - Ballina











With thanks to Michael Diskin, Vice-Chair of Mayo GAA Board for bringing Sam to the celebrations.

Delighted to be joined by our colleagues in Ukraine, Romania and Poland competing for the award for best international team which this year was won by Poland!



Photograph, from L-R:
Patrick Downes KMOb; Archbishop Francis Duffy, Archbishop of Tuam and Bishop of Killala; Vitalii Kulyniak and Vladyslav Tukal, Ukrainian Order of Malta; Minister Dara Calleary TD; Mariia Savka and Anastasiia Huliai, Ukrainian Order of Malta; and Commander Brian Coote KM.



Winners of the 2026 National First Aid Competitions:

First Aid Team - Dundrum & Cabra
FAR Team Test - Ballina
AADL Test - National Cadet Team
EMT Individual Test - Crumlin
Ambulance Test - Craughwell
Best International Team - Poland
CFR Team Test - Crumlin
Overall Test - Ballina

Events

Reek Sunday - 26th July





Teams on the mountain from all around the country ensuring a safe pilgrimage was had by all.

On the same day, the power of prayer as Mayo lifted Sam for the first time in 75 years to an ecstatic crowd of Mayo supporters and just about everyone else at Croke Park.

Cork - 60 Years of Community Service

A civic reception was held at Cork City Hall to mark 60 years of dedicated community service by the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps in Cork. Hosted by the Lord Mayor of Cork City, Councillor Damian Boylan, the event served as a formal token of appreciation from the city for six decades of unwavering support to local communities.

The reception saw a large turnout from both the Cork and Carrigaline units. Senior officers led the delegation, including Lt Pat Carroll KM (OIC Carrigaline Unit), Sgt John McCarthy (OIC Cork Unit), Captain Norma Coughlan (Carrigaline Unit), Lt Kevin Hickey (Cork Unit) and Adjutant Brenda Poole (Carrigaline Unit).

Addressing those gathered at City Hall, the Lord Mayor praised generations of volunteers who have given their time selflessly over the past 60 years, ensuring that emergency aid, medical support, and compassion remain readily available to the people of Cork.



The Lord Mayor paid particular thank you to Norma for her 60 years as a member of the Order of Malta and asked her to sign the Lord Mayor's book.





A substantial contingent of senior volunteers and cadet members were also present in the hall. The strong youth presence underscored the ongoing legacy of the organisation, highlighting a new generation of volunteers stepping up to carry forward the ambulance corps tradition of community care and emergency response training.

Events

NATIONAL PLOUGHING CHAMPIONSHIPS 15th - 17th SEPTEMBER 2026









Another successful Ploughing Championships, with 65 volunteer medics on site each day supporting over 240,000 visitors over the three days. A total of 185 patients were treated on site with only 5 of those needing transfer off-site for more advanced care.

FOCUS ON WATERFORD UNIT

Hundreds of volunteering hours given by Waterford Unit over a very busy summer.



Provided week long cover at the GAA World games with over 3,000 athletes and spectators , a great spectacle with over 150 casualties looked after.



Participated in a Major Emergency exercise with NAS, Waterford Civil Defence, Irish Coastguard and the Fire Service.



31st July - 2nd August brought the Annual Spraoi festival to the city for its 30th year, another busy 4 days for the Unit.



While covering the RNLI Swim in Dunmore East, the OIC got to meet Adam Sweeney, the youngest Irish man to climb Mount Everest, he was only home 48 hours!



Completed regular training sessions with the Dunmore East & Bunmahon Coastguard teams



Unit also had the 4 day Tramore Race festival with their colleagues from Tramore and managed to tie in some race course related training scenarios with Dr. Jenny Pugh Turf Club CMO.

Hospitaller Activities

Department of Foreign Affairs Diplomat visits Order of Malta's Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem

Ms Maeve McKiernan of the Department of Foreign Affairs recently visited the Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem in the West Bank as part of a fact-finding mission to learn more about its work and the increasingly challenging circumstances in which its services are delivered.

Ms McKiernan was received by H.E. Michele Bowe, DM, and members of the hospital's senior management team. During the visit, she was briefed on the hospital's maternity and neonatal services and its vital role in providing high-quality care to mothers and infants from across the region, irrespective of religion, background or ability to pay.

Established by the Sovereign Order of Malta in 1990, the Holy Family Hospital has since delivered more than 110,000 babies. Its neonatal intensive care services are particularly critical, supporting premature and vulnerable infants who require specialist treatment that may not otherwise be readily accessible.

The hospital has enjoyed a close association with Ireland from its inception. That relationship continues through financial and practical support, including the service of Irish midwives and doctors who regularly travel to Bethlehem to work alongside their Palestinian colleagues in exceptionally demanding circumstances.

Patrick Downes, of the Irish Association of the Order of Malta, warmly welcomed the visit:
"The Holy Family Hospital represents the Order's enduring commitment to the protection of life and human dignity. Its maternity and neonatal services are indispensable to the people of Bethlehem and the surrounding region. We greatly appreciate the continuing voluntary service of our Irish medical professionals who regularly are on duty at the hospital and very much welcome the Department of Foreign Affairs' interest in the hospital's mission and the challenges confronting its staff and patients."

The Irish Association of the Order of Malta remains committed to supporting the hospital and sustaining Ireland's longstanding connection with this vitally important humanitarian and medical mission in the Holy Land.





Hospitaller Activities

CALL for VOLUNTEERS to join the KnightRun team

Make a Difference. One Evening. One Conversation. One Act of Kindness.

The KnightRun Project is seeking new volunteers to join our dedicated team supporting people experiencing homelessness in Dublin.

Each week, KnightRun volunteers provide hot food, refreshments, clothing, hygiene items, and most importantly, compassion and human connection to those who need it most. Through simple acts of service, we can make a real difference in the lives of vulnerable members of our community. Whether you can volunteer regularly or occasionally, your time and support can help ensure that this important outreach programme continues to grow and reach those most in need.

Why Volunteer?

- Support some of the most vulnerable people in our community.
- Meet like-minded people committed to service and compassion.
- Put our values into action through practical, meaningful outreach.
- Make a tangible difference with just a few hours of your time.

We Need Volunteers For:

- Food preparation and packing
- Distribution teams
- Driving and logistical support
- General outreach

No previous experience is required. Training, guidance, and support will be provided.
If you would like to get involved or learn more, please contact us today. **marcus@mfo.ie**
Together, we can continue making a difference, one night at a time.

"Small acts of kindness can create lasting change."

Digitisation of Archives & Open Day at HQ 15th August



As part of the project to digitise our archive of photos, books, papers, and other important historical documents we held an Open Day at our headquarters in Clyde Road.

The event on 15th August from 10am - 1pm included three short presentations about the Order of Malta in Ireland and visitors were invited to view an exhibit of some of the amazing items that have been uncovered during this project.

Enormous thanks to The Heritage Council for their generous funding of this project.

Association News

Knock - 30th August

Each year on the last Sunday in August, cadets, members of the Ambulance Corps, Knights, Dames, and guests head to The Shrine in Knock for the annual pilgrimage. This year we had a big turn out with many travelling from as far away as Cork and Wexford to attend and assist pilgrims.





Retreat 24-26th Sept

Twenty four members and candidates for membership of the Irish Association attended a retreat at Mt St Joseph, Roscrea, Co Tipperary over 24-26 September. The retreat was given by Fr Mark Condon, Magistral Chaplain who also presided over Mass where Capt Chris Rowan, OIC Monasterevin Unit was invested as a Knight of Magistral Grace.



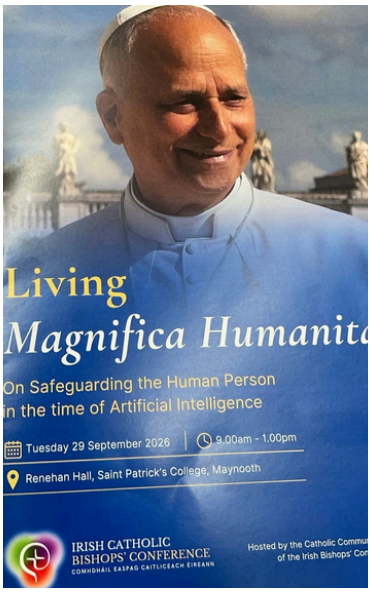
Commissioning - 23rd August

On Sunday, 23rd August in Athlone, thirteen long term, committed volunteers received their commission as Officers of The Order of Malta Ambulance Corps. With a combined service of over 400 years between them, these volunteers have undergone leadership training and developed initiatives which could help the organisation as we head to our 90th year.



Newly Commissioned Officers in Back and Middle rows.

Back Row (L-R): Lt Paul Duffy (Dundalk), Lt. Maria Cunningham Moran (Westport), Lt. Megan Daly (Crumlin), Lt. Sheila Bourke DM (Raheny), Lt. Caine McGoldrick (Omagh), Lt. James O'Neill (Armagh)
Middle Row (L-R): Lt. Marian Staunton (Ballinrobe), Lt. Peter Browne (Ballina), Lt. Dr. Julie Ann Lough (Cabra), Lt. Gemma Byrne (Dundalk), Lt. Aisling Doyle (Drogheda), Lt. Katie-Ann McGoldrick (Omagh), Lt. Paul Bennison (Knock).
Front Row: Comdr. Dr. Brian Power, Comdr. Aidan O'Brien KMOb, Comdr. John Wright KMOb, Mr Adrian Ahern KM, Comdr. Brian Coote KM (National Director), Mr Patrick Downes KMOb (Co-Chair, Order of Malta Ireland), Comdr. Bernard Guthrie KMOb, Comdr. Robbie Cawley, Comdr. Karl Vahey KM.



The Catholic Communications Office of the Bishops' Conference hosted a conference based on Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, Magnifica Humanitas. Entitled Living Magnifica Humanitas, the event was held in St Patricks College Maynooth and Dr Lisa Cunningham DM spoke at it representing the SMOM

Association News

National Day of Commemoration - 12th July







Pictured with the President are Cmdr. Brian Coote KM, Patrick Downes KMOb and Adrian Ahern KM.



It was a particular honour for representatives of the Order of Malta, attending at the invitation of An Taoiseach Micheál Martin TD, at the National Day of Commemoration on 12th July in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham, to meet HE Catherine Connolly, Uachtarán na hÉireann.

The occasion held particular significance for the Order, as Kilmainham was the site of its first hospital in Ireland, which it established in 1174, marking the beginning of more than eight centuries of service on the Island.

Belgian Ambassador Garden Party - 22nd July



Vencislav Velkov, Harold's Cross Unit, pictured with his daughter Tsveta Velkova, Patrick Downes KMOb, and Aidan O'Brien KMOb at the Belgian Ambassador's Garden Party on 22nd July.

Bulgarian Association Award



Vencislav Velkov, Harold's Cross Unit was awarded the Cross of Merit from the Sovereign Order requested by the Bulgarian Association for his support of their charitable activities.

Dr Peadar O'Mórdha KM

Dr O'Mórdha KM has served as Governor of the Apothecaries' Hall of Ireland since 2024, an institution incorporated in 1791 and successor to the 1446 Guild of St Mary Magdalen. Although the Apothecaries' Hall of Ireland and the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London have operated as separate institutions since their respective foundations, with both having historic roles in the regulation of medical practice and pharmacy, they have never previously shared a presiding officer. Dr O'Mórdha's election therefore marks a historic first, as he becomes the first individual to hold both leadership positions.



Countrywide news and events

Lt Bryan Crosby KM



Lt Bryan Crosby KM, Limerick Unit

A lovely write up about Lt Bryan Crosby KM of Limerick Unit in the Irish Independent detailing his 23 years as a volunteer. (click photo for full article)

Armagh Unit Coffee Morning Fundraiser - 19th September





Congratulations to Wexford OIC, Adj. Dylan O'Connor and his partner on the birth of their beautiful baby girl.

Bray Air Display, 1st August

50 volunteers and 7 ambulances from 6 Units on duty providing medical cover to the tens of thousands that attended the hugely popular Bray Air Display.



Bray, Blackrock, Navan, Tallaght, Harold's Cross & Dundalk Units providing cover for Bray Air Display



Shannon Unit at the pilgrimage to Our Lady's Shrine at Knock - 30th August



Killarney Unit helping transfer residents to the new Killarney Community Nursing Unit, marking a significant step forward for older persons' care in the South West region. This modern, purpose-built home will support residents to live well in a comfortable, welcoming environment designed around dignity, independence and person-centred care.



Tuam Unit covering the Tri Lakes Connemara sprint triathlon.

Countrywide news and events

WEXFORD UNIT - NIGHT OF FUNDRAISING



The family of the late Pat O'Mahoney raised over €4k for Wexford Unit in appreciation of the support given to Pat during his short battle with terminal cancer - helping him get to appointments and out and about when his condition made it harder for the family to do.

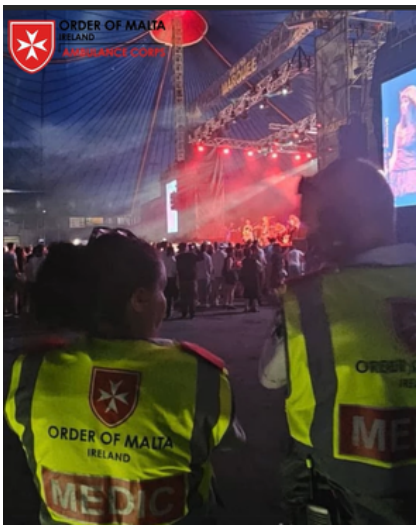
They even helped Pat and his sister travel to The National Opera House for an Imelda May concert but shortly after arriving he became ill and needed to travel back to home - only to be later called by Imelda herself when she heard what had happened! For the full story click on the picture and follow the link.

Athlone River Festival & Féile na Sionainne 31st July - 3rd August



Athlone Unit provided Ambulance and Medical services for both weekend events

A long hot fun Summer



A summer of festivals and events from concerts in Thomond Park, The Aviva and Slane to community fun days, sporting events (including The Worlds GAA games, motorbike road races, horse racing meets) and everything in between. None of this could happen without the generous support of our wonderful volunteers.

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who give up 100's of hours to make these events safe and possible.

Rás na mBan - 2nd - 6th September Wexford Unit

(with thanks to Comdr. Brian Power and Capt. Macartan Hughes for giving up their time as to attend as Advanced Paramedics)

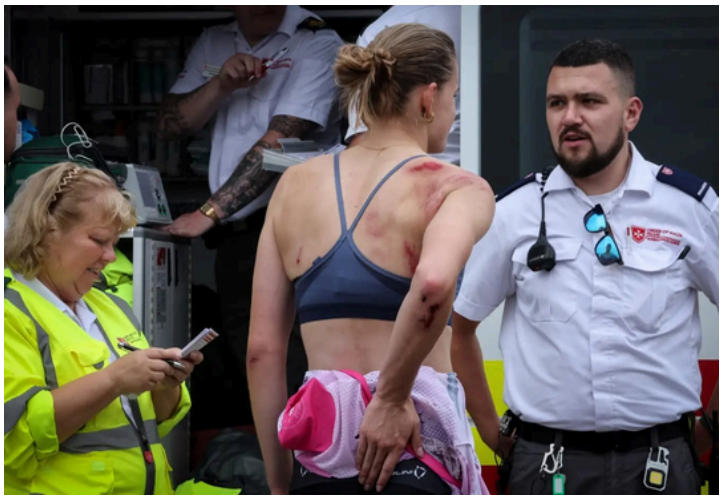


Photo: Lorraine O'Sullivan @Rásnamban

"The Order of Malta have been an integral part of the smooth running of Rás na mBan for many years in terms of providing medical support for the race.

Each year they provide medical cover with two Emergency Ambulances and an Advanced Paramedic Response Vehicle, ensuring a high level of care and rapid response throughout the event.

Covering an international stage race requires huge volunteer commitment, countless volunteer hours, and significant manpower. Year after year their incredible volunteers have stepped up to the challenge.

Rás na mBan is a massive logistical effort, but their dedication and professionalism are a huge asset to our event each year."

rosnamban - Instagram post

Countrywide news and events

LT. JIM KEOGH KM STEPS DOWN AS LIMERICK OIC





21st August saw the end of an era in the Limerick Unit as Lieutenant Jim Keogh KM finished his 5 year team as Officer in Charge.

Jim took over the unit in 2020 during the Covid 19 pandemic and led the unit with great honour and distinction throughout his term.

We thank Jim for all his hard work and dedication throughout the years.

Relay for Life - proudly supported by Dundalk, Balbriggan, Drogheda & Omagh Units

As part of the Community section of the Order of Malta Cadet Achievement Programme (CAP), the Dundalk Cadet Unit has proudly chosen to support Relay for Life Dundalk, an inspiring community event organised by the Irish Cancer Society.

To kick-start their fundraising, the Cadets, with the support of their leaders, organised a Table Quiz in Kennedy's Bar, Dundalk on Thursday 30th July, attracting 16 teams with fantastic support from the local community. Along with a raffle on the night, the quiz raised an impressive €1,047.50 for Relay for Life Dundalk.

Relay for Life took place at Dundalk Stadium on 12th–13th September, where teams walked around the track in relay for 24 hours, symbolising that cancer never sleeps. It is the Irish Cancer Society's largest fundraising event and celebrates cancer survivors, remembers loved ones lost to cancer, and supports those currently undergoing treatment.

The event begins with the Survivors' Lap, recognising the strength and courage of those who have overcome or are living with cancer. This is followed by the Carers' Lap, honouring the families and friends who have supported loved ones throughout their cancer journey. As dusk falls, the moving Candle of Hope Ceremony takes place, with personalised candle bags lighting the track in memory of loved ones and in support of those affected by cancer.

By taking part in Relay for Life, our cadets are learning the importance of community service, compassion and giving back—values that are at the heart of the Order of Malta. Their fundraising efforts and participation in the event are an excellent example of young members making a positive impact within their community.









Looking good...

NEW AMBULANCES



Tallaght



Westport



Nenagh

Well done and safe driving to all the Units who worked hard to get Grants or fundraise for new vehicles.



Limerick

NEW OIC's

- **Mullingar** - Sgt Kyle Conway
- **Harolds Cross** - Adj Daniel Smyth
- **Blanchardstown** - Sgt Laura Dwyer

CASTLEBAR UNIT - NEW BUILDING ON TRACK



Our new building in Castlebar is on track to complete in October. Thanks to Mayo County Council for all their help and support to get this project off the ground and almost ready!

Cadet News

National Cadet Camp and All Ireland Competitions - Fermanagh - 4th July



Huge well done to all the cadets, patients, examiners and leaders who took part in another successful Cadets Competitions in Fermanagh in early July (click the photo for more)



Cadets fun day out at Emerald Park

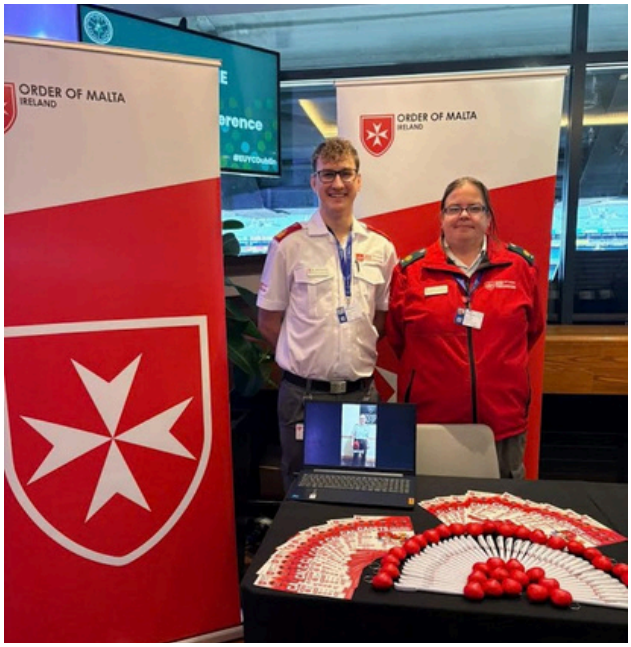






Anna's first duty at Oriel Park, Dundalk.

European Union Youth Conference



Our stand at Croke Park



Walkinstown Festival 6th September

Crumlin Cadets and Senior members out in force providing first aid cover at the Walkinstown Festival.

From putting their training into practice to meeting the wonderful people of the community, the team from Crumlin were kept busy and proud to be playing their part in keeping everyone safe.

And one of the highlights of the day was meeting the Lord Mayor of Dublin - Cllr. Daryl Barron.

HQ News



A very warm welcome to our new Director of Corporate Services, Andrea Lazenby Simpson.

Andrea can be contacted at 087 0982277 or dcs@orderofmalta.ie

Say 'Hi' to the HQ team at the National Conference

We are looking forward to meeting members at the OMAC conference in November where we will be able to provide support on:

- Safeguarding/Garda vetting queries, and providing paperwork for Garda vetting
- Unit Finances including quarterly returns and the submission process
- Membership queries and providing enrolment forms.
- Insurance/fleet queries and fleet confirmation forms will be available.
- And Miniature medals; Ribbons and pins and Order of Malta Christmas cards for sale

Introducing our new Secure Document Drop Box in HQ

Located just inside the front door for you to securely drop off your patient records, receipts, and any other confidential and important documents and correspondence.

Envelopes are supplied on top of the box for your convenience.



Thank you to Bray Unit for donating this vehicle to the Knight Run

The Knight Run have a new vehicle thanks to Bray Unit, which will be a great help to Thursday night activities.





Fr Mark O'Hagan

The members of Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, Dundalk Unit, were deeply saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Fr Mark O'Hagan.

Fr Mark was a dear friend to our Unit and a much-loved presence within the Dundalk community. During his 22 years serving the parishes of St Patrick's, Holy Family and Holy Redeemer, his warmth, kindness and friendship touched so many.

This photograph captures members of Dundalk Unit with Fr Mark while assisting with Eucharistic Minister duties - one of many occasions where our paths crossed through service, faith and community.

We will remember Fr Mark with great fondness and gratitude, and our heartfelt sympathies are extended to his family, friends and parish communities.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Upcoming Events

National Conference - Cork
7th - 8th November

70th Anniversary of Malteser Foreign Aid - Cologne
6th - 8th November

Requiem Mass - Haddington Road
14th November

Advent Mondays
30th November, 7th, 14th & 21st December

Advent Concert
12th December

Save the Date - All-Island Safeguarding Meeting
13th February 2027 (details to follow)

Appeals

Holy Family Hospital, Bethlehem
Launch tba

Lourdes Appeal
12th December

If you have any news/events you wish included in our Winter '26 Newsletter, please email fionatierney@orderofmalta.ie