

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES

May 2016

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 regulations anent Military Reserve Chaplains as set out in Appendix 4.
7. Instruct 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 ascribe.

REPORT

The UK military focus is clearly now on smaller discreet operations and contingent operations in a multiplicity of countries around the world. The number of operations has increased this year to over 25, many with only a handful of personnel on short term training missions, but some still with a significant UK military involvement.

Notable operations include the continuing mission in Kabul with around 450 personnel providing security and training at the Afghan military academy. The Chaplain General visited Kabul in January with the PJHQ Chaplain and got to see for himself the great work on-going – coincidentally 2 Scots happened to be the resident company providing Kabul security and the Chaplain General got to spend significant time with young 'jocks'

many on their first overseas tour alongside their padre the Free Church of Scotland Chaplain Colin McLeod.

The operation to combat so-called Islamic State has grown significantly over the past year with around 1000 personnel now involved - RAF personnel in Cyprus make up the bulk of these numbers with a full spectrum of capabilities being flown over Syria and Iraq but additionally there are smaller numbers of personnel in Iraq and other locations providing mentoring and training for the Iraqi/Kurdish military. The RAF Tornado force has never been busier in its history and is actively involved in bombing on a daily basis. The Chaplain for personnel conducting operations against Islamic State has had a great and positive involvement in visiting far flung discrete locations whilst based in Cyprus.

The Assembly of 2000 approved the current Regulations anent the deployment of Territorial Army (TA) Chaplains in voluntary mobilisation which were amended by Regulation III 2002 to include references to Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) Chaplains.

These regulations were framed in 2000 as a necessary replacement of unsatisfactory *ad hoc* arrangements which had been made during the Gulf War of 1991. During that conflict no TA unit was actually mobilised but two parish ministers, who were also TA Chaplains, volunteered to serve full time and were mobilised with their units. The Reserve Forces Act of 1996 put the TA onto a different basis and created the possibility of Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS).

The purpose of the 2000 Regulations was to protect the institution of TA Chaplaincy and to ensure that satisfactory arrangements were in place so that ministers received the necessary legal protection and benefits whilst serving on voluntary mobilisation. Since that time there have been hugely significant changes in pensions' legislation and of those pension arrangements for ministers in the Church of Scotland. The regulations also required clarification concerning the responsibilities and obligations of the various parties involved in deployment of ministers on military service.

The Committee has had extensive contact with the staff of the Ministries Council and the Principal Clerk's Office and gratefully acknowledges the help it has received from them. It offers draft amendments to the regulations in Appendix 4 below. In framing these, guiding principles again have been a desire to support Reserve Chaplaincy through providing a public package which would apply universally to those involved. This will enable a parish to know the extent of its minister's obligations.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. The Government is working with businesses, local authorities, charities and community organisations to support the forces through services, policy and projects.

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.

The Church of England and the Ministry of Defence signed an Armed Forces Corporate Covenant in February 2015 and it is now appropriate that the Church of Scotland should give serious consideration to making a similar commitment.

An Armed Forces Covenant will endorse the following principles:

- *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.*

And these are a few of the ways in which the Church can demonstrate such a commitment:

- *support the employment of veterans (young and old) in our own recruitment practices by advertising all vacancies through the Career Transition Partnership (CTP) website and guaranteeing an interview for those veterans who have Service related injuries, providing they meet the essential criteria for the job;*
- *look favourably upon employee requests for leave and flexible working by spouses with partners on deployment, and compassionate leave for any*

bereaved spouse - including attendance at an inquest;

- *support our employees who choose to be members of the Reserve forces, for instance, by seeking as far as possible to accommodate their training and deployment;*
- *recognise and remember the sacrifices made by others by marking Remembrance Sunday through the production and distribution of appropriate liturgical material for use across the Church of Scotland;*
- *ensure that wherever possible our buildings and facilities are accessible to all in the Armed Forces Community, especially veterans with disabilities;*
- *set up a dedicated page on the Church of Scotland website to alert those who work in relevant areas of Church ministries to the specific needs of the Armed Forces Community.*

It is recommended that the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces should engage with the Council of Assembly, the Ministries Council and the Social Care Council with a view to completing a commitment to honour the Covenant and bring to the Assembly of 2017 a document that will seek the endorsement of the Church.

In the name of the Committee

GORDON T CRAIG, *Convener*

JOHN A H MURDOCH, *Vice-Convener*

JOHN K THOMSON, *Secretary*

APPENDIX 1

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL NAVY

Protecting our Nation's interests

As an Island nation, our prosperity and security is totally dependent on our ability to access the sea. The UK is reliant on a stable global market for the raw materials, energy and manufactured goods which underpin our way of life and, in a globalised world, we must have the ability to respond to any event that threatens our economy or

national interests. That is why the Royal Navy is globally deployed and has a range of versatile ships, submarines and aircraft operated by highly professional Sailors, Aviators and Royal Marine Commandos. The Royal Navy continues to police the use of the sea in partnership with allies and retains the unique ability to influence events at sea, on land and in the air providing real flexibility of choice to both military and political leaders.

The Royal Navy is:

Preventing Conflict - The Royal Navy prevents conflict by being globally deployed in order to deter threats by reassuring regional powers and stabilising potential hotspots. The coercive nature of a credible military force at sea has significant worth in re-enforcing political will.

Providing Security at Sea - The Royal Navy is at sea every day, working with international partners to provide global maritime security where it is needed.

Promoting Partnerships - The Royal Navy promotes stable and co-operative relationships with friendly and neutral nations around the world through working together, training together and determining common understanding.

Providing Humanitarian Assistance - The Royal Navy provides humanitarian aid and relief from the sea without the need to draw on a country's infrastructure or resources.

Protecting our Economy - The Royal Navy contributes to the stability and economic prosperity of the UK by being deployed around the globe in order to protect trade routes and guard the flow of energy resources into our ports.

Ready to Fight - The Royal Navy is ready to fight and win in combat at sea, on land or in the air.

These are enabled by:

Our Sailors, Aviators and Marines who are a highly skilled and efficient force. They are the life blood of our service,

able to adapt to whatever the mission demands and are key to delivering success anywhere in the world.

Preventing Conflict

The Royal Navy prevents conflict by being globally deployed in order to deter threats by reassuring regional powers and stabilising potential hotspots. The coercive nature of a credible force at sea has significant worth in re-enforcing political will.

The use of the high seas needs no consent and therefore they represent a common highway that can be exploited by maritime forces. The UK's reliance on global trade means that international stability is important to sustain economic growth and security. In order to protect national interests and to fulfil its obligations as a member of the UNSC P5 and G8, the UK requires the ability to exert political influence around the world; a flexible military force is part of such Politics. Maritime forces have the ability to operate across the spectrum of conflict and deliver sustainable military force at a time and place of our choosing, providing political choice through credible capability. This ability makes the Royal Navy as good at **preventing** wars as it is at **winning** them.

Fact

On an average day, 24/7, 365 days a year, 68% of the Royal Navy is preparing for, recovering from or actively engaged in operations or military tasks.

The Royal Navy operates a capable and adaptable Fleet, albeit with a gap in Fixed Wing Carrier Strike until 2020, that enables a range of actions from conventional war fighting in joint operations with Land and Air forces through to supporting other government departments with the 'softer' use of military power through regional diplomacy and reassurance operations.

The Royal Navy provides real choice and unique access to situations around the globe. The Response Force Task Group is the nation's contingent high readiness military capability.

Providing Security at Sea

The Royal Navy is at sea every day, working with international partners to provide global maritime security where it is needed.

The UK's reliance on global trade in produce and energy means that the UK has a vested interest in supporting international organisations to maintain good order at sea by delivering maritime security. The Royal Navy has a key role to play in support of other government departments and international partners in maintaining security at sea, thereby preserving the free, safe and lawful use of the high seas.

Fact

The Royal Navy protects our Nation's interests worldwide through military support to the government for counter piracy, counter terrorism, counter narcotics, fishery protection and the protection of offshore energy installations.

The Royal Navy works within and leads EU, NATO and Coalition Forces to execute Maritime Security patrols across the Mediterranean Sea, Horn of Africa, Indian Ocean and Arabian Gulf to actively deter, disrupt and suppress piracy and the unlawful use of the sea in order to protect global maritime security and secure freedom of navigation for the benefit of all nations.

Promoting Partnerships

The Royal Navy promotes stable and co-operative relationships with friendly and neutral nations around the world through working together, training together and determining common understanding.

A global economy requires a common international approach to trans-national issues such as terrorism, piracy and competition for natural resources. The Royal Navy can assist government in this objective by working with other navies to help build their counter terrorism and counter piracy capabilities. The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) has confirmed and resourced the

requirement for the Royal Navy to operate globally in support of the UK's Foreign Policy.

Fact

Royal Navy ships operate bilaterally and multilaterally with many countries across the Middle East to build their capacity to counter the threat of terrorist attacks. The Royal Navy works with the Iraqi government and coalition nations to protect Iraq's maritime infrastructure, including Iraq's oil platforms and train their Naval Force.

Working with the FCO the Royal Navy engages across West Africa to promote peace and stability, with frequent involvement from ships from the Atlantic Patrols Tasks (known as APT(North) and APT(South)). The Royal Navy is building and maintaining partnerships with other navies across the Indian Ocean and Asia Pacific region to foster mutual understanding and continued UK influence.

Providing Humanitarian Assistance

The Royal Navy provides humanitarian aid and relief from the sea without the need to draw on a country's infrastructure or resources.

The Royal Navy has an enviable reputation for providing humanitarian assistance and aid around the world. Human suffering requires swift and large-scale action and the agility and global presence of Royal Navy ships uniquely positions them to be able to provide assistance. Royal Navy units can switch quickly from security operations to supply aid, repair infrastructure, evacuate entitled personnel or act as a command platform to coordinate a relief operation.

Fact

Naval units and personnel are designated to be on hand to help the six UK dependent territories in the Caribbean during the hurricane season.

In the recent years the Royal Navy has provided assistance in other parts of the world such as Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the tsunami.

The Royal Navy evacuated over 4,000 UK-entitled persons from the Lebanon in just 6 days and, more recently, were tasked to evacuate UK-entitled persons from Benghazi during the Libyan uprising.

Protecting our Economy

The Royal Navy contributes to the stability and economic prosperity of the UK by being deployed around the globe in order to protect trade routes and guard the flow of energy resources into our ports.

As a maritime nation, the UK's economic prosperity depends on seaborne trade, travelling through a network of international sea lanes. These lanes are the arteries of the global economy. We are now a net importer of energy resources and becoming increasingly dependent on gas supplies from other nations. Disruption to, or attack on, maritime trade or energy supply would have a severe impact on the UK's economy and the daily life of UK citizens. This responsibility is both domestic (in our home waters) and global (working with international partners) to ensure the security of the world's sea lanes.

UK waters host a wealth of resources, from fish stocks to energy reserves, all of which are important enablers of economic development. Protecting these resources is an important role for the Royal Navy.

Maritime security extends to the safety of those at sea. The Royal Navy's contribution to maritime rescue services, as well as their cutting edge hydrographical services, helps ensure the sea, both at home and abroad, can be navigated safely by everyone.

The design, construction and maintenance of Royal Navy ships and submarines employs thousands of people in the UK and helps maintain the UK's world class expertise in naval engineering. The Royal Navy delivers back to society citizens who are highly motivated, skilled and disciplined.

Fact

The UK is an island with 10,500 miles of coastline, 600 ports, around 300 offshore oil and gas installations and a

large fishing industry. The UK's dependency on imported gas will rise toward 50% by 2012 and overseas sources will provide up to 80% of UK energy needs by 2020. The UK is totally dependent on the sea for our economic prosperity.

In total, UK-based shipping contributes £10bn a year to GDP and almost £3bn to tax revenues making it the UK's fourth largest services sector industry. Global maritime trade relies on the free and lawful use of the sea. 95% of global maritime trade passes through just nine choke points which are inevitably vulnerable to attack.

Ready to Fight

The Royal Navy is ready to fight and win in combat at sea, on land or in the air.

We have entered an era shaped by globalisation and ready access to information. Current trends suggest that terrorism, climate change, shifts in population, religious tensions and increased competition for natural resources have the potential to lead to crisis, confrontation and conflict. This has been affirmed by the recent SDSR.

The Naval Service operates across the maritime, land and air environments, conducting, enabling and supporting operations with the Army and the Royal Air Force. Maritime forces, forward deployed and operating in international waters, enable the UK Government, without recourse to a Third Party, to employ military force at a time and place of its choosing. The Royal Navy's ability to conduct operations worldwide without reliance on a host nation for support enables the UK to combat security threats at source.

The Naval Chaplaincy Service

Royal Navy Chaplains are supporting the men and women of the Naval service all over the globe consistently deploying 75% of the Naval Chaplaincy Service work on the Frontline, at sea, with the Royal Marines or in our training establishments. The Royal Navy places much value on the spiritual and moral welfare of its people and highly values the Chaplains who are at the forefront of that delivery.

The Chaplains who serve are resilient, adaptable, insightful and pastoral. The Chaplaincy, in combination with the divisional and regimental systems and supporting caring agencies, makes for a winning formula when looking after the emotional and moral needs of our people – and their families too. The Royal Navy's Chaplains are fundamental to nurturing the resilient, valiant and indomitable spirit in our people – so that they continue to deliver our courageous and battle-winning edge."

If you think you are called to serve in this environment, get in touch:

NAVYCNR-CHAPLAIN@MOD.UK

www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers

Tel 023 92 62 55 52

As the advert says:

Ordained in the Church of Scotland but made in the Royal Navy!

Church of Scotland Naval Chaplains

Rev Dr Scott J S Shackleton BA BD PhD Royal Navy

Scott is Chaplaincy Team Leader at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines, Lympstone where he leads a large and busy team of chaplains and pastoral workers, providing spiritual and pastoral care to staff and trainees and supporting the ethics syllabus within all RM training. He is also playing an instrumental part in the development of a planned Families Centre for the base.

Rev Stan Kennon BA BD Royal Navy

Stan is currently recovering after an operation to his eye, after which he will resume his spiritual and pastoral duties at HM Naval Base Devonport.

Rev Mark F Dalton BD DipMin Royal Navy

Mark has been recently appointed as Chaplaincy Team Leader to the Faslane Naval Base Chaplaincy where he heads a team of four other Chaplains and a team of

Pastoral Workers. His role embraces that of Regional Chaplain (RN) for Scotland and the North of England.

Rev Dr Mark Davidson MA BD STM Royal Navy

Mark, having returned in March this year from a 6 month tour of duty working out of Bahrain has recently been appointed as the Naval Chaplaincy Recruiter based in Navy Command HQ in Portsmouth.

Rev Dr Marjory A Maclean LLB BD PhD Royal Naval Reserve

Marjory continues to serve at HMS SCOTIA, the Royal Naval Reserve unit at Rosyth.

Rev Jamie W Milliken BD Royal Naval Reserve

Jamie passed his Fleet Board last November and is now on the trained strength, serving at HMS DALRIADA, the Royal Naval Reserve unit at Govan.

APPENDIX 2 CHAPLAINCY IN THE ARMY

In chaplaincy terms Scotland continues to punch well above its weight the evidence for which can be clearly seen in 51 Brigade and Headquarters Scotland's commitment to operations over the past twelve months. From a small team of six regular chaplains we have seen two on enduring ops over the past year. The Rev John Duncan, serving with 3 SCOTS (The Black Watch), has spent six months on Op TOSCA, which is the UN mission in Cyprus. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) is a UN mission originally set up in 1964 but was given additional responsibilities in 1975 following the war and maintains the buffer zone between the Turkish and the Greek Cypriots. Also the Rev Colin MacLeod (Free Church of Scotland), chaplain to 2 SCOTS, is currently deployed on Op TORAL in Kabul, Afghanistan where his regiment has been providing Force Protection to various British missions around the capital. For the CO, his command group and the chaplain, this is a long eight month tour, but the companies have been rotating through the plot serving four months each supported by 5 SCOTS, Balaklava Company.

On the Reserve front the commitment to ops has also been high with two chaplaincy deployments in 2015 and one new on-going deployment into 2016. The Rev Philip Patterson, chaplain to 7 SCOTS deployed to TOSCA for two weeks to provide both R&R cover and mission support to 3 SCOTS. The Rev Louis Kinsey serving with 205 Field Hospital, deployed to BATUK (Kenya Training Team) for a new deployment of six months in support of all the British military community serving in that country. This deployment was so successful that Commander BATUK subsequently petitioned for a full time chaplain and Mr Kinsey was followed by a regular chaplain on a two year residential tour. Finally, the Rev Danny Connolly, chaplain to the newly formed Scottish and Northern Ireland Yeomanry (SNIY), is currently deployed on a weekly basis to Fort George, Inverness, in support of 3 SCOTS as their current chaplain is on Resettlement leave and will not be replaced until mid May. He then re-deploys to Leuchars Station for a further six months covering this base as its chaplain will be deploying on a four month tour to Op TORAL in Afghanistan.

Elsewhere within the army, Church of Scotland Chaplains have been at the forefront of making news including the Rev Chris Kellock who was deployed with 22 Field Hospital, the British Army's high readiness hospital, to Sierra Leone to help stem the Ebola crises (Op GRITROCK). It was during his 101 day deployment the Mr Kellock's ministry was recognised and he was awarded a Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS). Also of note is that the Rev James Francis has been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for his services on Op TORAL, Afghanistan in 2014/15.

Within Scotland and 51 Brigade the unit moves from Germany have begun to settle down. During July and August 2015 the Scots Dragoon Guards returned to their homeland, along with 2 Battalion REME and 110 Provo Company (RMP), who were the last RMP detachment to serve in Helmand Province returning to Paderborn, Germany, in January 2015. A further change relating to Army 2020 is that 3 SCOTS are in the process of retraining

for their new role as a Mechanised Light Infantry battalion (MLI) up at Fort George. The chaplaincy plot has also seen a lot of movement with the Rev Mike Goodison being posted into Leuchars to care for both the station and the SCOTS DG whilst the Rev Paul van Sittert was posted away from 3 RIFLES to Catterick being replaced by the Rev Stewart Young (Methodist). The Rev John Duncan on his return from Cyprus has gone on Resettlement Leave before he retires from the army and returns to parish ministry in Leuchars. Finally 51 Brigade and HQ Scotland remains based in Stirling with the intention of moving back to Edinburgh once a satisfactory solution is found to its real estate requirements. Finally, we allow the chaplains' themselves to voice some of their highlights from 2015:

'This past year has been dominated by two key events. The first of which was an operational deployment to Sierra Leone as Chaplain to 22 Field Hospital. Ministering to our military personnel, patients and local families; this proved a particularly challenging but immensely powerful time as we formed the UK spearhead response to the Ebola virus. Returning early March to the unit we were straight into the preparation for 8 weeks armoured infantry training in Canada. From the lush and humid conditions of West Africa to the vast plains of Canada was a leap but proved ideal for spending quality time with the soldiers – living in the field for a month. Being where the soldiers are is the key, whether on the ranges, on Exercise, conducting remembrance Parades, or leading Ethics study days. And of course fitting in the physical training to be ready – whether regular Coy PT, cross country trials, or simply the weekly programme plus the Adventure Training. Chaplaincy is a presence yes, but in being we also earn the right to share – and share in both joyful times as well as the more difficult ones. It is an immense privilege to do so.'

Rev Chris Kellock, 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, Mooltan Barracks, Tidworth.

'For me the highlight had to be BATUS during the summer. I know it's what most chaplains say, but there's something special about living alongside the people to whom you minister, with all your earthly belongings in your Bergen

on your back. You can't always guarantee transport, so you have to be flexible, resourceful, and prepared to walk! People are always pleased to see 'the Padre' whether they're religious or not, you're instantly welcomed and have a distinct role to play. Being apart from your own family for long periods of time are hard, but the benefits of this unique ministry more than makes up for any hardships.'

Rev Neil McLay, 1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, Barker Barracks, Paderborn

'A privileged diversion from routine matters was involvement in the dedication of the "Shetland Bus Memorial" at Burghead. It commemorates the service and sacrifice of Norwegian and British men who ran a secret courier service between Shetland, Burghead and Nazi occupied Norway. Relatives of those who died were present from both countries and a Burghead lady told me of remembering one of the Norwegians staying in her house when she was a child. We went out to sea in an old herring boat to scatter sprigs of heather in memory of those who risked and lost their lives.'

Rev Seoras Mackenzie, 39 Engineer Regiment (Air Support), Kinloss Barracks, Kinloss

'I was privileged to take part in the national service at St. Paul's Cathedral to mark the end of combat operations in Afghanistan. The presence of many loved ones of deceased service personnel together with the liturgy of this service were powerful reminders of the human cost of this recent conflict. It was not long then since I had been in Kabul, and as I thought of those I had sought to support in their loss and recalled seeing the memorial plaques at Camp Bastion inscribed with the names of those who had died on Op Herrick, I also reflected upon the continued contribution of British military personnel still in Afghanistan in advisory roles.'

Rev Nicola Frail, 32 Engr Regt, Marne Barracks, Catterick, North Yorkshire.

Remembrance in North East Fife 2015: *'This was the first Remembrance season since the Army was re-based from*

Germany to Leuchars in Fife. For Remembrance we had soldiers from Leuchars Station present at six separate services. Everything from a full regimental strength parade, with the pipes and drums, marching through St Andrews, to a few soldiers laying a wreath during the service in Balmullo Village hall. To be able to lead four of these services was an honour and to then hear the comments of joy, appreciation and thankfulness from the members of the community, who were so pleased that Remembrance was being carried out with military precision and with the level of respect and dignity that they felt was properly due, left me glad that I could be part of the day and do my small bit to help people remember the sacrifice and personal cost of the conflicts past and present. Being part of the Army seemed to give my prayers and comments a bit of authority that I never felt before.'

**Rev Mike Goodison, SCOTS DG, Waterloo Lines,
Leuchars Station, St Andrews, Fife.**

APPENDIX 3

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

The National Security Strategy which emerged from the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) has a vision of a secure and prosperous United Kingdom with global reach and influence. Everything in the strategy is centred on a determination to protect our people and our values and ensure the country prospers.

Particular priorities over the next five years will include deterrence of state-based threats, tackling terrorism, remaining a world leader in cyber security and ensuring a capability to respond rapidly to crises as they emerge.

The Royal Air Force defends our airspace, projects our air power globally and provides intelligence to support operations including counter terrorism. It is no surprise that many of the new full spectrum capabilities announced in the SDSR will have a direct impact on the Royal Air Force – new investment in Typhoon multi-role combat aircraft in RAF Lossiemouth and RAF Coningsby, arrival of the next generation combat aircraft the F35

Lightning II on the new Royal Navy carriers and based at RAF Marham, more investment in the new Protector remotely piloted aircraft and other intelligence gathering aircraft predominately at RAF Waddington, new maritime patrol aircraft to be based in Scotland and new heavy lift capability with the A400M based at RAF Brize Norton.

In equipment terms the Royal Air Force has a clear focus and mandate for the immediate future but there is also a recognition that the Armed Forces relies on the skills, commitment and professionalism of our people and yet there are heavy demands placed upon them. Recruitment, retention and training the right mix of capable and motivated service personnel is essential to deliver operational success and so there is recognition in the SDSR of a need to focus on new approaches to reflect the realities of modern life – helping service personnel buy their own homes, a whole force approach encompassing reserve and regular alongside civil servants and contractors. This commitment to service personnel is set out in the Armed Forces Covenant which should be commended to the General Assembly.

The Royal Air Force remains agile, adaptable and capable protecting the UK and supporting her interests 24/7 and providing the nation with choice in times of crisis.

It is in this environment that our Royal Air Force Chaplains are serving. The Mission of the Royal Air Force Chaplains Branch remains to serve the RAF Community through Prayer, Presence and Proclamation.

The calling of RAF Chaplains is to be at the very heart of their community, responsible for the spiritual welfare of the whole community – service men and women, and their dependants – whatever rank they hold, and no matter what their religious beliefs or views.

Chaplains live out daily their ministry of prayer, presence, and proclamation on RAF bases at home, overseas and in areas of conflict. In others words, where there are RAF personnel in any numbers, a Chaplain will be with them, facing the same kind of issues and challenges. This can

mean personal sacrifice, physically, spiritually and mentally as the RAF seeks to serve the demands of the nation, often far from home and in places of danger. This is the story of God's love in action, and as one airman said to his chaplain, 'You are here to remind us that there is something better and bigger than us out there – that God loves us'.

The Chaplain-in-Chief's objectives for 2015-2016 are firstly to deliver whole force Chaplaincy by delivering pastoral care, moral leadership and spiritual provision for the whole RAF Community; deploying regular and reservist chaplains in imaginative ways to meet the changing operational and organisational environment. A second objective is to strengthen community resilience by delivering the Beliefs and Values Programme (2015) in order to build personal and corporate moral understanding within the diversity of Service life; strengthening resilience in personal and professional relationships and care for those who are wounded, injured, sick and bereaved; resourcing and developing Spiritual Resilience within the RAF Community; and facilitating the diverse observance of religious practice.

The Royal Air Force and its Chaplains have continued at a high pace in this past year, involved in diverse operations from Nepal earthquake relief to Operations in Afghanistan and over Syria and Iraq, not to mention flood relief at home alongside UK air defence and the many and various smaller scale operations around the world, from Africa to the Middle East and further afield.

Recruitment as ever remains an issue with the number of Church of Scotland Royal Air Force Chaplains now down to an all-time low of two following the departure of Rev Jonny Wylie this month. The convenor would gladly welcome any enquiries or notes of interest.

Individual chaplains –

Rev Jonny Wylie

Jonny left the RAF in February 2016 to become Chaplain at Strathallan School after a fulfilling and wonderful 16 years in the military. His time ended with a tri-service tour in

the Permanent Joint Headquarters at the centre of all UK Operations overseas and he was privileged to see many personnel and their sacrificial work around the world. He leaves with only positive memories and thoughts and a feeling of God's presence throughout his time guiding and preparing the way and hopefully making an impact on all those he met.

Rev Sheila Munro

Sheila has had a rewarding and busy time at RAF Leeming this past year with a plethora of welfare issues and funerals of young people to conduct. In March Sheila travelled to Germany to conduct Post Operational Stress management briefings to 34 Squadron RAF Regiment who were the last to leave Helmand province and Camp Bastion in particular. Sheila has made a welcome return north of the border to return to RAF Lossiemouth and no doubt she will relish the prospect of re-integrating into a very different chaplaincy team and station than the one she left a couple of years ago.

Rev Craig Lancaster

Craig deployed in May 2015 to set up chaplaincy support for those involved in operations in Iraq. Based primarily in Cyprus he found opportunity to travel round the Middle East providing pastoral care as well as ministry through Word and Sacrament. He returned to RAF Brize Norton in September where he has continued to serve as part of an ecumenical team of chaplains on the largest RAF base. It is a fantastic privilege to care for and to share kingdom values with service personnel, their families, contractors and civil servants. He is 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 second year of RAF Chaplaincy at RAF Honington in Suffolk, the home of the RAF Regiment with phase one and two training. In 2015 the regiment was joined by the RAF Police, making it an even busier station. The Station Church experimented with monthly All Age services on occasions such as Battle of Britain Sunday,

Harvest, Christmas, New Year and Easter. These were well supported by people who do not often attend any church. In December 2015 he was deployed as the sole Forces Chaplain to British Forces South Atlantic Islands, based at Mount Pleasant in the Falklands. This is a busy tri-service environment of some 1,300 service personnel. There is an active church community and a prevalence of welfare cases associated with being 8,000 miles from home whilst relying on communication systems which are sporadic and expensive. A significant number of personnel find themselves in unique situations of isolation and pressure. The ministry opportunities were many and the work varied and vital. In May 2016 Philip was posted to RAF Waddington near Lincoln, home to the RAF Air Command surveillance and reconnaissance assets.

APPENDIX 4

MILITARY RESERVE CHAPLAINS REGULATIONS

Edinburgh, [] May 2016, Session []

1. Where a Parish Minister ("the Minister") is an Army Reserve Chaplain, RAF Reserve Chaplain or a Royal Naval Reserve Chaplain on part time reserve service, any proposed change of such status to military service on voluntary mobilisation under section 24 of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 shall not be effective unless and until all of the following have been granted:-
 - (a) firstly, the consent of the Minister's Kirk Session;
 - (b) secondly, the consent of the Presbytery of the bounds; and
 - (c) thirdly, the consent of the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces or any General Assembly Committee which may succeed to its duties or functions ("the Committee").
2. Before deciding whether to give or withhold such consent the Committee shall interview the Minister. The consent of the Committee shall not be granted unless the following apply:-
 - (i) the Minister must complete the Employer Notification and relevant mobilisation paperwork from the Ministry of Defence, naming the Church of Scotland, Ministries Council, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN as his or her employer, in order that the appropriate compensatory arrangements for the period of military service will be made to the Ministries Council (for the avoidance of doubt, all compensatory payments made to the Church during the Minister's period of military service shall belong to the Ministries Council);
 - (ii) confirmation must be received from the Ministry of Defence that satisfactory arrangements are in place as to insurance against personal injury and death during the period of military service;
 - (iii) the Presbytery of the bounds must be able to give an assurance that a suitably qualified locum (full-time where possible) for the Minister's charge will be appointed to serve for the period of the Minister's absence on military service, such appointment to be wholly conditional on the consent of the Committee, in terms of these Regulations, being granted.
3. On all of the consents, as detailed above, having been granted, the Presbytery shall appoint an Interim Moderator and, in consultation with the Kirk Session, a suitably qualified locum (full-time where possible) for the charge who shall serve for the period of the Minister's absence on military service. With the agreement of all parties the Interim Moderator and the locum may be the same person.
4. The Minister's period(s) of military service shall not exceed six months in any six year period.
5. During periods of military service the Minister shall retain his or her status as Minister of the charge but shall be seconded by the Church to the Ministry of Defence who shall assume all of the responsibilities of an employer vis-à-vis the Minister. For the avoidance of doubt payment of stipend to the Minister shall cease for the duration of such periods.
6. During periods of military service the Church's contributions to the Church of Scotland Pension Plan

in respect of the Minister will be paid by the Church as though he or she were fulfilling all of the duties of a Parish Minister in the charge, UNLESS the Minister requests that employer contributions are made into the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), in which

- case payment into the Church of Scotland scheme will cease until the Minister resumes Parish duties.
7. Regulations VI 2000 shall be repealed.