

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES

May 2017

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Reaffirm the support of the Church of Scotland for all who serve in Her Majesty's Forces as Chaplains, and thank them for their outstanding service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel and their families.
3. Acknowledge with particular gratitude the dedicated service of Chaplains on operations and the immeasurable support shown by their own families.
4. Commend to the prayers of all members of the Church of Scotland not just our Chaplains but all who serve in HM Forces and their families.
5. Commend to eligible ministers of the Church consideration of service as a Chaplain to HM Forces – Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces.
6. Approve the Armed Forces Covenant described in Appendix 4 of the Report.

REPORT

1. Last year the General Assembly instructed the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces to work together with the Council of Assembly, the Ministries Council and the Social Care Council to examine the principles enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant and present to the General Assembly of 2017 a Covenant to which the Church can subscribe.

2. The Armed Forces Covenant endorses two principles:

Firstly: No member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen.

Secondly: In some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.

3. It should perhaps be clarified that the Armed Forces Community is a community made up of Serving Personnel, both Regular and Reservists, Veterans and all their families. The Armed Forces Covenant is therefore about supporting people, not Government Policy. Signing the Armed Forces Covenant would not impinge the Kirk's ability to challenge the government on any aspect of Defence Policy.

4. In his 2006 Dimpleby lecture, General Sir Mike Jackson said, "The Armed Forces' contract with the nation which they serve - and from which they very largely recruit is to take risks; if need be, the risk of life. But this must be a two-way contract; it has to be reciprocal. Military operations cost in blood and treasure, because risk-free military service, which some seem to think is possible, is simply a contradiction in terms. It is our servicemen who pay the cost in blood - the nation must therefore pay the cost in treasure."

At that time, General Jackson felt that such reciprocity was not being honoured fully by government and in much of the Armed Forces. However, the situation has improved greatly in recent years and the Armed Forces Covenant now has statutory backing. In Scotland, the Covenant has been signed by the Scottish Government, Police Scotland, the Scottish Prison Service, the Department for Work and Pensions, every Council and every Health Board, all of whom have also appointed regional Veterans' Champions who are delivering positive effect. The churches of the United Kingdom have also engaged with the Covenant, the Church of England signed a Covenant in 2015 and the Methodist Church and Baptist Union are actively examining the procedure.

5. It is estimated that there are around 260,000 veterans in Scotland at present, almost 6% of the population. And when you add the families that make up the veterans community, they represent almost one in 10 of Scotland's people. While their experiences, aspirations, vulnerabilities, successes and failures are varied, veterans ultimately share only one thing in common. They contracted themselves to a job that required them regularly and uniquely to make considerable personal sacrifices in the service of the Nation. A job where, for good reasons, the working hours liability was almost unlimited, no union negotiated pay and conditions, compulsory personal and family mobility was frequent and, when required, they placed their lives at risk.

6. However, contrary to widespread opinion, Veterans are not all "Mad, Bad and Sad." Many exaggerated tales on issues such as PTSD rates and Prison occupancy have gained currency but are simply not true. In reality, the vast majority of Veterans leave the Armed Forces and live productive and happy civilian lives. However, there is a small minority who do not; their difficulties are very real and encompass a range of needs including physical and mental health, employment and training, housing and benefits, and simply learning to live a civilian life.

7. In 2013 the General Assembly passed a Deliverance encouraging Presbyteries to appoint Veterans' Champions to assist in signposting Veterans in need to appropriate support, but few have done so to date. This Armed Forces Covenant is a solemn undertaking for action in support of those who have defended our Nation and the Committee commends it to the General Assembly in that spirit.

In the name of the Committee

GORDON T CRAIG, *Convener*
JOHN A H MURDOCH, *Vice-Convener*
JOHN K THOMSON, *Secretary*

ADDENDUM

Rev John A H Murdoch

This year's Assembly marks the conclusion of John Murdoch's term as Vice-Convener. He has served the Committee diligently and faithfully and brought to its work his experience as a Chaplain in the Royal Army Chaplains' Department; and we thank him for his significant contribution.

In the name of the Committee

GORDON T CRAIG, *Convener*
JOHN K THOMSON, *Secretary*

APPENDIX 1

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL NAVY

Today, the Royal Navy has up to 30 ships and submarines, and over 30,000 of our young men and women committed to operations at home and around the world. The Royal Navy continues to fulfil our standing commitments, from supporting British overseas territories in the Caribbean and the Falklands to the Royal Marines' on-going support to counter-terrorism at home. A ballistic missile submarine is currently on patrol deterring state based threats against the UK and our NATO allies, as has been the case 24 hours a day, every day, for the last 47 years.

In Northern Europe and the Baltic, we are responding to the highest level of Russian naval activity since the end of the Cold War. Whilst in the Mediterranean and the Aegean, we continue to work alongside our European partners to counter arms-traffickers and people smugglers, and to stem the flow of migrants. Meanwhile, in the Gulf, the Royal Navy is working hard to protect international shipping in a region which is essential to the UK's economic security.

To enable the Royal Navy to operate in a fast changing world we are seeing a renewal of the whole Fleet. The two new aircraft carriers, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH and HMS PRINCE OF WALES, will soon be the bedrock of British defence policy, projecting power and positive influence worldwide. Additionally, the General Purpose Frigate (Type 31) is planned to enter service in the 2020s alongside the more high-end next-generation Type 26 frigate. Both classes of frigate are due to be assembled here in Scotland.

The Royal Navy Chaplains from the Church of Scotland have been engaged across a wide spectrum of ministries across the Fleet. Both Regular and Reserve Chaplains have been deployed to frontline units where their ministry has been greatly valued, whilst others have faced the varied challenges of working within diverse shore side establishments; teaching, caring and seeking to bear witness to the love of God in Christ to all in their charge.

The Rev Dr Scott Shackleton RN is currently the Principal of the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (AFCC) at Amport House, Andover. This is a highly challenging appointment as he is responsible for the delivery of Chaplain and Chaplaincy training across the Royal Navy, the Army and the Royal Air Force. He leads a team of Chaplains from all three Services in this quest and, with the proposed closure of Amport House, he has to constantly engage with the highest levels of MOD policy to ensure the provision and ethos of the AFCC can still be met for the future generations yet to come.

The Rev Mark Dalton RN is part of the team at HMS NEPTUNE in Faslane, the RN home of the Submarine Service and mine hunters vessels. Chaplain Dalton engages daily with many sailors and marines who are based near Helensburgh and ministers to those Service persons who will deploy frequently for months at a time.

The Rev Dr Mark Davidson RN has served for the last year as the Chaplain recruiter for the Naval Chaplaincy Service. In this role he has tried to engage with, and encourage, clergy from the Church of Scotland and all other recognised denominations to explore Ministry with the Royal Navy, either in a full time or a reservist capacity.

There are currently two Church of Scotland Maritime Reserve Chaplains. The Rev Dr Marjory McLean RNR, based at HMS SCOTIA (Rosyth), was able to deploy with one of the Hydrographic Ships to the Mediterranean in 2016. Once on board, she was involved in ministering to many involved in the mammoth migrant rescue effort and wrote very movingly in Life and Work as a response to her experiences. And finally, the Rev Jamie Milliken RNR; based at HMS DALRIADA (Govan) was deployed to the Antarctic with HMS PROTECTOR, the RN's Ice Patrol ship. Jamie's presence on board was much valued by the Ship's Company whilst the deployment afforded him a unique experience of Ministry in an extreme environment; a challenge he thoroughly embraced and appreciated.

APPENDIX 2

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ARMY

As part of the Army 2020 plan and the Army Operating Model the Royal Army Chaplains' Department (RACHD) remains committed to ensuring that every deployable unit Regular or Reserve is provided with a chaplain. In order to meet this requirement the Army and the RACHD relies heavily upon what is called the 'Whole Force Concept' where manpower is found from the Regular and the Reserve Force, supplemented with contactors or in the case of chaplaincy Officiating Chaplains to the Military. In

addition the Army Cadet Force is extremely well served by its Church of Scotland Chaplains. For some time now the department has relied heavily upon Reservist Chaplains to meet our operational commitments and we are glad that in the past year a number of Church of Scotland Chaplains have transferred from the Regulars to the Reserves and vice versa. The Chaplain General is now in his third year of office and was made a Companion to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB) in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours List. He is most ably supported in his work by his Staff Chaplain, the Rev Dr Jim Francis and the Rev Duncan Macpherson his Staff Officer at the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow.

Elsewhere Church of Scotland Chaplains are serving wherever the army are deployed across the Field Army at home and overseas; in the Army Recruitment and Training Division where all recruits are trained; in the home base within Regional Command and in the Joint operational arena you will find Church of Scotland Ministers both Regular and Reservist serving alongside our soldiers and the families.

Within Scotland itself the Army Chaplaincy Team of Regular, Reserve, Cadet and Officiating Chaplains continues to play a vital role in caring for the pastoral, spiritual and moral health of all ranks and their families, responding to the many opportunities across the nation to share in and enrich personal and family lives and in contributing to the Firm Base support of serving and veteran military personnel and their families. Strong interfaith links have developed further this year, and for the first time Chaplaincy cover was provided on a daily personal basis to the UK and international performers taking part in the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.

Our chaplains have once again had the incredible opportunity to serve the military community and beyond in a wide range of roles and situations. Here some of them speak for themselves:

I had the opportunity to take part in a four month international military exchange programme to New

Zealand. This was a great opportunity to experience chaplaincy first hand in a very different bi-cultural context. Based at Burnham Camp outside Christchurch, I formed part of the chaplaincy team, offering pastoral support to a range of minor units as well the small tri-service correctional facility and Limited Service Volunteers' course for unemployed 18-25 year olds. As my exchange involved a job swap with an army chaplain from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, I was able to participate in the local Presbytery retreat led by the Moderator, which was held in an alpine village with hot springs! I also attended General Assembly in Dunedin, a city known for its Scottish heritage, where the opening service complete with acoustic guitar and drums was preceded by a powhiri, a traditional Maori welcoming ceremony.

Rev Nicola Frail 32 Engineer Regt

Highlights of my chaplaincy year would be going away on our Annual Continuous Training, where I joined in with the 4 day Survive, Evade, Resist, Escape (SERE) package in the bleak landscape of Garelochhead training area - culminating in building our own shelters and killing and eating our own chicken. I nearly didn't survive, or at least my finger didn't, when one of the young soldiers managed to strike me with a machete whilst chopping a limb off a tree! It did mean I got better acquainted with the Royal Navy, whose med centre at HMNB Clyde I got to know. I was back on the exercise once it was patched up, and it was a talking point for the rest of the exercise. Of all the people to hit with a machete, the padre was probably not on this young signaller's hit list. It all opens up conversations, and banter, and the chance to model forgiveness!

Intermingled with these character building experiences were some serious pastoral issues, which again highlight to me, how being available to people is the most crucial aspect of this ministry. The army is not always an organisation where it is easy for tough and capable soldiers, often experienced for many years in their chosen field, to open up to each other or show weakness or even

failure. But it is often only when we openly acknowledge our weakness and failure that we receive help and consolation from a power greater than ourselves: as true for the padre as for anyone.

As with any community, there are times of illness and bereavement, when my services have been called upon, and more joyful occasions, such as weddings, or the annual Christmas carols, both for the soldiers at their weekend and at Regimental Headquarters for the permanent staff. These are good opportunities to provide a welcome highlight to soldiers' festivities, who may well not attend a church service, but who nevertheless want to mark the significance of the season and be challenged to think a little more deeply than they would, were I not afforded the opportunity to conduct worship with them.

Rev Christopher Rowe 32 Signal Regiment

For the last 18 months I have been the chaplain to the Military Corrective Training Centre and the Military Provost Staff Regiment in Colchester. These men and women are the detention specialists who look after British service personnel from the three services, as well as tending to captured persons in operational theatres.

There has always been a sense of mystery, terror even, surrounding 'The Glass House' as the MCTC is known, but the dread factor is purely reputation and the reality is an organisation that looks after detainees to the highest possible standards. There is now a national presence with the small Service Custody Facilities, one of which is in Edinburgh, that cater for individuals serving sentences of 14 days or less.

In my capacity as chaplain, I have had the privilege of meeting individuals, male and female, from all three services who for one reason or another, have fallen foul of military discipline, and have lost their liberty for a period of time. As in any other unit, there is the opportunity to provide pastoral support and share God's love in practical ways, as well as offering informal worship services, teaching on ethical matters and joining them for PT and

sport. The same is true of interaction with staff members who in a similar way appreciate the presence of a chaplain – to converse with and to confide in.

I use the word 'privilege' a lot to describe the calling to military chaplaincy, for that is indeed what it is. God has taken me on a journey that when I was training for the ministry in Aberdeen, I certainly did not expect to be on. Can I encourage you to consider whether God might be calling you to this ministry: a ministry that may well take you out of a comfort zone but gives another, different opportunity to live out and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rev Hector MacKenzie, The Military Corrective Training Centre, Colchester

In 2015 I packed my kit and belongings, handed my parish and congregation over to the care of an Interim Moderator and Locum, and deployed to Kenya as the first Army Padre ever to have served with the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK). After an overnight stay in a hotel on the outskirts of Heathrow, I was on a flight to Jomo Kenyatta International Airport where I was met at the commencement of a six-month tour of duty, offering pastoral care to the BATUK community in Nairobi and Nanyuki, and anywhere else the British Army happened to be in that beautiful country. BATUK is a Training Unit offering world class training for infantry soldiers. Each year, up to 12000 soldiers go out to Kenya, where they experience training in some of the most challenging terrain and weather conditions you can find anywhere. My job was to be the Army Padre for BATUK staff and for their family members, a growing group of people, many of whom are on two-year postings to Kenya. BATUK had not had a Padre of its own before, and my privilege, as an Army Reserve chaplain, was to be the first. I quickly established a chaplaincy office in Nanyuki, which sits astride the Equator at an altitude of 6500 feet, signed for a vehicle, and began a six-month peripatetic ministry that took me on weekly journeys to Nairobi on pastoral visits, and to Samburu province in the northern semi-desert, on exercise in the

African bush. Pastoral conversations, praying with soldiers, leading services and bible studies, distributing bibles, taking part in Unit command groups and health committees - this was a happy and rewarding time of ministry. I was able to establish a new church for soldiers and their family members, to counsel them in times of need, and did my best to be available to soldiers in the spartan conditions of the bush every bit as much as in the suburbs of Nairobi. It was very interesting to see that an Army Reserve Padre could integrate easily and readily with the Regular Army and make a much-valued contribution in a part of the world where our servicemen and women are quite distant, a lot of the time, from the helps and comforts that are immediately to hand back home in the UK. Practical issues, such as finding an Interim Moderator and Locum, essential to making this sort of deployment possible, are not always straightforward. However, once set in place, they permitted me to carry out a hugely rewarding and personally satisfying ministry, and one that showed how inter-operable our Army Reserve chaplaincy now is with the Regular Army.

Rev Louis Kinsey

2016/2017 has been a particularly busy period for The First Battalion the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. Alongside the usual training in the UK elements of the Bn have deployed to places such as Lithuania, Brunei, Kenya, Canada and the Falkland Islands. Of particular note in the Bn's calendar was the presentation by Her Majesty the Queen of a new

set of Colours. Traditionally a rallying point in battle the colours are of huge significance and bear upon them the battle honours of the Fusiliers down through the years. After a short drumhead service in which the New Colours are consecrated by the Chaplain General, they are then paraded in front of the whole Bn – a proud moment for all.

It was particularly good to be able to visit elements of the Bn whilst they were in Brunei training in the sweltering jungle and also in Kenya operating in 50 degree heat, the Falklands were a little cooler! Nevertheless when you are just as hot, sweaty and dirty as the troops, or if you're struggling as they are to find shade under the glaring African sun, or about to cross a 70m strip of water hoping your kit stays dry as you pack it in your bivouac bag - this is when the immense privilege of chaplaincy comes to the fore. It is the being alongside that matters – it is in these times that the most extraordinary conversations are started about life, the universe and faith – and a whole lot of other things as well! The power of 'being there' has not changed in 100 years; reminded as I was at the laying and dedication of a VC plaque to Padre Mellish who won his award (as well as an MC) for not leaving the Fusiliers he was Chaplain to injured on the field of battle.

There are many pressures on service personnel today, please continue to pray for them, those who lead them and all who are with or support them.

Rev Chris Kellock 1st Bn Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

Table with Locations of Regular & reserve Army Chaplains

Reg	Army Headquarters	David Coulter	SE	Andover
Reg	Army Headquarters	Jim Francis	SE	Andover
Reg	Army Personnel Centre	Duncan Macpherson	Scot	Glasgow
Reg	Intermediate Command and Staff Course	David Anderson	SW	The Defence Academy, Shrivenham
Reg	SCOTS DG	Mike Goodison	Scot	Leuchars
Reg	32 Engr Regt	Nicola Frail	NE	Catterick
Reg	39 Engr Regt	Seoras Mackenzie	Scot	Kinloss
Reg	1 SG	David Thom	SE	Aldershot
Reg	The 3 SCOTS	Stewart MacKay	Scot	Inverness
Reg	4 SCOTS	Paul Van Sittert	NE	Catterick
Reg	1 PWRR	Neil McLay	BFG	Paderborn
Reg	1 RRF	Chris Kellock	SW	Tidworth
Reg	HQ MCTC	Hector MacKenzie	E	Colchester
Reg	JSSU (Cyp)	Geoff Berry	BFC	Ayios Nikolaos
Resv	SNIY	Danny Connolly	Scot	Edinburgh
Reg	1 YORKS	Alan Cobain	SW	Warminster
Reg	3 Sig Regt	Richard Begg	SW	Bulford
Resv	32 Sig Regt	Christopher Rowe	Scot	Glasgow
Resv	6 SCOTS	Stephen Blakey	Scot	Glasgow
Reg	Armour Centre	Philip Patterson	SW	Bovington
Resv	205 Fd Hosp	Louis Kinsey	Scot	Glasgow

APPENDIX 3

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

This year has been a remarkable period for the Royal Air Force (RAF). Rarely in the 98 years of its history has it been so operationally engaged, with virtually every frontline force fully committed. There have been 15 operations taking place on 4 continents during 2016, whilst simultaneously supporting exercises both in the UK and in a total of 36 countries around the world. This is in addition to the regular tasks of controlling air-space over the UK, the Falklands and in support of NATO allies. This has been achieved through Quick Reaction Alert Typhoon aircraft based in RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby.

The manner in which the RAF is delivering is widely regarded as world leading with over 600 strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria. These have been delivered by Tornado and Typhoon fast jets and remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS). Added to this intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) assets have delivered over 2 hours of coverage in the air for every hour of 2016. The air transport fleet have moved 21600 passengers and more than 22000 tonnes of freight.

Sustaining these levels of operational commitment is extremely difficult and recognised as a huge undertaking. Such is the importance of what the RAF delivers that demand for its capabilities are increasing. That is partly the reason why the RAF will buck the trend of the other services of the UK Armed Forces and grow over the next few years.

In air transportation the new heavy lift capability of the A400M aircraft will be based at RAF Brize Norton. In ISR the Protector RPAS will join other ISTAR gathering aircraft are based at RAF Waddington. In July the MOD confirmed it plans to purchase nine P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol aircraft which will also be based in RAF Lossiemouth.

And the first flight over the UK of the next generation combat aircraft the F35 Lightning II took place at RAF Marham in July.

The introduction of all this new equipment is not an easy task as numbers of personnel employed within the RAF will increase by only 500. However, personnel were encouraged by, Air Chief Marshal Steven Hillier, to "Embrace change and focus on opportunities as well as risk..." as he assumed the role of Chief of the Air Staff in July 2016. He recognised the realities of the current political situation stating that "In these days of austerity tight financial constraints on all other spending will also endure." This is set against a background of ageing infrastructure which is suffering from years of under investment. He also recognised that dealing with these challenges demands innovative thinking to do things differently and requires more commitment from 'The Whole Force'. This is the term used by the RAF for personnel both regular and reserves, their families, civil servants and contractors.

The Church of Scotland's chaplains to the Royal Air Force are embedded in this culture. It is the Chaplain-in-Chief's intent that they be inspired and equipped to serve the whole RAF community through Prayer, Presence and Proclamation. This calling demands an openness to offer spiritual and pastoral support to the whole community irrespective of rank, race, sex, sexual orientation, or religious beliefs and understandings. RAF chaplains express their ministry both in the UK and overseas to help meet the needs of those facing a changing operational and organisational environment. A key part of this objective is to 'strengthen community resilience'. This can come at a personal cost, physically, spiritually and mentally as the RAF seeks to serve the growing demands placed upon it.

The Chaplain in Chief's objectives from last year's report remain extant with an added objective to: Deliver Integrated, Commissioned World Faith Chaplaincy.

Recruitment of Church of Scotland chaplains remains a concern with the number regular Royal Air Force Chaplains at an all-time low of two.

The Convener would gladly welcome any enquiries or notes of interest.

Individual chaplains –

Rev Sheila Munro

Sheila has had a busy time since returning to RAF Lossiemouth as part of a team of 4 chaplains. She was met with a surge of welfare issues and funerals of young people to conduct and for a short while required some time off to recover from ill health. Having returned to work she is again fully involved in the delivery of pastoral and spiritual care.

Rev Craig Lancaster

Craig is based at RAF Brize Norton serving in an ecumenical team of 4 chaplains on the largest Royal Air Force base. In September Craig went to Military Staff College to undertake the 2 month Intermediate Command and Staff Course (Air). This will enable him to better understand the risks and rigours of military command. He remains immensely grateful for the prayers and support of the Kirk as he continues ministry among and beside such a diverse community.

Rev Philip Wilson (Presbyterian Church in Ireland)

Philip has completed his third year of RAF Chaplaincy now based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. This is the home of ISTAR and a squadron of RPAS which are permanently involved in the campaign in Iraq and Syria. As such he is well placed to minister to those who serve at the cutting edge of technological warfare.

APPENDIX 4

The Armed Forces Covenant

An Enduring Covenant Between

The People of the United Kingdom
Her Majesty's Government

and

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown and their Families

'The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.'

Whereas the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland notes the terms of *The Armed Forces Covenant*; and whereas the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland is desirous of setting out the principles which the Church of Scotland will follow in its relations with past and currently serving members of the armed forces of the United Kingdom and their families. Now therefore the General Assembly declares the following principles:

Section 1: Principles of the Armed Forces Covenant

1.1 A consequence of the Government's defence of the realm is that servicemen, servicewomen and veterans may face disadvantage in their lives. Therefore we, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will endeavour in our business and charitable dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved

Section 2: Demonstrating our Commitment

2.1 The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland recognises the value serving personnel, reservists, veterans and their families bring to our society and communities. We will seek to uphold the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, by:

Pastorally:

- urging Presbyteries to appoint Veterans' Champions who will support parish ministers and engage with and help contribute to local Veteran's forums;
- urging every parish minister who encounters members of the broader Armed Forces community who are facing disadvantages to signpost them to the appropriate resources;

- supporting veterans, regulars, reservists and their families by the normal arrangements for the provision of pastoral care.

Liturgically:

- commending the recognition and remembrance of the sacrifices made by others by marking Remembrance Sunday and other such occasions.
- producing and distributing appropriate promotional and liturgical material for use across Scotland as resources for remembrance of the past and reflection on future hopes.

Organisationally:

- providing support in the employment of veterans (young and old) in our own recruitment practices including advertising appropriate vacancies in the non-incorporated Councils and Committees through relevant veterans' employment websites and guaranteeing an interview for those veterans who are in receipt of a War Disabled Pension or other Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payment, providing they meet the essential criteria for the job;
- looking favourably upon employee and office holder requests for leave and flexible working by partners of those deployed, and compassionate leave for any bereaved spouse - including attendance at an inquest or other legal investigation;
- affirming the important work of regular and reserve military chaplaincy and facilitating the transition to and from civilian and military ministry by recognising the transferability of skills and experiences of those engaged in military chaplaincy;
- seeking to support our employees and office holders who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, for instance, by seeking as far as possible to accommodate their training and deployment;

- setting up a dedicated page and links on websites across the Church's community to alert those who work in relevant areas of Church ministry to the specific needs of and resources for the Armed Forces Community.
- 2.2** We will seek to publicise these commitments on our websites, setting out how we will seek to honour them and inviting feedback from the Service and Veterans' community and others on how we are doing. In addition, we will encourage organisations across the Service and Veterans' community to link to our websites and resources.