



2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter,

Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)

WEBSITE: www.2-1-196th.com

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Volume 9

“A Soldier Once And Always”

January 2019

Commanders Corner: The Holiday seasons are behind us now. I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas or other faith holiday periods. Time has really flown by and another year is here. I hope that all of you will have a great 2019 year!

Please consider getting involved in donating during this year for our 2-1 INF Brick Program. This might be a small commemoration of our battalion and regiment, but it will last for a long time and people will see these in memorial gardens and other places where we decide to commemorate our brothers who stood in ranks before us. We are members of an old regiment of our Nation's Army, and its service, and the service of those who came before should be marked in history. Five dollars is not a lot and we can all afford this small token. I couldn't go without bringing to your attention a moving account of the importance of the 119 meeting of the service academies on the turf of Philadelphia's Federal Field. I hope you will take a minute to read the accounts of two very renown sport writers on their account of the games importance.



We have finally made a decision on the inscription to be placed on our brick to be placed at the entrance of the U.S. Army National Museum on the grounds of Fort Belvoir, VA. The inscription will read:

**HONORING VETERANS
PAST, PRES, & FUTURE
2ND BN, 1ST INFANTRY
196TH LIGHT INF BDE
U.S. ARMY FROM 1791
SEMPER PRIMUS**

Your Executive Committee has worked diligently with a great deal of thought to come up with the most appropriate words that express the honor of the soldiers who served in our battalion over the century of service to this great nation. We hope we have caught the essence of your honest sentiment.

God bless you and your families during the rest of this year and the upcoming Holidays. Have a great New Year's celebration as well. Remember our collective extended family, those Americans serving in our Armed Forces all over the world, and especially to the memories of those that gave the ultimate sacrifice.

Got a comment, idea or complaint, contact me at Commander.2.1.jgw@gmail.com.

John
Commander

Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!

2/1 Infantry; Chapter Stuff: Locate a Brother We are looking for someone who might know the whereabouts of CPT Robert McBane. CPT McBane commanded B Company in 1971-1972. Last contact was in Germany after retirement from the service. If you know where he is please contact me.

Looking for a soldier Named **Gary Smith**. He was with Company B 2/1 Infantry during the period April – May 1972. He transferred out of Vietnam around that same time, His last known address is Sparks, Nevada. If you know where he is please contact me.

Treasurer's Report: I would like to thank all the members at the reunion for all their help and donations. I collected enough money to cover the cost of the hospitality room and refreshments We had enough left over to boost our Brick Fund to \$210.00. We now have a balance of over \$5,000.00 dollars in our Chapter account. We now have a total of 157 members in our Chapter. This year we have picked up 16 new members so far. Keep up the good work!

Jesse Mendoza Sec/Treas.

Banks of the Maumee, Ohio, August 1794. Anthony Wayne commanded the Army, enlarged in 1792 and formed into the Legion (now 1st and 3d Infantry Regiments). He trained it into a tough combat team to beat the Indians of the Northwest who had twice whipped us. The Legion advanced into Indian country, feeling its way cautiously. On 20 August 1794 it tracked down the foe, routed him from behind a vast windfall, and destroyed his warriors. Thus the way cleared for the new nation to expand into the Ohio Valley. In the December newsletter, Commander Woyansky made reference to the history of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment. Anyone interested in reading up on the history of the regiment can find detailed information on our web site at http://www.2-1-196th.com/httpdocs/Sub_Htms/History-2nd_1st.htm or at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Regiment_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1st_Infantry_Regiment_(United_States)). Below is a rendering of the initial "Legion" (which was eventually divided into the 1st and 3rd Infantry Regiments) in action in 1794. Our web site also contains information regarding some of the units assigned to the Americal Division, the ARVN's and the NVA.

2019 ADVA National Reunion: The 2019 ADVA and 2/1 Infantry Chapter Reunion will take place from 2-6 October 2019 in the city of Warwick, RI. You might think this is too early to put together information concerning the Reunion, but many of you remember last year rooms at the host hotel were cut off early in the year. If you are thinking of attending the reunion it isn't too early to reserve your room. The hotel is the Crown Plaza Providence/Warwick (Airport) at 801 Greenwich Avenue, Warwick, RI 02886. The reunion reservation code is "ADV" is available now., Telephone (401) 732-6000. The reunion guestroom rate is \$109.00, plus tax, per night, with free daily breakfast. Events are being planned and will be available soon.

Defense Secretary Mattis Says His Views No Longer Aligned with Trump: Defense Secretary Jim Mattis announced he will step down from that post by the end of the February, leaving a significant leadership void in President Donald Trump's Cabinet. In his resignation letter, Mattis told Trump he was making the move to allow the president to find “a secretary of defense whose views are better aligned with yours.” Mattis, a former Marine Corps general, is regarded highly among defense experts and is a well-respected military mind among lawmakers. On numerous occasions over the last two years, both Republicans and Democrats have lauded him as a calming presence within the turbulent Trump administration and a voice of reason for the sometimes impulsive commander in chief. He's also wildly popular among troops. A Military Times poll conducted in late September found that nearly 84 percent of troops had a favorable view of his work leading the armed forces. Among officers, the figure was almost 90 percent. But Mattis' relationship with Trump had appeared to sour in recent months as the president pushed for more aggressive military policies.



Pentagon Withdrawing 7,000 Troops from Afghanistan: President Donald Trump has directed the Pentagon to withdraw thousands of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in coming months, with an eye towards ending the 17-year deployment of American forces there, a U.S. official confirmed to Military Times. The Wall Street Journal first reported that more than 7,000 service members will begin returning from Afghanistan in coming weeks, per a White House order. The move comes just a day after Trump signaled plans to remove all U.S. forces from Syria, declaring that “We have won against ISIS.” The U.S. official said there is no timeline set for the return of the troops. The news also comes on the same day as the announced resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, who said he is leaving the administration so Trump can find a military leader “whose views are better aligned with yours.” The withdrawal announcement also comes amid news first reported by Military Times that Erik Prince's former security contractor firm, Blackwater USA, had announced its return. Prince has lobbied the Trump administration since the president took office to privatize the war in Afghanistan.

President Trump, First Lady make Surprise Iraq Visit: Pres. Donald Trump and first lady Melania made a surprise visit to Iraq, his first trip overseas to visit troops in a conflict zone since taking office. The president landed at Al-Asad Air Base and took photos with troops. The visit comes just days after Trump announced he would withdraw all of the estimated 2,200 U.S. forces deployed in Syria. That decision was part of the reason behind the high-profile resignation of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis last week. During the visit, Trump defended his Syria decision, telling troops that the U.S. presence in Syria was never to be “open-ended,” and that Turkey has agreed to eliminate remnants of Islamic State fighters still remaining in the country. Trump also said other nations must increase their financial commitments to rebuild Syria. “The nations of the region must step up and take more responsibility for their future,” Trump told the assembled troops, and added there would be a “strong, deliberate and orderly withdrawal” of U.S. forces from Syria. Trump also told the Military he had no plans to withdraw forces from Iraq. According to the numbers the Pentagon reports publicly, there are about 5,200 troops still in Iraq after U.S., coalition and Iraqi forces completed combat operations against the Islamic State last year. The troops remain there “as part of international Coalition efforts to provide training and assistance to Iraqi Security Forces to enable Iraqi efforts to ensure the enduring defeat of ISIS,”

2/1 LOCATOR

** Send your locator notices to *Locator c/o P.O. Box 2639 Key West, FL 33045*, or email: jhughes-groupins@aol.com. Okay to include photo, name / nickname, rank, home origin if known, and time of Vietnam service.

South Turkey-backed Fighters Prepare to Replace US Forces in Syria: Turkish-backed fighters said Monday they are preparing to move into eastern Syria alongside Turkish troops once American forces withdraw and are already massing on the front line of a town held by Kurdish-led forces. The U.S. pullout will leave the oil-rich eastern third of Syria up for grabs. It is currently controlled by Kurdish-led forces that the Americans have backed over the past four years, with multiple parties seeking to move in. They now face a triple threat from the Syrian government, IS and Turkey, which views them as terrorists because of their links to a Kurdish insurgent group inside Turkey. Youssef Hammoud, spokesman for Turkey-backed Syrian opposition groups, said they have up to 15,000 trained fighters ready to deploy alongside Turkish forces, and they are already preparing to move into Manbij — a Kurdish-administered town in northern Syria where U.S. troops are based. Hammoud said there is “no alternative” to Turkish forces and their allies replacing U.S. troops. “We are ready to fight Daesh,” said Hammoud, using the Arabic term for the Islamic State group, though IS militants are largely confined to a remote desert enclave hundreds of miles (kilometers) to the southeast of Manbij. U.S. President Donald Trump announced last week that the U.S. will withdraw all of its 2,000 forces in Syria, a move that will leave control of the oil-rich eastern third of Syria up for grabs. Ilham Ahmed, a Syrian Kurdish official, said the Kurdish-led forces are now reaching out for potential new allies.

President Trump Greet US Troops in Germany: President Donald Trump and his wife, Melania Trump, have greeted U.S. troops in Germany. It was the president's second visit to U.S. troops abroad in the last day. He stopped at Ramstein Air Force Base on his way back from Iraq. Trump slowly made his way down a rope line at the Ramstein base, shaking hands, chatting and posing for photos. Some service members held up "Make America Great Again" caps for Trump to sign. The president's earlier visit to a base in western Iraq was his first to U.S. forces in harm's way overseas. Both visits were unannounced.

First look at the Sikorsky-Boeing Defiant Helicopter: Sikorsky and Boeing provided the first look at the Defiant helicopter, one of two designs competing under the U.S. Army's Joint Multi-Role technology demonstrator program, two weeks after confirming the first flight would be delayed until 2019. The Joint Multi-Role Technology Demonstrator effort will inform requirements for the U.S. Army's FVL family of systems, which will come online in the 2030s. The Defiant is designed to fly at twice the speed and range of today's conventional helicopters and offers advanced agility and maneuverability, according to the Sikorsky-Boeing team. Data from the Defiant will help the Army develop requirements for new utility helicopters expected to enter service in the early 2030s. The Defiant's first flight was bumped to 2019 following a technical issue discovered during ground tests. Competitor Bell's V-280 Valor tilt-rotor aircraft has been flying since December 2017.



Family of National Guard Major Killed in Afghanistan Gets Mortgage Paid Off: The family of a Utah Army National Guard major who was killed in Afghanistan last month received an early Christmas present when a charity honoring a firefighter who died in the 9/11 attacks paid off their mortgage. Frank Siller of the Tunnel to Towers Foundation presented Jennie Taylor with the document signifying the paid-off home loan live on "Fox & Friends" Thursday morning. "It's the least we could do [for you] as a country and from the Tunnel to Towers Foundation. Merry Christmas," said Siller, who added: "This is paid off in full, It's done, it's finished, you never have to worry about it again." Brent Taylor, who was also the mayor of North Ogden, Utah, was killed Nov. 3 in an insider attack in Afghanistan's capital, Kabul. The 39-year-old was on his fourth tour of duty and is survived by Jennie and the couple's seven children. "Brent is a man that's larger than life, especially now that we've lost him," Jennie said. "A man who loves his country, loves his family and above all, loves his God. I'm a Gold Star wife, which I never expected to be, but I'm a very proud Army wife. I really am." Jennie Taylor said having the mortgage paid off would remove a heavy burden from her family. "I stay home with our seven children and that's where I want to be," she said. "I don't want them to lose him to war and then all of a sudden I have to go work a couple of jobs to try to make ends meet, so this is just unbelievable." The Tunnel to Towers Foundation was founded in honor of New York City firefighter Peter Siller, who ran through the closed Brooklyn Battery Tunnel to render aid at the site of the Twin Towers, where he died. The foundation holds an annual 5K run that retraces Peter Siller's final steps to the World Trade Center site.

Nation's Oldest World War II Vet Dies at age 112: A family member says the nation's oldest World War II veteran who was also believed to be oldest living man in the U.S. has died in Texas. Richard Overton was 112. Shirley Overton, whose husband was Richard's cousin, says the Army veteran died at a rehab facility in Austin. Overton had been recently hospitalized with pneumonia. Overton was in his 30s when he volunteered for the Army and was at Pearl Harbor just after the Japanese attack in 1941. He once said that one secret to his long life was smoking cigars and drinking whiskey, which he often was found doing on the porch of his Austin home. In 2013, he was honored by former President Barack Obama at a Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Triple-amputee Veteran's GoFundMe to Pay for Trump's Border Wall has Raised over \$5 million: An airman who survived the most catastrophic war wounds in the service's history has started a fundraiser — with a goal of \$1 billion — in an effort to pay for the U.S.-Mexico border wall. Brian Kolfage, a triple-amputee Purple Heart recipient, started the GoFundMe account, "We The People Will Fund The Wall" amidst ongoing deliberations on how the border wall, a campaign promise of President Donald Trump, will actually be funded. Trump most recently stated it will be U.S. troops who are tasked with building the wall if Congress refuse to fund the project. Kolfage says 100 percent of the donations will go toward wall construction, and that a point of contact within the Trump administration has been made to secure "where all the funds will go upon completion."

Why do I have to press one for English when you're just going to transfer me to someone I can't understand anyway?

Lawmakers Worry about New VA Community Care Rules: Department of Veterans Affairs officials have less than six months to put in place sweeping new rules governing how and when veterans can get taxpayer-funded medical care in their community. Lawmakers are worried that they still don't have a clear picture of what they'll look like. "The Mission Act — we passed it with the best of intentions, but it could be a train wreck, too," Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee ranking member Jon Tester, D-Mont., told VA Secretary Robert Wilkie during a hearing on the issue Wednesday. "It is in your lap." The new community care rules, mandated under legislation signed by President Donald Trump last summer, are poised to be the primary focus of veterans policy by lawmakers for months to come. For months, VA planners have been drafting the new rules largely out of sight with limited input from veterans groups and members of Congress, raising concerns among those groups about how far the rules will go in pushing health care funding from the federal system and into private-sector medical offices. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie worked to calm some of those fears in the last major veterans policy hearing of the year, just a few weeks before Democrats take over control of the House. He repeated his promises that the changes will help revolutionize veterans care by expanding access and flexibility, but not lead to privatizing large swaths of VA responsibilities. "VA will be the central node, no matter what that veteran decides to do," he said. But several Democrats on the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs committees expressed concerns that initial drafts of the rules are being written so broadly they could allow near unfettered access to private care for veterans. Incoming House committee chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., pushed Wilkie to promise a full briefing on the new rules details before any large-scale public announcements, including a rumored inclusion in Trump's State of the Union speech. But Wilkie rebuffed the commitment, saying that Trump must give the final OK on the plans. The president has made expanding veterans' private-sector care choices a key talking point in speeches over the last six months, sometimes incorrectly claiming that veterans already have a new set of rules governing those requests. The Mission Act — passed with significant bipartisan support — requires VA to consolidate its multiple community care programs into a single, more comprehensive system to simplify payment rules and veterans' experience. Wilkie said the new system will be in place by June 2019, as mandated under the law.

New York National Guard's Military Funerals top 11,000 in 2018: The New York National Guard says it will have provided military funeral honors for more than 11,000 veterans and military members by the time 2018 ends next week. National Guard officials say honor guard teams will have conducted 11,115 military funerals by the time the current year ends at midnight Monday. That's slightly down from the 11,170 funeral services conducted across the state last year. Army National Guard teams will have conducted most of the honors, about 8,970 funeral services. The rest — nearly 2,200 — will have been conducted by the Air National Guard's honor guard teams. Federal law mandates that any military veteran who didn't receive a dishonorable discharge from the armed forces is eligible for military honors at a funeral service.

Agent Orange Registry: If you served in the Vietnam War 1962-1975 and have not registered you may be missing out on treatment and compensation from illness you may not even be aware you have. Take note—It is to your benefit to register now. It doesn't hurt, it doesn't cost anything, and it is the smart thing to do. Signing up now will likely benefit you later. Learn more about the registry at <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/benefits/registry-exam.asp>.

4 2,000 Coast Guardsmen Are Getting Screwed On Pay Because Of The Government Shutdown:

About 42,000 active-duty coast guardsmen are working without pay amid a federal government shutdown, and they won't receive their scheduled paycheck on Dec. 31 if Congress doesn't pass legislation by Friday. Although the rest of the military is still getting paid during the shutdown, the Coast Guard is not, since its budget falls under the Department of Homeland Security. "Unless legislation is passed by Friday, Dec. 28, our military workforce will not receive our regularly scheduled pay check for 31 Dec.," Chief Warrant Officer Allyson Conroy said in a statement to NBC News. Although Congress doesn't seem like it's going to help, Navy Federal Credit Union has already stepped up to offer zero-interest loans to coast guardsman during the shutdown up to \$6,000. USAA, on the other hand, has done the same but has tacked on a small amount of interest. Salaries earned during and after the lapse in appropriations will be paid to military members once an appropriation or a continuing resolution is passed.

Coast Guard Members will get Paid Next Week, despite the Government Shutdown:

In a surprise reversal Coast Guard officials announced that service members will receive their regularly scheduled paychecks next week, despite the ongoing government shutdown. In a message to all Coast Guard members, Vice Commandant Adm. Charles Ray said that service and Department of Homeland Security officials “identified a way to pay our military workforce on 31 December.” The move means that service members won't go an entire month without paychecks, as many had feared when the shutdown began on Dec. 22. Earlier in the week, Coast Guard officials had announced that without an end to the shutdown or new emergency legislation, the paychecks would stop completely. “I recognize that this changes course from previously provided guidance on military pay,” Ray wrote in the message. “However, this is outstanding news for our military workforce.” Service and administration officials did not provide details on how they managed to cover the \$75 million shortfall in funding. Appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security lapsed on Dec. 21 when Congress and the White House failed to reach a deal on full year funding for a host of federal agencies.

First Female Enlisted Soldier Graduates from Sapper School:

Sgt. Hailey Falk, who is assigned to B Company, 39th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, of the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, graduated from the 28-day combat engineer leadership course and received her Sapper tab on Dec. 7, according to an Army press release. The Sapper Leader Course was created in 1985 at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. It challenges students in troop leading procedures, conventional and field expedient demolitions, and mountaineering operations, according to the release. The course finishes with an intense field training exercise that forces students to draw on specialized engineer techniques they learned throughout the program.



Privatized Military Housing is Plagued with 'Shoddy Workmanship, Raw Sewage, Rotten Wood and Chronic Leaks':

Problems with construction and maintenance in some newer privatized military family housing call into question the success of the Defense Department's major initiative to improve housing for military families, according to a new report. A new investigation by Reuters published Friday centers mostly on some families at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, but builds on the news organization's previous investigations into Army and Marine Corps privatized family housing. “What the Pentagon touts as privatization's signature achievement — the building of new housing for military families — is marred by faulty construction and poor upkeep,” the report found. There has been “limited federal oversight and little accountability” for the companies that have taken over the responsibility of operating the housing. The report cited “shoddy workmanship, raw sewage, rotten wood and chronic leaks” leading to mold infestation and other issues “putting residents' health at risk.” Reuters conducted interviews, reviewed court records and documents from the Defense Department's Inspector General, and found “serious construction problems with new or renovated housing on at least 17 bases.” Problems include water damage, improper electrical wiring, missing smoke alarms and construction errors that have required residents to leave their new homes. At Tinker, landlord Balfour Beatty had to replace water lines in each house and fix the systemic plumbing failures just six years after the houses were built. The company and the Air Force also inspected the rooms that housed heating, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment, and found that half of the homes had mold or water damage, Reuters reported. Some of the families at Tinker Air Force Base said family members had suffered respiratory ailments in their homes, and they complained to landlord Balfour Beatty about the mold problems. Balfour Beatty said it tried to address the problems. In one case, a family said the company moved them into temporary housing and then later paid for a hotel. The company continued to collect their rent, paid by allotment, and when the family moved off base, charged them a month's rent for terminating the lease early, as well as billing them \$1,171 for “unspecified damages,” Reuters said.

Armory Heist Ringleader Sentenced for Stealing:

The leader of an armory heist that brought in a major haul, including machine guns, grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, night vision goggles and various other items, was sentenced Friday to 10 years in prison, Department of Justice release said. Brandon Shane Polston, 33, admitted that on Thanksgiving Day 2017, he jumped the fence at an Army National Guard base in Lancaster, South Carolina, and entered the armory when he realized one of the building's doors was unlocked and nary a soul was present. With the military armament world as his oyster, Polston proceeded on his very own unlimited minute-shopping-spree jaunt through the aisles, except instead of filling a cart to the brim with food or toys, he accumulated weapons to sell for cash, cocaine and some of that ol' fashioned, South Carolinian meth. “Gear adrift,” as the saying goes. Polston then hid the stolen arsenal in some nearby woods before transporting select items to a motel for individual sales and trades. Polston may have even gotten away with it had it not been for a generic traffic stop a few nights later, when an officer from the Lancaster Police Department pulled over a vehicle driven by Kimberly Denise Cannon, 40, after observing her tossing trash from the car. Cannon and Austin Lee Ritter, 23, were assisting Polston with the transport and sales of the arsenal. While preparing to confront Cannon about the environmental dangers of littering, the officer noticed the abundant weapons cache. Among the items recovered by the officer were: M249 Squad Automatic Weapon light machine gun, M16 rifles, M203 grenade launcher, set of NVGs and Beretta M9 pistols

NOTHING IN SPORTS MOVES ME LIKE THE ARMY-NAVY GAME:

Roy Exum writes I would venture to say I know more sports trivia than the next guy. I've spent a fun lifetime watching and listening and learning so why is it, on the early eve of my three-score-and-ten, I never knew about “the best four minutes in sports” until just now? Oh, for decades I've know the annual Army-Navy football game, played this November, was special. A half-century ago Bear Bryant told me one of his favorite beliefs was born in the Army-Navy tradition: “At the end of the play, you help the guy up who you just knocked into the dirt, brush him off a little, and then tell him, ‘I’ll be right back!’” Bryant, so legendary he’s still in a class by himself, loved winning with class and there is nowhere in all of sports that can match the Army-Navy game in sportsmanship and all else that is good and right in athletic greatness. But, my mercy, a new wrinkle after many years ...John Feinstein, the great writer for the Washington Post, wrote a beautiful story over the weekend under the headline, “Nothing in sports moves me like the Army-Navy game.” Feinstein is easily one of the preeminent sports writers of our time and on Saturday morning, hours before the 119th renewal between the two service academies, this is an excerpt of the way his story for the day began: By John Feinstein (in the Washington Post, December 8, 2018)

At about 6:30 on Saturday evening, following the 119th renewal between the two service academies, I will be standing on the field at Lincoln Financial Field while the Army and Navy alma maters are being played. I have no idea who will sing second, as the winners always do, but I know one thing for certain. As the last notes die out, my wife — who watches exactly one football game a year — will send me a text. It will say, “Are you crying yet?” And I know exactly what my answer will be: “Absolutely.” It doesn't matter who wins the game; when they play the alma maters, I cry. For 14 years, when I was the color commentator on the Navy radio network, I would tell Bob Socci, who did play-by-play: “When the alma maters end, don't ask me a question right away. I'm going to need a minute.”

In the many decades of years that my emotions have never failed to help me recognize the gravity of the so many precious moments in this life I love, I know exactly what John is feeling. I have stood with the same reverent awe so many times and at so many different events, and let me add the occasions come more often as we age just enough to see what we've missed in the past. Yet not until this weekend I was painfully ignorant of what I had watched year after year. I just learned what was really happening. Yet I now understand, and I now relish, what is undeniably the best four minutes in all of sports, not to mention mankind at its all-time greatest.

This year's game was a classic, with Navy (2-10) closing it to a one-possession battle late in the final quarter before Army (10-2) put the seal on a splendid 17-10 afternoon. I have known for years the losing team sings the alma mater first, and then the winning team steps right in to solemnly and with utmost respect sing the second alma mater.

But wait! What had never seeped into my thick cranium was that when the losing team sings first, it is the alma mater of their victorious opponents that they sing from rote, not their own song. Navy, defeat be damned, proudly sung the West Point Alma Mater! Quickly, the winners from Army then sang with all reverence and glory the words to “Navy Blue and Gold.” Great God Almighty, what I just learned is the absolute-absolute of any and all of mankind's most precious homages from one warrior to another warrior. Or, much better, from one brother to another brother.

In my memory, nothing can compare to such a treat on a cold and rainy afternoon. And our enemies wonder why in war and in peace we always win. I can just hear Gen. MacArthur: “On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds that on other days and other fields will bear the fruits of victory.”

“SOME WONDER WHY WE PRAY FOR A FOOTBALL GAME”

President Donald Trump and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis were on hand to start off the annual Army vs. Navy game and, of course, the game is always a solid sellout. Before the national anthem was sung triumphantly – yes, triumphantly – by the combined Army and Navy Glee Clubs, military chaplain Matthew Pawlikowski gave a pregame prayer which, as you know, is forbidden in every other sports arena. The chaplain openly wondered why we would pray before a football game. “God of wonders, some wonder why we pray for a football game,” Pawlikowski said. “So I tell them in this game, every player on the field is willing to die for every person watching.” “There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for what is truly good.”

Then the chaplain, without a hint of shame or political correctness – and in a strong display of truth that countered some poor misguided souls among us -- he prayed, “And so, God, I do pray for these players on this field and all the good they represent. Their fellow cadets and midshipmen, soldiers, sailors, Marines, firefighters, first responders, police, and countless others who lay down their lives daily in our defense because in your eyes, God, it's not the critic who counts, but those who actually step in to the arena. And so, almighty God, we who are willing to die for others, we salute you. Let this game begin. Amen.”