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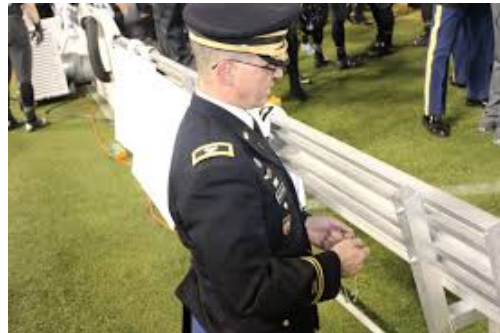
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Weekly Newsgram - December 12th 2018

[Military Chaplain Gives Powerful Prayer at Army-Navy Game](#)



Chaplain Col. Matthew Pawlikowski

noted that every one of the players would lay down their life for another

A military chaplain gave a powerful opening prayer before the Army-Navy football game over the weekend that has since been making the rounds on social media. Chaplain Col. Matthew Pawlikowski of the United States Military Academy at West Point started his invocation Saturday with his compelling reason for praying before a football game.

"God of Wonders, some wonder why we pray for a football game. So I tell them, in this game, every player on the field is willing to die for every person watching," Pawlikowski said. "And there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for what's truly good. And so, God, I do pray for these players, on this field, and all the good they represent."

His prayer was a reference to the New Testament verse John 15:13.

President Donald Trump, who was on hand for the game, handled the coin toss at the 119th annual rivalry match between the Army Black Knights and Navy Midshipmen.

Army beat Navy 17-10 at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. It was Army's third win in a row.

What else did the chaplain say?

"Their fellow cadets and midshipmen, soldiers, sailors, Marines, firefighters, first responders, police, and countless others who lay down their lives daily in our defense," he continued. "Because in your eyes, Oh God, it is not the critic who counts, but those who actually step into the arena,"

"And so, Almighty God, we who are willing to die for others, we salute you. Let this game begin. Amen," Pawlikowski closed the invocation.

What was the crowd's reaction?

The crowd burst into cheers following Pawlikowski's petition to God for the safety of all the players, according to the Western Journal.

What else?

In 2016, Pawlikowski was seen praying the rosary on the sidelines of the Army-Navy game.

"I always pray for both our teams, for no serious injury on either team. And I pray for the kids on both teams, and just for their holiness and their salvation," Pawlikowski told the Catholic News Agency.

"And then I ask for Army's victory."

Watch Chaplain Pawlikowski [here](#)

In Memoriam



Chaplain Allen Kovach

Colonel, United States Army, Retired
born April 18, 1951
deceased November 15, 2018
Military Chaplains Association Member 2002
Southern Baptist Convention
Columbia, South Carolina

Executive Director Notes

Last week found me in the National WWII Museum in New Orleans with some new insight on our chaplains who

were part of The Greatest Generation. This week found me at the US Army Command and General Staff College with an outstanding group of young officers, and in their midst, a remarkable young Army chaplain.

After just barely getting out of the Asheville area on Saturday to get to the Charlotte Airport for a flight on Sunday afternoon to attend the Annual Board of Visitors meeting for the US Army Command and General Staff College, I finally made it into Kansas City, and then Leavenworth. I had been invited to attend a holiday gathering for the Art of War Scholars seminar group at their professor's home.



As I walked in and made introductions- and having been told these were some of the sharpest young officers attending the Army Command and General Staff Officer School this year - I met some great young Army, Air Force and Marine officers - male and female- as well as two international officers - one from the UK and the other from Ireland. After making my way to get one of my staple beverages, a Diet Coke, one officer came over and said "Father Waff, it is so good to meet our Executive Director. Thank you for being here."

Wow- it was clear to me that young Chaplain Erik Alfsen had stayed up late doing his homework! We then had a wonderful conversation as to how he got to be in this highly competitive seminar group as a chaplain, and what a great story it is:

Chaplain Alfsen had gone to college, then entered seminary, and then Army chaplaincy. While a young chaplain, one of his mentors had been influential in encouraging him to apply for Ranger school, which he did. He attended, finished the grueling training, and was assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment. Flash forward a bit, and his mentor told him that when selected for CGSC, he should do all that he could to be accepted in the Art of War Scholar seminar group, which he also successfully did.

This remarkable group consists of sixteen highly energized, well read, laser-focused young men and women who are required to complete the optional Master of Military Arts and Science degree, and add on an additional 6,000 or so pages of reading. They also have an additional 30 or so seminar-specific outside speakers, so that when they graduate, they will have had a very different - and broader- experience than their other classmates.

And into this group Chaplain Alfsen had applied, and been accepted. On Monday we were invited to sit in on their class, where they were meeting with one of the German liaison officers who was doing a presentation on the German Way of War, which was absolutely fascinating. The questions from the seminar group were focused, articulate and insightful.

In the midst of this Chaplain Alfsen was right in the mix, asking questions about how the current German General Staff's approach with a very strong Chief of Staff in each field grade command was balanced with the traditional role of the commander. This was fascinating, and in the interest of space and time and I will leave it at that.

For those of you who know Erik, shoot him a quick email or FB message to let him know that I gave him a shout out in today's column, and walked away mightily impressed. I have met a number of great Army CGSC students since September 2000 as both a member of the adjunct faculty sitting on the MMAS thesis committees and as a member of the Board of Visitors. However, this group was nothing less than remarkable, and seeing Erik in the mix was a breath of fresh air.

A gifted professional asking articulate questions, whose presentation of the question could provide insight for the rest of his seminar group. What a remarkable gift to see Erik operating with such skill and insight! He is only the second chaplain to be selected for this highly competitive group of Army CGSC students, and the Army - and Army and military chaplaincy - will be the richer for it.

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National, and Public Service Interim Report



Please join us for the release of our Interim Report and our event, **From Ethos to Action: Cultivating American Civic Engagement**. The event will feature a conversation about how service can create a stronger America.

Interim Report Release, January 23, 2019,
The Newseum
555 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20001

From the Federal Register: This Commission was created with a broad, aspirational mandate: to develop ideas that will foster a greater ethos of military, national, and public service among Americans of all ages and, in the process, strengthen our democracy. The Commission will also conduct a review of the military selective service process.

Over the course of the next two-plus years, we hope to ignite a national conversation around service and inspire more Americans to serve. We intend to listen to the public, learn from those who serve and have yet to serve, and understand what barriers may exist that prevent more Americans from serving. Ultimately, our goal is to transform this conversation into a series of recommendations for the country, the American people, Congress, and the President. We spent our last year listening and learning from Americans, and we are thrilled to share our report with you!

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service is a bipartisan, 11-member Commission created by Congress to develop recommendations to inspire more Americans—specifically young people—to participate in military, national, and public service and to review the military selective service process. We are comprised of eleven commissioners who bring together diverse experiences from service in the military, public office, Capitol Hill, and not-for-profit organizations.

The Commission was established on September 19, 2017 and launched in January 2018. We plan to release an Interim Report in early 2019. Addressed to the American public, Congress, and the President, the Interim Report will outline issues we are exploring and summarize our work to date. We will publish our Final Report, complete with policy recommendations and legislative proposals, by March 2020. Our work will conclude by September 2020.

SOLDIER'S HEART FREE HEALING RETREAT



Thursday, April 11–Sunday April 14, 2019

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 N. Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA

This retreat has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the Pittsburgh Foundation* and the tireless fundraising efforts of Diana Jones.

*PLEASE NOTE: Priority will be given to applicants living in western Pennsylvania. There are expected to be openings for those living outside of this area, so all are encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 1st, 2018

All applicants will be notified regarding the status of their application in mid February. Applications are expected to exceed spots available.

Soldier's Heart retreats restore warriors and their communities by providing veterans, service members, family members, helping professionals and caring community members a safe space

to learn and practice ways of successful homecoming and healing from war and military service as found in Dr. Edward Tick's book, [War and the Soul](#).

[More from Soldier's Heart](#)

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If you missed the December 5th edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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