

VIII. ACT ANENT THE INSTITUTION OF KIRK SESSIONS IN SCOTTISH UNITS OF H.M. FORCES

Edinburgh, 21st May 1952, Session 3.

The General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, enact and ordain as follows, notwithstanding any other enactment to the contrary:-

1. Where members of the Church of Scotland serving in any embodied unit of Her Majesty's Forces desire authority for the constitution of a Services Kirk Session in their unit, they may apply to the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces requesting the Committee to take steps to that effect.

2. On receiving any such application, the Committee shall first satisfy itself –

- (i) that the unit in question comprises a sufficient number of persons who are or may desire to become members of the Church of Scotland;
- (ii) that a Services Kirk Session, if constituted in that unit, would have a reasonable prospect of continuing in existence for a material period; and
- (iii) that the application has the approval of the Church of Scotland chaplain concerned and of the commanding officer of the unit;

and, if satisfied of these matters, may take steps to authorise the constitution of a Services Kirk Session in the unit.

3. A Services Kirk Session shall consist of the Church of Scotland chaplain of the unit, failing which, of any other Church of Scotland chaplain, as Moderator, and also of not less than two duly ordained elders of the Church of Scotland who are members of the unit. Nothing herein contained shall prevent a Church of Scotland chaplain from acting as Moderator of more than one Services Kirk Session.

4. Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions, for the purpose of enabling a Services Kirk Session to be constituted in any unit of Her Majesty's Forces where there is available no, or only one, duly ordained elder of the Church of Scotland, the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces shall appoint as assessors not less than three duly ordained elders, and any of these elders may act along with the Church of Scotland chaplain of the unit, or failing which, any other Church of Scotland chaplain, and any elder in the unit, as an interim Services Kirk Session for that unit to enable the election, ordination, and admission to the eldership of a sufficient number of members of the Church of Scotland in the unit to constitute a Services Kirk Session as provided for by Section 3; and, in any such case, the ordination and admission of the said elders shall be conducted by such chaplain with any available elders in the unit, after approval of the election has been given by the said assessors as well as by the said chaplain and any available elders in the unit.

5. Before any Services Kirk Session, or interim Services Kirk Session, is constituted, it shall first be authorised by the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces.

6. A Services Kirk Session may itself elect further elders when an addition to its numbers is considered necessary. Any elder so elected shall be a member of the Church of Scotland and also a member of the unit.

7. The ordination and admission of an elder to office in Services Kirk Session shall take place at a diet of public worship.

8. Intimation by edict in common form of the election of any person as elder by Services Kirk Session or Interim Services Kirk Session shall not be necessary, but it shall be the duty of any chaplain, before ordaining or admitting any such person to office as elder in such Kirk Session, to take all steps reasonable and practicable in the circumstances to be satisfied that no objection exists to such person's life or doctrine, and, in discharging this duty, the chaplain shall consult with any available elder.

9. Each Services Kirk Session shall be associated with a Presbytery of the Church of Scotland. Where the unit has a depot in Scotland the Services Kirk Session of that unit may elect to be placed on the roll of the Presbytery of the bounds. In other cases, the Services Kirk Session shall be placed on the roll of the Presbytery of Edinburgh.

10. The placing of a Services Kirk Session on the roll of a particular Presbytery shall not affect the existing membership of Presbytery of any chaplain to Her Majesty's Forces.

11. The Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces shall keep a Register of Services Kirk Sessions authorised by the Committee.

12. The Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces shall report each year to the General Assembly on the state of its Register of Services Kirk Sessions.