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**The Voice for Chaplaincy - Chartered by Congress - Serving Since 1925**

## **Weekly Newsgram - November 7th 2018**

### **The last American officer killed in WWI: Chaplain William F. Davitt fell an hour and 15 minutes before the Armistice on Nov. 11, 1918**



Father William F. Davitt, a first lieutenant and senior chaplain, was the last American officer and the last chaplain to fall in World War I. It was on November 11, the day of Armistice. All fighting was to stop at 11:00 a.m. Father Davitt died about 9:45 a.m.

Father Davitt wasn't shy about joining the men in the thick of fighting. In one instance, when his division was advancing along the Vesle River and he heard that a party of Americans was cut off in a ravine, he assembled and led a group of volunteers through what was described as "a hail of machine gun bullets and rescued those cut off without the loss of a man."

More honors came for the brave chaplain while he was serving such a long way from where he was born on December 8, 1886 in Holyoke, Massachusetts then grew up in neighboring Chicopee where he played football in high school. No doubt his brother James also showed the same courageous spirit as a first lieutenant in the 94th Aero Squadron of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF).

It was also a long way from Holy Cross College in Worcester where he graduated in 1907, and from the seminary he attended in Montreal, Canada, before being assigned to St. Ann's. But then came the war and his service as a chaplain in France. In another instance there, the commanding office of the American 5th Corps cited him "for faithful and conscientious performance of duty and for extreme coolness under shell fire in the performance of his duty as Acting Chief Burial Officer, 5th Corps, during the Meuse-Argonne Operations."

He was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross. The recommendation stated that during one major advance "Chaplain Davitt worked single-handed without ceasing for anything, collecting the dead of his Division (32d) and looking after the burial. He did this under violent fire,

to which he apparently paid no attention. While doing this work he stopped to encourage with cheerful words and advice the enlisted men along the line who also were under fire. The results of his work were 125 American soldiers buried, many wounded cared for, and soldiers in the line encouraged."

The War Department awarded it to him posthumously.

Shortly before the end of the war, Father Davitt was transferred to the 3rd Corps, but on November 10, 1918, he had to return to his regular Division.

There, the next morning everyone was looking forward with relief to the armistice to take effect at 11 am. But then the unthinkable happened.

Father Davitt was carrying a large American flag to present to the Commanding Officer, said one source. The flag was to be raised at the official hour of the armistice. He had "just stepped from the latter's room" and then was crossing over a parade route when "a piece of a shell bursting on the roof of a barn nearby struck and killed him." The shrapnel was from the last shell fired by the enemy in the war.

His friend and fellow classmate Father George Connor, also a chaplain and Captain there, celebrated Father Davitt's funeral. He would go on to tell Father Davitt's mother his regiment "had learned to love this wonderful, brave, big-hearted boy of a chaplain.

The colonel, his officers and men, marched behind their regimental band, bearing his precious remains to the yard of the little village church that nestled almost unharmed amidst the ruins around it."

story from [Remembering the First and Last American Officers to Die in World War I](#)

more - [Holy Cross grad, chaplain last US officer killed in WWI](#)



## In Memoriam

### **Chaplain Raymond Eugene Barry**

Colonel, United States Army, Retired

Born 1930

Deceased October 25, 2018

MCA Member 1957

MCA Life Member 1986

Christian Church/Disciples of Christ - United Methodist Church

San Antonio, Texas

## **Executive Director Notes**

What a remarkable first day of our National Institute. The workshops, plenary sessions and Awards Dinner this evening were absolutely first

class!

We have a significantly larger gathering this year for the conference events during the day, and over double the attendance at the dinner last year.

And speaking of the dinner, Chaplain Barry Black, former US Navy Chief of Chaplains and the current Chaplain of the Senate, provided an absolutely captivating dinner speech that was masterful in his ability to weave together scripture, Aristotle and his own experiences as a Navy chaplain.



I will have a full report of the event next week after we wrap up the Annual Meeting tomorrow, as well as our annual Memorial Service and Emerson Luncheon. For those of you who could not be with us, we wish you could have been here to share today's events with you.

As it is now late into the night/early morning, I will now turn in, excited about the events of tomorrow.

Fr. Razz Waff, DMin, BCC  
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## Veterans Day Observances and the Veterans Day National Committee

In his 1954 Veterans Day Proclamation, President Dwight D. Eisenhower called for the formation of a Veterans Day National Committee to oversee national planning and coordination of the Veterans Day observance. He named the Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, Harvey V. Higley, as Chairman of committee and called upon the heads of all departments and agencies of the executive branch of the government to assist the committee in every way possible.

Administrator Higley called together leaders of veterans' groups and asked them to serve on the committee. The original committee consisted of associate chairmen from the following organizations: The American Legion, American Veterans of World War II and Korea (AMVETS), Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps League, United Spanish War Veterans, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

The full committee consisted of representatives from: the American National Red Cross; American Veterans Committee, Inc.; Army Mutual Aid Association; Army and Navy Union, U.S.A.; Blinded Veterans Association; Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A.; Coast Guard League; Disabled Officers Association; Fleet Reserve Association; Jewish War



Veterans of the United States; Military Order of the Purple Heart, Inc.; Military Order of the World Wars; National Jewish Welfare Board; National Society - Army of the Philippines; National Tribune; Navy Mutual Aid Association; Regular Veterans Association; United Indian War Veterans, U.S.A.; and the Women's Forum on National Security. Many of these organizations continue to serve on the current Veterans Day Committee.

*Your Military Chaplains Association is a member.*

The committee meets three times a year in Washington, D.C., to plan Veterans Day activities, including selecting a national Veterans Day poster, recognizing regional observances that serve as model events to honor America's veterans, and hosting the national ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

The committee also has an interest in ensuring that younger generations understand the true meaning of Veterans Day, and the sacrifices veterans have made to secure and defend the freedoms of the United States of America. To this end, the committee produces a teacher resource guide and distributes it to schools nationwide. The guide includes suggested activities for Veterans Day programs and information for students of all ages.

To see all the 2018 National Veterans Day Regional Sites go [here](#)

## Bringing Order out of Chaos

### *WW II Chaplain sees beauty in shattered stained-glass windows - now pieces of art*

By Paighen Harkins

Walking through places of worship destroyed in World War II, U.S. Army Chaplain Frederick A. McDonald saw glass everywhere, the "deeply smoked" fragments of shattered stained-glass windows.



"The shards represented something deep that you want to remember about this," he later said. "It's so often a little thing that can bring back a flood of memories."

As he collected the shards in 1944 and 1945, he mailed them back home to Seattle, but he didn't know what else to do with them. They sat in a closet for decades until one night, over dinner, he mentioned them to a group of friends, said Brian Farr, with Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and Utah District of Rotary International's Peace Committee.

The conversation led McDonald to connect with artist Armelle Le Roux, Farr said. They worked with other stained-glass artists to create 25 pieces of work featuring the shards, each telling the story of the churches, synagogues and cathedrals where

McDonald found them.

The pieces are now on display at the Walker Center, 175 S. Main St., from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. The "Remembered Light" exhibition, sponsored by the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable and Utah District of Rotary International's Peace Committee, will continue until Nov. 17.

Though McDonald died in 2002 before the project was finished, he said he wanted the art "to serve as a memorial to the places they were found and offer hope for lasting peace," according to a news release from its opening in San Francisco.



## [Spiritual Care for Moral Injury: Equipping Religious Leaders and Faith Communities](#)

Shattuck Hall, Iliff school of Theology Campus  
Iliff School of Theology 2201 S. University Blvd, Denver, CO  
80210

***Thursday, November 15, 2018 8:45 a.m. - 5 p.m.***

\$35 registration

Register [Here](#)

[Event Flyer](#)

Visit our [website](#). There you will be able to [update your contact information](#), [join](#), [pay your dues](#), [make donations](#), [file ministry reports](#), contact our supporters, [read The Military Chaplain](#) magazine and otherwise [connect to resources](#).

If you missed the October 31st edition of the Newsgram [click here](#)

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