

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES MAY 2018

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 the appointment by Presbyteries of an Armed Forces Champion.
6. Commend to eligible ministers of the Church consideration of service as a Chaplain to HM Forces – Regular, Reserve and Cadet Forces.

Report

1.1 Every year the ministers of the Church of Scotland serving as Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces gather at the General Assembly on what has become known as 'Chaplains' Day.' Not without a degree of embarrassment they have stood before the General Assembly to listen as the Kirk reaffirms its support of them and their ministry to the Armed Forces. This year they attend the General Assembly, for what is perhaps the first time, with mixed feelings. The Registration of Ministries Act has categorised them Category E, alongside all Church of Scotland clergy working out with the parish. Therefore before returning to parish ministry within the Kirk they will have to regain Category O status which they can only attain following an assessment process to identify whether they may be lacking skill sets or knowledge to enable them to function as competent parish ministers. If required suitable training will then be provided to allow Chaplains to gain Category O status.

1.2 The Registration of Ministries Act recognises that military Chaplains are a special case and the intention of the Act is to make the transition from military to parish as seamless as possible. However at the time of writing the details to enable this to happen are still being worked on and consequently an unintentional result of the Act is that the Kirk's military Chaplains feel marginalised and their ministry undervalued.

1.3 It is expected that the process to ensure seamless transition from military to parish will have been formalised by the time the General Assembly meets. However this year, more than any other, the Chaplains feeling of embarrassment at being singled out may be outweighed by gratitude if the General Assembly chooses to 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.

2. Chaplains continue to serve their people in challenging situations. The appendices following this report provide a flavour of the deployments experienced by the ministers serving as Chaplains.

Rev Dr Mark Davidson RN has recently returned from a 6 month deployment spent beneath the waves in a Trident Class submarine.

Army Chaplains who were deployed in the last year include:

Rev Mike Goodison deployed to Cyprus to serve with the United Nations on Op TOSCA from October 17 for six months.

Rev Stewart MacKay deployed with elements of 3 SCOTS to Iraq on Op SHADER. He travelled to Iraq in January and will be deployed for 6 months.

Rev Nicola Frail deployed for 6 months with 32 Engineers in July 17. Travelling to Sudan a short report of her experience is contained in Appendix 2. Her report begins: 'In July 2017, I deployed on Op TRENTON as Chaplain to the UK Engineering Task Force that forms part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. For the past six months, I have been providing pastoral care to personnel as they undertake site work for a new hospital, repair culverts, and engage in other infrastructure improvements that it is hoped will better enable others to bring humanitarian assistance to the point of need.'

The Royal Air Force has only two serving regular Chaplains. One of those, the Rev Craig Lancaster is currently deployed on his third operational tour ministering to personnel based at headquarters throughout the Middle East.

3. Last year at a ceremony held in Edinburgh Castle the Moderator signed the **Armed Forces Covenant** which pledged the support of the Church of Scotland to the Armed Forces Community, a community made up of Serving Personnel, Regular and Reservists, Veterans and all their families. It equates to roughly 10% of the population of Scotland and the largest grouping within the community are veterans of retirement age who report that their greatest issue is loneliness.

The Armed Forces Covenant signed by the Moderator contained these words:

'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 strongly Presbyteries to appoint Veterans' Champions who will support parish ministers and engage with and help contribute to local Veteran's forums;
- urging strongly 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'

Resources to assist the work of Veteran's Champions are available from the secretary of the Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces. To date 18 Presbyteries have appointed a Veterans' Champion.

4. One of the greatest issues facing military chaplaincy is recruitment. The Services take clergy from the recognised 'Sending Churches' and traditionally Church of Scotland Chaplains have formed a large percentage, second only to Anglican Chaplains. That is no longer the case. The recruitment of new Church of Scotland Military Chaplains has now reached a critical point illustrated most starkly by the Royal Air Force. There are only two Church of Scotland Chaplains remaining. It is unlikely that any member or affiliate of the Church of Scotland who joins the Royal Air Force will ever be ministered to by a Chaplain of his or her denomination. The Royal Navy and Army may have more Church of Scotland Chaplains but they do not have enough.

In the name of the Committee

GORDON T CRAIG, *Convener*
CAROLYN H MACLEOD, *Vice-Convener*
JOHN K THOMSON, *Secretary*

Addendum

Rev Gordon T Craig

The conclusion of this year's Assembly sees the retirement of Gordon Craig after having served four years as Convener. Gordon's previous service of 24 years as a Regular RAF Chaplain, latterly as Principal Chaplain (Church of Scotland & Free Churches), meant that he very quickly grasped those significant issues which confronted the Committee at the time of his appointment. Recruitment of chaplains remained at the forefront of the Committee's remit and Gordon used his very best endeavours to achieve success in this area. The support and encouragement of chaplains is another key function that Gordon undertook with dedication and enthusiasm. We are indebted to Gordon for the time and commitment which he has given to the work of the Committee.

In the name of the Committee

CAROLYN H MACLEOD, *Vice-Convener*
JOHN K THOMSON, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL NAVY

Parish Ministry on a Global Scale

2017 was designated by the MoD as 'the Year of the Navy' to mark what was described by Sir Michael Fallon as "the start of a new era of maritime power, projecting Britain's influence globally and delivering security at home."

The publication of the National Shipbuilding Strategy set out a path to a more competitive industrial sector that would help bring about a more effective and influential Navy in the years ahead and the arrival of a new generation of ships, submarines and aircraft is visible proof that this new era is underway.

Significant milestones during the Year of the Navy were:

- HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed from Rosyth and following sea trials was commissioned by Her Majesty in December.
- The second carrier HMS Prince of Wales was named and entered the water.

- In the summer steel was cut on the Clyde for the first of the Type 26 Frigate, to be named HMS Glasgow.
- The Royal Fleet Auxiliary took delivery of the first of four Tide-class tankers, RFA Tidespring.
- The first of the Navy's five next-generation patrol ships, HMS Forth, began her sea trials.
- The fourth Astute Class submarine entered the water for her commissioning phase in spring.
- The opening of the first permanent Royal Navy base east of Suez in nearly half a century.

However, the single most important element of the Naval Service remains our sailors and marines, and those who support them. These young men and women are bright, motivated and incredibly proud to serve. During the first quarter of 2017, one third of the Royal Navy's front-line strength were on global operations.

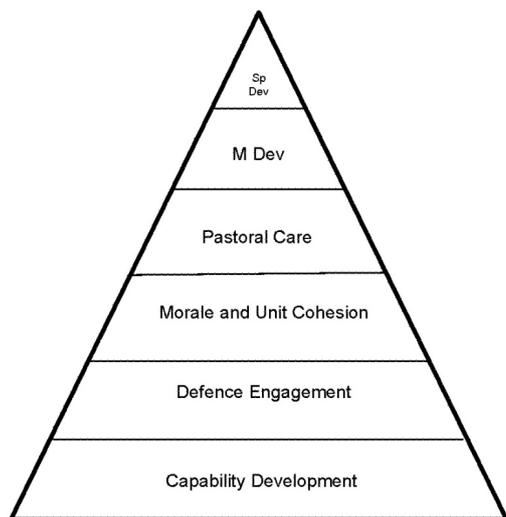
This human activity was best demonstrated by our efforts to assist the hurricane-ravaged communities in the Caribbean last autumn. RFA Mounts Bay was already in the region and could respond from the outset. She was quickly joined by the Lead Commando Group from the Royal Marines and later by HMS Ocean, which brought bulk supplies and several helicopters. This effort was conducted in partnership with the RAF and Army, and supported throughout by reservists and civil servants. Few nations have the ability to project forces across an ocean with the same speed, scale and sophistication. The Royal Navy did so while continuing to deliver the round-the-clock Nuclear Deterrent, monitoring Russian warships operating close to our shores, leading NATO task groups in the Mediterranean and fulfilling a myriad of other commitments at home and around the world.

Looking ahead, 2018 will be a year of expanding maritime horizons for the Royal Navy, taking the UK's message of partnership and prosperity across the world, including major deployments to the Arctic, Gulf and Asia-Pacific. We are working our way through shortfalls in equipment availability and manpower, not least in the Chaplaincy Department, but our long-term future is secure.

This is what the Royal Navy does each day of the year, but where do the Chaplains fit into this?

During last summer, the chaplaincy team at HM Naval Base Clyde held a team-building day. The team explored a model of contemporary military chaplaincy entitled The Padre's Pyramid, which was offered for consideration by Rev Dr Mark Davidson RN who led the day. While it is by no means a static model, it provides a framework with which those we engage with, both within the Service and without, are able to begin to answer the above question of what chaplains in the Royal Navy do and it is hoped that over the next year it will be refined as it is reflected on theologically and critically.

The elements of the Padres' Pyramid is outlined below.



Capability Development

This is the foundation on which the Padres' Pyramid is built. It is about clergy self-care, without which ministry would be unbalanced.

Defence Engagement

Defence engagement by the Royal Navy around the globe is understood as 'soft power'. Chaplains enable the Service to link in with local communities wherever it finds itself through relations with local clergy, faith leaders and congregations. Chaplains can directly mediate between the military and the wider civilian context and facilitate the building of relationships and trust. This was clearly demonstrated during the conflict in Afghanistan.

Morale and Unit Cohesion

This covers the enhancement, development and maintenance of authentic community, whether the Chaplain serves ashore or afloat. Here, the different personalities of Chaplains will have different effects, but each is valued, whether the Chaplain is regarded as the 'party padre' or is a quiet, observing presence. It's about being where our people are that we might know them and offer tailored pastoral support.

Pastoral Care

This encompasses a wide variety of areas and issues and is carried out in conjunction with other caring agencies within the Royal Navy. It can range from dealing with those who are bereaved or suffering grief and loss for some reason, to supporting those recovering with mental health issues, crisis intervention, supporting veterans and informing next of kin of death or injury. Chaplaincy in many cases are first to respond, achieved through the availability of a Duty Chaplain in each naval establishment, 24/7.

Moral Development (M Dev)

In today's world, Service Personnel are to be ethically and morally intelligent and astute. While ethics and morals do not belong solely to chaplaincy - we are not morality police, Chaplains are key in supporting the Unit Command as they strive to achieve this. This ordinarily occurs at individual, unit and strategic levels through one-to-one discussion, developing tailored responses to local situations, offering advice to Command upon request, delivering the Royal Navy's Beliefs and Values (BVRN) package (C2DRIL - Courage, Commitment, Discipline, Respect, Integrity and Loyalty) and engagement with the Naval Service Ethics Programme. Here, chaplaincy acts as the 'critical friend'.

Spiritual Development (Sp Dev)

This encompasses traditional practices associated with ordained ministers, and include leading of prayer, services of worship, weddings and blessings, baptisms and funerals but it is also critically about helping unchurched or spiritually curious personnel and their families to encounter or explore faith, belief and belonging.

We have a Service that is routinely forward deployed and as such Royal Navy Chaplains are supporting the men and women of the Naval service all over the globe. At any one time 70% of the Royal Navy is at sea. 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 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.

ROYAL NAVY CHAPLAINS

Rev Dr Scott Shackleton RN

The Rev Dr Scott Shackleton spent the first half of the year as the Principal of the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Amport House, which is the tri service chaplaincy and pastoral skills theological college within the wider Defence Academy. . It was a busy year with some 9,000 students (both chaplains, service personnel and families) undertaking short courses taught by the college staff and SME's. The pressure on the college was intense due to the announced proposed closure of the college by 2020 and the privatisation of three quarters of the staff from civil service posts into the private sector. Funding of the college and its re-provisioning against the maintenance of its teaching syllabus occupied much of his time alongside supporting a brilliant staff going through difficult times professionally. Credit is due to them all for improving the quality of the teaching, the innovation of new courses more relevant to faith within today's military community and continued high standards of hospitality being shown as a residential college. In the second half of the year Dr Shackleton was promoted to become the Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet where he is responsible for the overall capability of the Naval Chaplaincy Service on behalf of the Chaplain of the Fleet. This post is based at the Naval Command HQ, Portsmouth. Academically, Dr Shackleton was made a Visiting Professor of Ethics with Bath Spa University due to his on-going work within military ethics and within the wider public sector. He continues in his role with the University of Exeter as an Honorary Fellow within the Divinity Department where he is working on Bonhoeffer's ethics and the secular context.

Rev Mark F Dalton RN

Rev Mark Dalton has served this past year at HM Naval Base Clyde where he enjoys providing pastoral care to the personnel of the Base. He is due to take up a new appointment later in the year.

Rev Dr Mark Davidson RN

Rev Dr Mark Davidson joined the chaplaincy team at HM Naval Base Clyde last year as a chaplain to the Faslane Flotilla. He has deployed on patrol in support of the country's nuclear Continuous at Sea Deterrent with a Trident Class submarine and is looking forward to his next challenge.

ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE CHAPLAINS

Rev Jamie Milliken RNR

Rev Jamie Milliken is enjoying being 'bish' at HMS DALRIADA, Glasgow where he attends on a weekly basis.

In February this year, he spent time at the Commando Training Centre (CTC) at Lympstone in Devon on a general acquaint to gain an understanding of the Royal Marine Corps, Commando Training and the structure of and role of specializations within the Royal Marines.

The acquaint covered Chaplaincy to Phase 1 Recruits, visiting and observing those undertaking field-craft training, delivery of the RM Ethics package and in conversation with the Corps tutor its updating and the way it's delivered to Command Courses, involvement in delivery of worship to recruits and staff. All this while working as an integral part of an ecumenical and multi-disciplinary ministry team. Jamie found his time with the Royal Marines highly rewarding and gave a helpful insight into another part of the Naval Service.

Rev Dr Marjory McLean retired from the RNR last year. Her contribution to the Naval Chaplaincy Service will be greatly missed and we wish her well in all that she does in the future.

If you sense that you might be being called to ministry in the Royal Naval Chaplaincy Service or are called, either full time or in the Royal Naval Reserve, then the first stage on your journey is to contact the Chaplaincy Recruiter. Contact details are:

Email: **NAVYCNR-CHAPLAIN@MOD.UK**

Tel: 023 9262 5552

Mob: 07818 520705

Web: www.royalnavy.mod.uk/careers

Appendix 2

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ARMY

2017 has been another busy year for Chaplains both serving within Scotland and as ministers of the Church of Scotland (CS). Within 51 Brigade the Deputy Assistant Chaplain General (DACG) was deployed to South Sudan to work with the United Nations from early February to July 2017, with the Rev Stephen Blakey (CS) providing Rear Ops support in his absence. The Rev Mike Goodison (CS), chaplain to the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards (SCOTS DG), based in Leuchars, Fife, also deployed to Cyprus to serve with the United Nations on Op TOSCA from October 17 for six months, with Rear Ops supported by the Rev Danny Connolly (CS), and in January 2018 the Rev Stewart MacKay (CS) deployed with elements of 3 SCOTs to Iraq on Op SHADER. Rear Ops support for Fort George is being overseen by the Rev Seoras Mackenzie (CS), serving in Kinloss. This represents a deployment figure of 50% of the six Regular chaplain's serving in Scotland either involved in pre-deployment training or deploying during the year.

2017 was also busy with the news of future changes to the military infrastructure within Scotland with the announcement of the closures of Fort George, home to 3 SCOTs, in 2032; Forthside, Stirling, home to 51 Brigade and Headquarters Scotland, in 2021; Craigiehall, formerly 2nd Division and Headquarters Scotland, in summer 2018 and Redford Barracks in 2022. There was also the surprise announcement that Glencorse Barracks, Penicuik, home to 2 SCOTs, is forecast to close in 2032. Leuchars Station, formerly RAF Leuchars, and now the home to the SCOTS DG, 2 Battalion REME and 110 Provost Company, Royal Military Police, will become the hub and focus for the army within Scotland as more units move to the Kingdom of Fife. So the footprint of the army continues to change in light of Army 2020.

Part of the army's new operational focus has been to re-engage with the United Nations both in support of various missions around the world whilst also acting in the capacity

of an exemplar nation. This has involved new missions with struggling nations like South Sudan.

South Sudan is the youngest country in the world and one of the most conflicted. Following thirty-five years of armed conflict with its Northern neighbour South Sudan was eventually birthed on the 11th April 2011, concluding six years implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) brokered by the Troika¹ and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)². However, from the outset a combination of factors have ensured that the founding of this new state has been a rocky one and since December 2013, 50,000 people have been killed and 3.5 million people have been displaced internally, from a population of just 11,562,695 (July 2014 estimate). A further 480,000 have fled to neighbouring countries and it has become the world's fastest growing refugee crises.³ With no clear end to the brutal civil war in sight, February 2017 saw even more tragedy when in February of that year the UN announced that the country was also experiencing a famine affecting 100,000 people, with another one million on the brink of starvation. The whole situation has resulted in the worse cross border refugee crises since the 1994 Rwandan Genocide.

Initially, the Rev Cole Maynard, DACG, deployed with a force of just over sixty personnel as part of an Engineering Task Force with the headquarters coming from 21 Engineers, Ripon; the sappers from 39 Engineers, Kinloss and 71 Engineers, a Scottish Reserve regiment, with the force protection element being supplied by 2 RIFLES based in Northern Ireland. From their arrival the main focus was on building Malakal Engineering Group (MEG) as the hub for the operation (Op TRENTON) so that from this Forward Operating Base (FOB) the taskforce could launch into Bentiu and establish the Bentiu Engineering Group (BEG) and the Role 2 hospital for the UN staff. Malakal POC (Protection of Civilians) camp housed around 35,000 refugees whilst Bentiu POC housed over 80,000. As part of TRENTON 2, February – July 17, the main task was to build the two British camps in both locations and the temporary hospital in Bentiu so that future deployments of British Engineers could improve both the UN infrastructure and then move out of the camps helping with wider engineering tasks. It was a very interesting deployment, harrowing at times and at the end of Cole's tour the Rev Nicola Frail (CS) deployed with 32 Engineers to continue with the mission. She presents the following short report to the Assembly:

'In July 2017, I deployed on Op TRENTON as chaplain to the UK Engineering Task Force that forms part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. For the past six months, I have been providing pastoral care to personnel as they undertake site work for a new hospital, repair culverts, and engage in other infrastructure improvements that it is hoped will better enable others to bring humanitarian assistance to the point of need.

The needs are unquestionably great in a country that has seen over 3.5 million people displaced from their homes since December 2013. Some live in United Nations protected camps. Two of these are in Malakal and Bentiu, where a majority of the UK Task Force is located. Working in an environment in which there is a jarring contrast between the relative comfort enjoyed by visiting nations and the neighbouring world of monthly food distribution to the local population has sparked many a conversation.

Working collaboratively with people from other countries is part and parcel of life here and I have been privileged to preach at a Rwandan church service, to bring a word of encouragement to local women at a prayer meeting for peace and to take part in the Ghanaian contingent's festival of lessons and carols. In so doing, I have experienced a sense of solidarity with Christians from other traditions and nations as we pray for lasting peace and prosperity in the world's youngest country.'

Rev Nicola Frail CF (CS)

The Rev Stephen Blakey is approaching his retirement as an Army Chaplain since commissioning in 1977 as a Regular before a return back to the parish and continuing his commission within the Army Reserves. He is currently the longest serving chaplain in the British Army:

'It was a great privilege in September 2017 when the Chaplain General, Revd Dr David Coulter CB QHC CF, came to Duns to preach on the 40th Anniversary of my Ordination and Commissioning as Minister and Army Chaplain. He opened his sermon by quoting from a reference the Rector of Madras College, St Andrews, had written in support of my application to join the Royal Army Chaplains Department in 1977. No one could have imagined that the journey which started back then would only now be drawing to a close.

Every chaplain has their story to tell. My own journey has taken me round the world in peace and on operations with five of our

historic Scottish Infantry Regiments as a Regular Chaplain, followed by over 20 years as a Reservist, Officiating and Cadet Chaplain. I have been honoured by the opportunity military chaplaincy has provided to me to minister to the men and women of our nation who have accepted the call to serve their Queen and country as soldiers of the Crown.

Service Chaplaincy provides a very special form of ministry, which allows clergy of the Kirk to draw close to those in uniform. There is a powerful incarnational dynamic of putting on the uniform. The minister becomes 'one of us' because he dresses like us, goes to the places we go to, eats the same food, endures similar discomforts and faces the same dangers.

The Kirk is the church for the people of Scotland, called by God to take the fullness of the Gospel to every corner of our nation. An important section of that nation is our military community - Regular, Reserve and Cadet, serving personnel and veterans, and their dependents - and I have enjoyed being allowed to be part of the team of chaplains who minister to these men and women.'

Rev Stephen Blakey CF (CS)

So as the above report details Church of Scotland ministers remain busy about the Lord's business around the world whilst also remaining continually grateful for the support and the prayers of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

List of Regular & Reserve army chaplains:

Rev Dr David Coulter, Chaplain-General, MOD Andover
Rev Dr James Francis, Staff Chaplain, MOD Andover
Rev Duncan Macpherson, Army Personnel Centre, Glasgow
Rev Michael Goodison, Leuchars Station, St Andrews
Rev Geoff Berry, Topcliffe Barracks, Thirsk
Rev Nicola Frail, Marne Barracks, Catterick
Rev Seoras Mackenzie, Kinloss Barracks, Forres
Rev Philip Patterson, Carver Barracks, Wimbish
Rev Richard Begg, Kiwi Barracks, Bulford
Rev Stewart Mackay, Fort George, Inverness
Rev Paul van Sittert, Bourlon Barracks, Catterick
Rev Alan Cobain, Battlesbury Barracks, Warminster
Rev Neil McLay, New Normandy Barracks, Aldershot
Rev Hector MacKenzie, Berechurch Hall Camp, Colchester
Rev Christopher Kellock, Royal Memorial Chapel, Camberley
Rev David Thom, Princess Royal Barracks, Deepcut

Rev David Anderson, Ward Barracks, Salisbury
Rev Daniel Connolly, Army Reserve
Rev Christopher Rowe, Army Reserve
Rev Rory MacLeod, Army Reserve
Rev Louis Kinsey, Army Reserve
Rev Stephen Blakey, Army Reserve

Footnotes: ¹ Britain, America and Denmark. ² See Hilde Johnson, *'South Sudan- the Untold Story'* (2016) Tauris. Johnson was the former Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG). ³ Uganda hosts 800,000 refugees. The Bidi Bidi Refugee Camp opened in August 2016 and by December had 260,000 refugees. It now has 270,000 and is the world's largest refugee camp. ⁴ The Indian army and Engineers all serve for twelve months.

Appendix 3

CHAPLAINCY IN THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

The past 12 months were described as "business as usual" for the Royal Air Force by Air Chief Marshall Sir Steven Hillier when he offered thanks to the Royal Air Force (RAF) whole force community in December 2017. However, delivering offensive airpower on operations against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, defending the skies over the United Kingdom, the Falklands Islands and our NATO allies, distributing short notice humanitarian disaster relief and demonstrating Britain's defensive capabilities by participating training exercises across the globe are the 'usual' he was referring to.

The Royal Air Force has a hard earned a reputation for delivering air and space power, and doing it well. This means that they continue to be trusted to deliver on operations safely and with financial prudence. The investment made in the RAF in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 is now starting to bear fruit enabling them to initiate growth. Preparations for the P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol aircraft to be based at RAF Lossiemouth are well underway. This will add to the RAF's intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) assets. The RAF is a world leader in ISTAR capability and is in constant demand.

In December 2017 the UK Reaper Force reached 10 years on coalition combat operations, during which it has flown over 100,000 hours. These aircraft operate alongside the Typhoon

Squadrons from RAF Lossiemouth and Coningsby and Tornado Squadrons from RAF Marham and were integral to the defeat of Daesh in Iraq. Also the announcement that the new Lightning II Sqn will be badged as 617 and based at RAF Marham and a joint RAF Qatari Typhoon Sqn will be badged as 12 Sqn and based at RAF Coningsby.

The RAF's heavy lift fleet, based at Brize Norton proved their worth again in 2017 when their C17, Voyager and A400M aircraft carried personnel, supplies and equipment to Islands in the Caribbean following the devastation caused by Hurricanes Irma and Maria. Royal Marines, engineers and specialist personnel from all three Services along with medical supplies and aid including emergency shelter kits, rations and clean water were flown out. At its height, over 2000 military personnel participated in this operation, over 400 of which were RAF Regulars and Reservists. This humanitarian operation showed how effective our forces are when they work together with a Tri-Service approach. Wing Commander Gareth Burdett who served on that operation said; "For many of us it was the proudest job we've ever done."

This year, 2018, the RAF celebrates its centenary. This provides an opportunity to commemorate past successes, celebrate who we are and what we do today, and look forward to the future by inspiring younger generations' successes. As they embark on a second century their aim is to be better prepared to continue to deliver at the highest levels with great success.

Church of Scotland chaplains to the Royal Air Force are vital servants to the people who make up the RAF community. The Chaplain-in-Chief maintains his intent that they be inspired and equipped to serve the whole RAF community through Prayer, Presence and Proclamation. Whilst retaining spiritual and denominational integrity 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 objective to: Deliver Integrated, Commissioned World Faith Chaplaincy saw fruition this year with the first Sikh commissioned chaplain being attested in the autumn.

Recruitment of Church of Scotland chaplains remains a concern with the number regular Royal Air Force Chaplains at an all-time low of two. However, we are pleased that Rev (Wg Cdr) Gordon Craig has taken up the opportunity to become a RAF Reservist chaplain.

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

Individual chaplains

Rev Sheila Munro

Sheila has completed another tour at RAF Lossiemouth as part of a team of 4 chaplains. She has been essential to the delivery of pastoral and spiritual support. In January 2018 she was detached for three months to RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire and will be permanently posted to that station in due course. This will be a digital post where she will have sole responsibility for chaplaincy to the community.

Rev Craig Lancaster

Craig finished his time at RAF Brize Norton this year and is currently deployed on his third operational tour ministering to personnel based at headquarters throughout the Middle East. On his return he will begin ministry at another RAF Station (however, at time of writing, that location is not yet known). Craig continues to be immensely grateful for the support and prayers of the Kirk and remains keenly aware of the enormous privilege of being able to share the Gospel hope among the family of the Royal Air Force.

Rev Philip Wilson (Presbyterian Church in Ireland)

Philip is into his fifth year of RAF Chaplaincy, and has been based at RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire since May 2016. This is

the home of the Intelligence Surveillance, Targeting and Reconnaissance Force, with a squadron of Remotely Piloted Air System aircraft 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