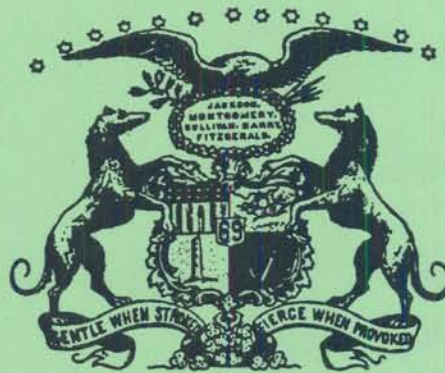


THE CHAPLAINS
of the
SIXTY-NINTH REGIMENT
of
NEW YORK



BLESSING AND UNVEILING
OF PLAQUE
REGIMENTAL ARMORY

Sunday, 21 Sept. 1969

P R O G R A M.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES -

Rt. Rev. Patrick D. O'Flaherty
Chaplain, Veteran Corps, 69th Regiment

INVOCATION -

Rev. William J. O'Donnell
Chaplain, 1961 - 63.

NATIONAL ANTHEM.

THE CHAPLAINS OF THE SIXTY-NINTH REGIMENT

Rt. Rev. Patrick D. O'Flaherty

MEMORIES OF THE FIGHTING IRISH

Rt. Rev. John T. Byrne
Chaplain, 1943 - 44.

PROCLAMATION BY THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Read by Maj. Gen. Martin H. Foery,
Regimental Commander, 1949 - 56.

PROCLAMATION BY THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Read by Lt. Colonel Charles W. Shea
Commander, 1st Bn., 69th Inf. NYARNG

UNVEILING OF PLAQUE

Rt. Rev. Joseph A. McCaffrey
Chaplain, 1932 - 39

BENEDICTION

Rev. John E. Rooney
Chaplain, 1940-41, 1947-63

A-Duffy Francis P. (Father)
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DEDICATED TO THE CHAPLAINS WHO SERVED THE
69TH REGIMENT IN WAR AND PEACE FROM 1861 TO 1963.

REV. THOMAS I. MOONEY	1861 - 65
REV. THOMAS WILLETT	1861 - 65
REV. WILLIAM CORBY	1861 - 64
REV. JAMES M. DILLON	1861 - 63
REV. PAUL E. GILLEN	1862 - 65
REV. BARTHOLOMEW GALAGHER	1865 - 69
REV. BERNARD GALLAGHER	1869 - 75
REV. JAMES MOORE	1875 - 77
REV. MATTHEW P. BREEN	1877 - 89
REV. HUGH J. KELLY	1889 - 93
REV. BERNARD A. BRADY	1895 - 98
REV. WILLIAM J. DALY	1898 - 08
REV. JAMES D. LENNON	1908 - 14
REV. FRANCIS P. DUFFY	1914 - 32
REV. JOSEPH P. DINEEN	1918 - 21
REV. JAMES M. HANLEY	1918 - 19
REV. GEORGE CARPENTIER	1918
REV. MERRILL J. HOLMES	1918 - 19
REV. EUGENE T. KENNEDY	1918
RT.REV. JOSEPH A. McCAFFREY	1932 - 39
RT.REV. JOSEPH M. EGAN	1939 - 41
REV. JOHN E. ROONEY	1940-41, 1947-63
REV. J. CONNOLLY	1941 - 42
REV. STEPHEN J. MEANY	1942 - 43
RT.REV. A.C. DINEEN	1942 - 47
REV. FRANK REYNOLDS	1943 - 45
REV. ANTHONY G. McGABE	1943 - 44
RT.REV. JOHN T. BYRNE	1943 - 44
REV. LAWRENCE LYNCH (K.I.A.)	1944 - 45
REV. SYLVESTER R. GANNON	1944 - 45
REV. F. SINFIELD	1950 - 51
RT.REV. F.J. WILLIAMS	1952 - 59
REV. HACKETT	1952 - 54
REV. FRANCIS McKENNA	1957 - 58
REV. W.J. O'DONNELL	1961 - 63

Erected by

VETERAN CORP. 69TH REGIMENT

Sept. 21, 1969.

THE CHAPLAINS OF THE SIXTY-NINTH REGIMENT
OF NEW YORK.

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No greater fighting Regiment has ever existed than the One Hundred and Sixty-Fifth Infantry of the Rainbow Division, formed from the old Sixty-Ninth Regiment of New York.

One of the most outstanding characteristics of the Regiment was its deep sense of religious responsibility inculcated by one of my most beloved friends - Father Duffy.

General Douglas MacArthur,
24 January, 1940

Father Thomas I. Mooney is generally considered to have been the first Regimental chaplain. When the Regiment sailed for Washington at the outbreak of the Civil War, Father Mooney accompanied it. Born in Manchester, England, he had been ordained in New York in 1853 and became the pastor of St. Brigid's Church at Eight Street and Avenue D in the following year. How he became associated with the Sixty-Ninth is not known, but some think that he acted as the spiritual advisor of Company C which was known as The Mechanic Guard, and is believed to have been made up of shipyard workers living in St. Brigid's Parish. While the ship was at sea on the way down the coast, Father Mooney said Mass on deck when the weather permitted and while they labored to build Fort Corcoran he cared for their spiritual needs and tried to keep them out of trouble. His speech at a ceremony naming one of the fort's guns displeased Archbishop Hughes, who felt that Father Mooney's humorous remarks were not in keeping with clerical decorum. He never returned to the War, but he followed the fortunes of the Sixty-Ninth of Meagher's Irish Brigade with great interest; was a close friend and associate of General Corcoran in the formation of his Irish Legion; and acted as spiritual guide to the Sixty-Ninth Regiment New York National Guard. In him the Regiment found a warm friend until his tragic death when his carriage overturned on Fifth Avenue in 1877.

Father Thomas Willett joined the Sixty-Ninth of Meagher's Irish Brigade shortly after its formation and served with it for the greater part of the War. A mild and kindly native of Canada, he never hesitated to speak out for the right and, on occasion, to act with vigor to bring wandering feet back to the straight and narrow. During the Seven Days Battle, the chaplain seldom slept, for besides bringing spiritual consolation to the injured and dying, he performed most of the duties that now fall to the medics. After the battle of Melvern Hill, he remained on the field after the Army retired to Harrison's Landing. All night his lantern traced a path along the battle field. Near the dawn, the commander of a Confederate patrol, not recognizing him in the darkness, called out "A fine lot of Yanks we have here". On learning his mistake, he apologized. The gallant Southerners treated him with kindness and returned him to the Union lines together with the chaplain of the Irish Ninth Massachusetts Regiment who was captured at the same time. Colonel Robert Nugent of the Sixty-Ninth tells how, before the Irish Brigade charged at Fredericksburg, as the regiment was drawn up, he went down the line blessing each man, Catholic and Protestant alike. When he finished, the Colonel placed a sprig of boxwood in his hat and, turning to the men, called out "I'll make an Irishman out

of the Father this day." The men laughed and began to move up the hill. Not many of them came back. Shortly after this terrible battle Father Willett resigned from the Army because of ill health. The good Father could not stay long away from his boys and early in 1864 he re-joined the Regiment and served with them to the end of the War.

Father Corby, who had served with the Irish Brigade from the beginning of the War, acted as chaplain of the Sixty-Ninth during the absence of Father Willett. During the battle of Gettysburg, as the Brigade was being drawn up to meet Picket's charge, Father Corby jumped on a large rock, explained the procedure necessary for a general absolution and, as the men knelt around him, gave the first general absolution ever given on an American battlefield. His statue with hand raised stands on that stone today, erected as a memorial of his zeal. A duplicate of the statue also stands on the campus of Notre Dame University, the great school of the Holy Cross Fathers, of which Father Corby was a member. The students, noting the attitude of the statue with eyes up-turned and hand raised, call it the statue of "Fair Catch" Corby because, to our football minded young men, the Father's position resembles the stance of a player signalling for a fair catch.

Father William Corby was born in 1833, in Detroit, and at the age of nineteen entered Notre Dame University. A year later he joined the congregation of the Holy Cross. In 1861 he left Notre Dame, and volunteered as Chaplain in the Northern Army. He was at once assigned to the Eighty-eight, New York Regiment of the Irish Brigade, then at Camp California near Alexandria, Virginia. For the next three years Father Corby remained with the brigade and was one of the eight priests who ministered to the men while on the field or in the hospital. During that time he was a source of consolation to hundreds of soldiers. He held the rank of Captain of cavalry while in the service. After the War he served as president of Notre Dame university and was largely instrumental in the rebuilding of the University after the fire of 1879. He was elected provincial general of the Order of the Holy Cross in the United States, later being chosen first assistant general for the order in all parts of the world. At the time of his death in 1897 he was commander of the only Grand Army post composed entirely of the members of a religious order.

Father James M. Dillon, another Holy Cross priest, like Father Corby, served with the Sixty-Third Regiment of Meagher's Irish Brigade and later with the Sixty-Ninth Regiment of Corcoran's Irish Legion.

Also from Motre Dame was Father Paul E. Gillen who served from 25 Nov.1862 till 15 Jul.1865 with the One Hundred and Seventieth Regiment of Corcoran's Irish Legion.

In the post Civil War years, the Regiment had as its spiritual advisors Fathers Bartholomew Galagher, Bernard Gallagher, James Moore, Matthew P. Breen, Hugh Joseph Kelly, and Bernard A. Brady.

Father William J. Daly was chaplain for many years in peace and war. He accompanied the Sixty-Ninth to the Spanish-American War in 1898, and received in the name of the Regiment the Chapel Tent presented by the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick. This tent was the envy

of every regiment in the service, painted in red, white and blue, decorated with Celtic Crosses, inscribed in large letters, Our Chapel Tent, 69th New York Volunteers, it stood in the middle of the camp proclaiming that the regiment depended not only on their arms but on their God. It is greatly to the credit of the Chaplain that the local parish priest in Florida where the Regiment was stationed wrote to the Archbishop of New York complimenting the men for their good conduct and for their generosity to his parish, and praising Father Daly for his fine work.

The Chaplain during the First World War was Father Francis P. Duffy, who succeeded Father James D. Lennon. A native of Canada, he was for many years professor of Philosophy at St. Joseph's Seminary at Dunwoodie, Yonkers, N.Y. Early in the fall of 1912 he became pastor of the new parish of Our Saviour in the Bronx. He was appointed Chaplain of the Sixty-Ninth shortly after and accompanied the Regiment during its service at the Mexican Border. The heroic deeds of the Regiment are known to the general public chiefly through his book "Father Duffy's Story". Popular with the officers and men alike, his influence and judgment was felt in all ranks. In Camp Mills he acted as peace maker in the last battle of the Civil War when the Sixty-Ninth and the boys from the Fourth Alabama attempted to settle the dispute between the North and the South which began in 1861.

Father Duffy however is best remembered as the priest and friend who roamed the trenches hearing confessions, bringing communion, and giving last rites to the wounded. At Rouge Boquet he stood by during the terrible night while the men under Major Donovan strove to dig out the soldiers buried by a German shell and read the burial service over the men whose bodies could not be recovered. It was his voice that first was heard reading Joyce Kilmer's beautiful poem "Rouge Bouquet" written in memory of his comrades who had fallen, as Sergeant Patrick Stokes stood near sounding taps in tune with the last lines of each verse. It was his chiefest joy to have the devoted Joyce Kilmer near him and his love for the soldier post is reflected in his every mention of that noble soul, who was killed at the side of Major Donovan on the River Ouroq.

Even the enemy knew his kindness as he ministered to captured German soldiers, and during the occupation when the Germans and America jammed the church as he said Mass, and the late enemies joined in the charity of Christ sang together the beautiful hymn "Holy God We Praise Thy Name". On his return home, he became the pastor of the Church of the Holy Cross in West 43rd Street. His early death saddened all the people of the city and in his memory his people changed the name of Longacer Square, to Duffy Square. There today his statue looks out on the busiest place in the world, a monument to Father Duffy and the men of the Sixty-Ninth. His spirit can be felt there as it stands guard over his city and especially over the men who have taken the places of his boys in the Sixty-Ninth.

Other chaplains who served overseas with the Regiment were Rev. James M. Hanley of the 3rd (Shamrock) Battalion, Rev. George R. Carpentier, Rev. Merrill J. Holmes and Rev. Eugene T. Kennedy.

The Rev. Joseph P. Dinneen was chaplain of the Sixty-Ninth Regiment New York Guard while the war-time Regiment was overseas. His brother

Rev. Aloysius C. Dineen would later perform the same duties with the Sixty-Ninth New York Guard Regiment during the long years of World War II.

Father Joseph McCaffrey, now retired Pastor of the Church of the Holy Cross, was Chaplain of the Sixty-Ninth during the thirties after Father Duffy died.

Father Joseph Egan was Chaplain when the 165th was called into service in 1940. Like Father Mooney, the first Chaplain, he was the pastor of the Church of St. Brigid, and like Father Duffy he had been a professor at Dunwoodie Seminary. He remained with the Regiment only about a year but in that time he proved himself a worthy successor to Father Willett of Civil War fame. He was ably assisted in all things by Father John Rooney, now retired chaplain of the Sixty-Ninth. The two chaplains were transferred within a short time of each other. Father Rooney, after being stationed in several places in the United States saw action in Europe, and Father Egan returned to New York to serve in the office of the Military Ordinariate. After the war he did not remain long in his church at Tompkins Square. He was appointed pastor of the Church of St. Francis of Rome in the Bronx and was honored by Pope Pius XII with the title of Domestic Prelate.

Father Stephen Meany landed with the 69th at Makin. Throughout the night on the Transport he heard the confessions of the men, and at 2 A.M. said Mass, he hit the beach at 0800 and six hours later he was struck by a snipers bullet while going to the aid of a wounded soldier. Father Meany was one of a Brooklyn family of ten, who worked his way through Fordham University before he joined the Society of Jesus. His inspiration in joining the Society was the life of Father William Doyle, the Jesuit Chaplain of an Irish Regiment in the British Army during the First War.

Father Anthony McCabe of the Dominican Fathers, took over as the active Chaplain the moment that Father Meany fell on Makin. On the ship enroute to Saipan it was his custom to recite the Rosary on deck every evening at 6 P.M. and when he finished he would hold prayers for those who had not joined in. During the bitter fighting on the island he went along with the men in the very front lines, hearing confessions, offering words of encouragement and providing whatever spiritual ministrations were needed. He never thought of his own life or safety, working tirelessly as long as his boys were in danger. He left the Sixty-Ninth when it was stationed at Espiritu Santo following the battle of Saipan, and was replaced by Father Lawrence Lynch of the Redemptorist Fathers.

Father Lynch introduced himself as Brooklyn's gift to the Fighting Sixty-Ninth, and although the Regiment was now All American, with soldiers from every state in the Union in the ranks, he never let the boys forget they were the Sixty-Ninth of New York. On April 24th, 1945 he was attending the wounded at the battalion aid station on Okinawa when killed by Japanese Artillery fire.

Other chaplains of World War II service were Rev. Frank Reynolds, Rev. John T. Byrne, and Rev. Sylvester R. Cannon.

A. Duffy, Francis P. (Father)
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Father John Rooney returned to the Regiment in 1947 and served until his retirement in 1963. He was assisted by Rev. F. Sinfield, Rev. Francis J. Williams, Rev. Hackett, Rev. Francis McKenna and Rev. William J. O'Donnell, who still serves the Sixty-Ninth though he is officially a Brigade Chaplain.

Certainly the Sixty-Ninth owes a great debt to the Chaplains who have so nobly served it in Peace and War.

Compiled by :

Rt. Rev. Patrick D. O'Flaherty
Captain Kenneth H. Powers.