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Rev. J. T. O'Callahan, Hero-Priest, Is Dead

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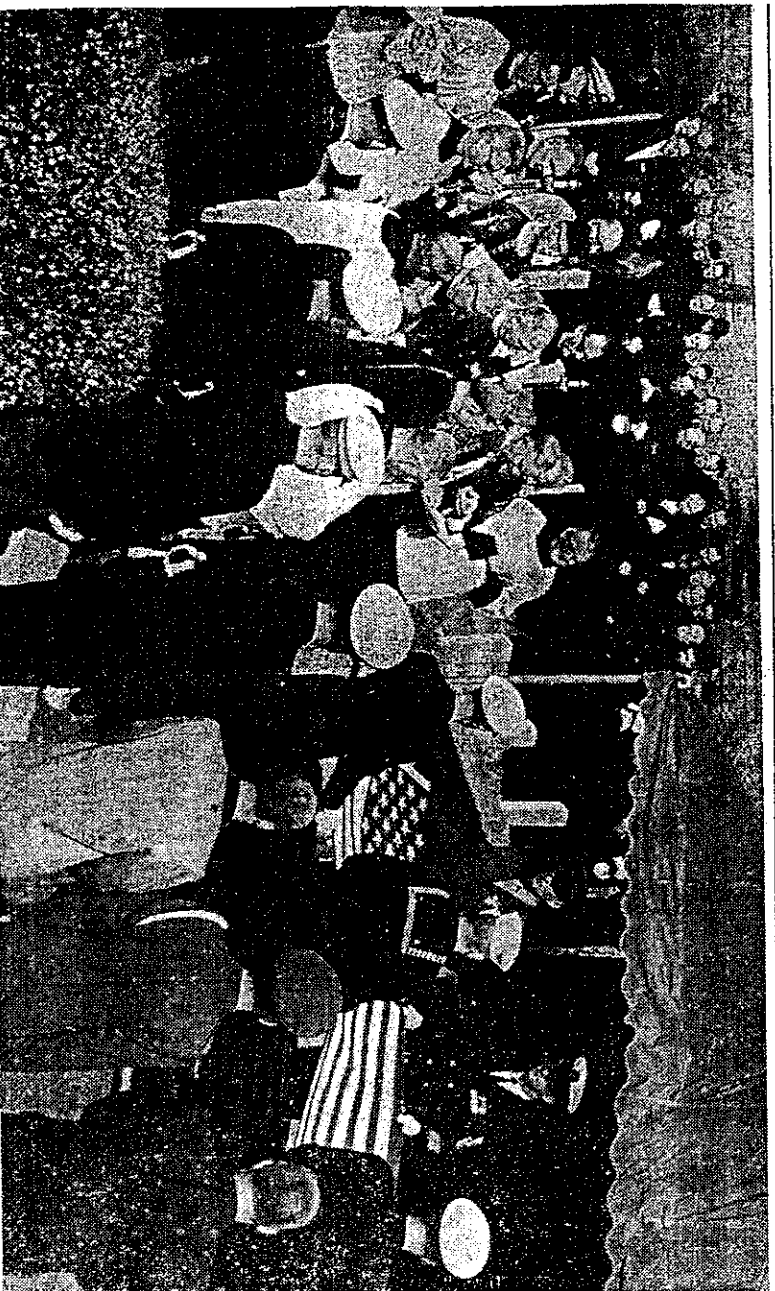
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BURIAL OF A HERO: An honor guard holds the American flag over the coffin of Rev. Joseph T. O'Callahan, S.J. whose heroism during World War II became legend, as Bishop Finnigan reads the prayers for burial in the cemetery at Holy Cross College last Saturday. Fr. O'Callahan, the only American military chaplain ever to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, died on the eve of the 19th anniversary of the Japanese kamikaze attack on the Aircraft Carrier Franklin, March 19, 1945. His actions following that attack, for which he was awarded the nation's highest and rarest military decoration, later became the subjects of a book, several magazine articles, a movie and a Navy training film.

Rev. J. T. O'Callahan, Hero-Priest, Is Dead

A Solemn Requiem Mass was offered last Saturday in the Holy Cross College Chapel for Rev. Joseph T. O'Callahan, S.J., 58, the only American military chaplain ever to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor who died in St. Vincent Hospital.

The Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Raymond J. Swords, S.J., president of Holy Cross, the college on whose faculty Fr. O'Callahan had served for nearly 20 years. Bishop Flanagan presided at the Mass which was attended by military and civic dignitaries from throughout the nation. Fr. O'Callahan was buried in the Jesuit cemetery at Holy Cross.

Ironically, the former Navy chaplain died just a few minutes before midnight March 18, the eve of the 19th anniversary of the tragic military event which brought him fame.

Served On Franklin
Fr. O'Callahan was awarded the Congressional Medal, the nation's highest military decoration, for heroism under fire in ministering to wounded and badly burned crewmen of the Aircraft Carrier Franklin off Okinawa on March 19, 1945.

The medal was presented by former President Harry S. Truman in White House ceremonies on Jan. 3, 1946. The citation read in conjunction with the presentation said in part:

"With the ship rocked by incessant explosions, with debris and fragments raining down and fires raging in ever-increasing fury, he ministered to the wounded and dying, comforting and encouraging men of all faiths; he organized and led fire-fighting crews into the blazing inferno on the flight deck; he directed the jettisoning of live ammunition and the flooding of the magazine; he manned a hose to cool hot, armed bombs rolling dangerously on the listing deck, continuing his efforts despite searing suffocating smoke which forced men to fall back and impeded others who replaced them."
Fr. O'Callahan was also wounded by shrapnel in the

Historic Medal Viewed By Public

Rev. Joseph T. O'Callahan's Congressional Medal of Honor, the only one ever awarded an American military chaplain, was on public display for the first time last weekend.

Nine years ago, on the tenth anniversary of the March 19, 1945, Japanese kamikaze attack on the U.S.S. Franklin, during which action, Fr. O'Callahan distinguished himself, a photographer asked Fr. O'Callahan if he would pose for a photograph wearing his cherished medal. Fr. O'Callahan politely refused. "I'm sorry, but it's locked in the (Holy Cross) library. I've told them not to show it until after I'm dead."

The Medal was taken from the library safe last week following Fr. O'Callahan's death and placed next to the casket beside his bier as his body lay in state in Fenwick Hall on the college campus.

action and held the Purple Heart as well as the Congressional Medal.
Death this week, according to hospital officials, was caused by complications arising from generalized arteriosclerosis. Although he had been admitted to the hospital only the day before his death, Fr. O'Callahan had been in poor health in recent years.

Born in Boston, he entered the Society of Jesus shortly after his graduation from Boston College High School. He studied philosophy at Weston College and taught from 1929 to 1931 at Boston College. He returned to Weston for theology studies and was ordained there on June 30, 1934. He received his master of arts, doctorate of philosophy and licentiate in sacred theology and an honorary doctorate in science from

taught at Holy Cross from 1938 to 1940.

He headed the mathematics department at Holy Cross at the time he entered the Navy on Nov. 23, 1940. He served aboard the U.S.S. Ranger from April, 1942, to December, 1944, and participated in the North African campaign.

It was following his transfer to the Pacific Fleet and the U.S.S. Franklin, however, that Fr. O'Callahan won fame. The 27,000-ton carrier was severely damaged in the March 19 attack and was racked by fire and explosions, although she was able to make port. A total of 823 men lost their lives in the action during which Fr. O'Callahan distinguished himself.

Wrote Book

He later wrote a personal account of the attack, "I Was Chaplain on the Franklin," which was published in 1956 by Macmillan Co. His courage also served as the basis for many magazine articles in Readers Digest and *Colliers*. A movie, "Battle Stations," which deals with his battle experiences, was also released in 1956.

An official Navy training film, "Saga of the Franklin," shows Fr. O'Callahan performing heroic tasks while under fire on the fateful day. A copy of the film was presented to the Jesuit Order in special ceremonies at Holy Cross on Sept. 21, 1954.

The science library in Habermann Hall at Holy Cross has been named in memory of Fr. O'Callahan.

Following his retirement from the Navy with the rank of captain, on Nov. 12, 1946, Fr. O'Callahan went on a lecture tour throughout the country. Significantly, funds raised during the tour were given to the Jesuit missions in Japan. And he later was assigned to do mission work in Japan and the Carolina Islands, under the New England Province of the Society of Jesus.

Returns To H.C.

In the fall of 1948, however, Fr. O'Callahan returned to Holy Cross as a philosophy professor and was assigned there until the time of his death.

Among his survivors are his 90-year-old mother, who resides at Providence House; three brothers, and two sisters, one of whom is Sister Rose Marie, O.P., of Maryknoll College, P.I. A Maryknoll nun, she was a missionary in the Philippines when World War II broke out, was captured by the Japanese and repatriated at the end of the war.

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