

## GENERAL SYNOD

### **The Church and the Armed Forces Covenant** **A report by the Mission and Public Affairs Council**

#### **Executive Summary**

1. Important changes taking place in the way Britain's Armed Forces are configured will see members of the Armed Forces more squarely rooted in the local community. This move will mean that the provision of pastoral and spiritual care to the Armed Forces Community becomes a shared responsibility involving both the Chaplains (lay and ordained) to the Armed Forces and the wider Church.<sup>1</sup> Set against the backdrop of British troops returning from Afghanistan and the centennial commemorations to mark the outbreak of World War One, this Report shows how the Armed Forces Covenant scheme offers a helpful opportunity for the Church to respond to the wider reforms affecting the Armed Forces and the welfare and spiritual needs of a new generation of veterans.

#### **Introduction**

2. This report looks at the current relationship between the Church of England and the Armed Forces Community. It explores how this relationship needs to be adjusted to respond to a new generation of veterans as well as wider transformations affecting the Armed Forces Community. It looks again at the Armed Forces Covenant and suggests ways in which the Church 'outside the wire' might complement and support the incarnational ministry of lay and ordained chaplains to the Armed Forces by living out this Covenant in a way that is meaningful and sustainable.
3. Responding faithfully to the spiritual and pastoral needs of the Armed Forces Community is not about the Church providing preferential treatment to one particular section of society. Rather, it is about how the Church builds inclusive communities and combats marginalization and disadvantage. It is about drawing out and reaffirming the national narrative of the social and common good and the Church's role in meeting the needs of those the State cannot adequately reach alone, in this case the Armed Forces Community. It is about acknowledging that even when there is controversy about whether a particular war or conflict is just, those who serve in the Armed Forces and have had no say in the political decision to use military force, need the Church's spiritual support, pastoral care and moral guidance. This report argues that the Armed Forces Covenant provides a unique mechanism for the Church to do just that.
4. To honour those who have given their lives in the service of their country and to protect those who have suffered life changing injuries is not to glorify war. The use of armed force, even when justifiable in certain limited circumstances, has its roots in human sinfulness and is a visible sign of the brokenness of human relationship in our fallen world. The decision to use military force needs at all times to be taken by a competent authority with the right motives and only as a last resort when all reasonable avenues of averting conflict have been exhausted. It must only be undertaken when there is a reasonable chance of success. The use of military force needs to be proportionate to the

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry of Defence defines the Armed Forces Community as those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families.

state of affairs it attempts to realise. It should never be excessive to the measure of peace it can reasonably hope to achieve.

## **Future Challenges**

5. The Armed Forces Community is facing significant challenges that will test the resilience of existing Church of England structures and practices of providing pastoral support.<sup>2</sup> Most importantly, the Church needs to understand the pastoral and welfare support needs for a new generation of veterans. Changes in the Armed Forces employment model and the move towards greater reliance on reservists will also see members of the Armed Forces more rooted and integrated in the communities in which they are located.

### *Supporting and caring for a new generation of veterans*

6. The withdrawal of troops from Iraq in 2011 and the continued drawdown of forces in Afghanistan have been hailed as an end, or at least the beginning of an end, to recent British involvement in wars in the Middle East. Yet the costs and consequences of the conflict continue to accumulate, both at home and abroad. Even as Britain's active military engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan winds down, veterans and their families are starting to come to terms with the changes the experience of war has brought to their lives. To put things in context and to underline the ugliness of war it is important to remember the conflict in Afghanistan alone has seen over 2,000 British servicepersons injured in action of which 607 were classified as being very seriously wounded or seriously wounded. 240 British armed forces personnel have been given amputations since the war in Afghanistan began in earnest in 2006.
7. The complications and costs of veterans' health problems increase with age. Based on data from previous wars, annual expenditures on Britain's obligations to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are expected to climb until peaking thirty to forty years after the fighting ends. Trailing expenses for these wars may actually be greater than for previous conflicts, because recently returned soldiers are accessing medical services and disability benefits at higher rates than veterans of earlier wars. As new medical and military technologies have steadily increased wartime survival rates, seriously injured soldiers who previously would have died on the battlefield now have a chance to make it home, though many go on to face a lifetime of challenges.
8. Beyond the physical scars of war, veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are also reporting higher rates of mental health issues and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than veterans of previous wars. Some of this increase is due to more widespread awareness of the 'unseen wounds' of war and a greater willingness on the part of soldiers to seek treatment. The intense stress of service in the recent conflicts is also a contributing factor with many Armed Forces personnel serving multiple, extended tours of duty. The lack of clear 'front-lines' in the conflicts and the assignment of less stressful support tasks (which once served as a relief break for soldiers) to private contractors means Armed Forces personnel have been exposed to nearly constant stress.
9. Qualitative research undertaken by the Royal British Legion in 2010 as to the needs of the ex-service community in Britain and the hardships they face makes for stark

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix 1 of this report sets out existing practice.

reading. The most common health problems identified in their research include depression, anxiety, stress, physical limitations, cognitive impairment and pain. Many face financial hardships including lack of employment and difficulties accessing benefits. Common social problems include loneliness, adjusting to civilian life, social isolation and difficulties with new or existing relationships.

10. A 2011 report by the think tank ResPublica, entitled *Holistic Missions: Social Action and the Church of England*, paints a picture of a Church which is present in every community, town, village and city and embedded in its localities. It is a Church which baptises, marries and buries a significant proportion of the population, educates some 1 million children in church schools and serves the poor, the homeless, the lonely, the hungry and the distressed in often unnoticed but crucial ways. Despite the reach of the Church's social action work it is far from certain whether there is a wide awareness or understanding within the Church of the specific needs of this new generation of veterans.

#### *The New Employment Model for service personnel*

11. In early 2012, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) began work on the New Employment Model (NEM) looking at how Armed Forces personnel are employed. This is the most thorough review of service personnel terms and conditions of service (career structures, pay, accommodation, training, etc.) in a generation. It will be introduced no later than April 2015, although certain components of it are already coming on stream.
12. Amongst other things, the NEM is being designed to address the personal, social and domestic impacts of service, both now and in the future, so that the MoD can recruit and retain personnel of the right quality. One element of this work is the Future Accommodation Project which looks at how accommodation will be provided to Armed Forces personnel and their families.
13. Providing conditions for regular service personnel that support their domestic stability and supports partners' employment is an important part of this process as is the need for a long term accommodation strategy that supports increased levels of home ownership. The Future Accommodation Project seeks to balance the desire of families for greater geographical stability with the Services' need for mobility.
14. Changes to the Armed Forces career structure will deliberately make some personnel less mobile. The Army is, and is likely to remain, mobile although not to the same degree as in recent years. The RAF is less so and the Royal Navy and Royal Marines will soon be reduced to just three substantial bases and port areas
15. The New Employment Model and the Future Accommodation Project will over time see the Armed Forces more firmly rooted in the community where they are located. It is from this community location that members of the Armed Forces will be mobilised, often at short notice, for operations overseas. A more static but operationally mobile Armed Forces will – as shown with the Army 'supergarrison' of Catterick – enable members of the Armed Forces to buy their own homes and become stakeholders in the communities in which they and their families live.
16. Armed Forces that are more integrated into community life rather than living on base 'behind the wire' will throw up new challenges and opportunities. Chaplains to the

Armed Forces will continue to be the main point of contact between the Church and Armed Forces personnel and their families, but they will not be the only point of contact.

17. Many within the wider Church may be unaware of the spiritual support and pastoral care required by the Armed Forces Community. In the past, providing spiritual and pastoral support to the Armed Forces Community has tended to be seen as the responsibility of the Chaplains, lay and ordained, to the Armed Forces. Soldiering is a unique activity unlike any other employment practice. Soldiering does not fit easily into the Church's existing parish practices or even its understanding of industrial mission.
18. When Armed Forces personnel are deployed, often at short notice, they leave behind family members living with separation and the fear of the knock on the door with bad news. They may often lack the empathy of their neighbours. Churches 'beyond the wire' need to understand and address these complex needs if they are to be in a position to work alongside the Chaplains to the Armed Forces to provide long term pastoral care to military families, many of whom experience isolation at times of deployment.

#### *A greater reliance on Reservists*

19. On 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012 the Government published its long-awaited Green Paper, *Future Reserves 2020: Delivering the Nation's Security Together*. Set in a broader context, the Green Paper represents a crucially important step, particularly for the Army, in realising its 'Army 2020' future structure that integrates a reduced Army of 82,000 regulars with 30,000 trained reservists (formerly the Territorial Army) into one 'Whole Force'. The proposals will also affect the Maritime Reserve and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. Both will be used to provide greater strength and depth to the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.
20. The Green Paper recognises that the provision of welfare, health and family support to Reservists needs development. Currently the Services aim to provide 28 days notice prior to the date when the Reservist is required to report for duty. At the end of the tour, the Reservist returns to the Mobilisation Centre, where they undergo debriefing and medical checks. Once the Reservist has been demobilised, they are sent on post-operational tour leave of up to 40 days. After post-operational tour leave, the Reservist is no longer in full-time service and returns to their civilian role. The MoD aims to provide demobilised Reservists with the same level of support that is offered to regular service personnel returning from operational tours, including access to counselling services.
21. These proposals are not without their critics. When the proposals were first floated in the October 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the Mission and Public Affairs Council expressed concern that the speed and scale of the cuts envisaged were unrealistic. In December 2012 the Archbishop of York described the reductions already announced as 'savage' and warned that reducing the size of the regular Army and filling the gap with Reservists could imperil the "safety of the nation and the peace of the world."
22. Despite these long standing concerns the increased reliance on Reservists, individuals who frequently traverse the boundary between civilian and military life, poses new challenges to the Church, in terms of pastoral care of military parishioners and even

more acutely if the Parish Priest is a Reservist. From a pastoral perspective, regular Reservists, like their Territorial Army predecessors, will be accompanied by Chaplains who may or may not have been mobilized on operational duty at the same time, but it is evident that they and their families will also need the pastoral support of the parish in which they are based.

23. Since Reservists and their families are geographically dispersed they and their families face specific support needs. As with the regular Armed Forces, Reservists will see isolated families in civilian communities facing the anxieties of separation, possibly without the full support of the military family on their doorstep. The speed with which these changes are being enacted means that the Church has yet to reflect on how the changes might necessitate new styles of ministry and community outreach.

#### *Responding to the challenges: cross-cutting issues*

24. Whatever the advantages and disadvantages of specific Government policies, the reshaping of the Armed Forces will result in many more full-time service personnel and Reservists being embedded in the wider civilian community than at any time since the end of National Service. This development needs to be acknowledged by the Church if it is to help provide pastoral support to existing and future generations of Armed Forces personnel as well as their families. Allied to these changes, the Church needs to recognise that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a new generation of Veterans with specific welfare needs that need to be addressed.
25. These developments pose challenges to both parishes and chaplaincy. Traditional chaplaincy approaches need to be re-examined and delivered differently. Churches need to be alert to these changes and adapt their own practices accordingly. The Diocese of Portsmouth and the Royal Navy, for instance, have begun a series of training days to introduce clergy to the challenges faced by Service personnel and families living in their parishes. This is a welcome step and there needs to be even more liaison between parishes, deaneries and local Armed Forces chaplains in order to provide linked and effective pastoral care to the Armed Forces Community.

#### **The Armed Forces Covenant**

26. The Armed Forces Covenant was set out in the Armed Forces Act of 2011. It details the relationship between the Nation, the State and the Armed Forces. It recognises that the whole Nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families and establishes how they should expect to be treated. It exists to build inclusive communities by redressing the disadvantages that members of the Armed Forces Community might face and by recognising the sacrifices that they have made.
27. Across the country at the local level, 'Community Covenants' are being signed bringing military and civilian communities together. Community Covenants were initially supported by a £30 million Grant Scheme to support local activities promoting greater understanding between military and civilian populations. In 2012 the Chancellor announced that £35 million of LIBOR fines would be allocated to good causes in support of the Armed Forces community, with an additional £40 million announced in 2014 to support veterans' accommodation projects. Funding for the Armed Forces Covenant has been made permanent, with £10 million a year allocated in perpetuity from 2015-16.

28. All local authorities are being invited to sign up to the Community Covenant scheme. The scheme provides an opportunity to honour the Armed Forces Covenant and to bring its principles to life locally. Alongside Community Covenants the Government also launched the Corporate Covenant. The Corporate Covenant encourages a closer relationship between businesses and charitable organisations and the Armed Forces Community.
29. The Armed Forces Covenant, Corporate Covenants, Community Covenants and the Grant Scheme provide a helpful and flexible framework through which the Church at all its levels can show solidarity with the Armed Forces Community. The Grant Scheme provides innovative funding opportunities for related community and social action projects organised by dioceses and parishes.

### *Corporate Covenants*

30. A Corporate Covenant is a written and publicised voluntary pledge from businesses and charitable organisations who wish to demonstrate their support for the Armed Forces Community. It has been designed to complement the Armed Forces Covenant and sits alongside the Community Covenant scheme. Corporate Covenants include a core statement of commitment which covers the two key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:
  - 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.
31. Interested organisations and charitable bodies are encouraged to offer support in ways most appropriate to their situation and capacity. A Corporate Covenant can be adopted by a business or charitable organisation of any size, and from any industry, whether they are an employer of a member of the Armed Forces Community or simply wish to acknowledge publicly their support for the Armed Forces. Further information about the Corporate Covenant can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/fulfilling-the-commitments-of-the-armed-forces-covenant>

### *Community Covenants*

32. Community Covenants are voluntary commitments of mutual support between civilian and Armed Forces communities. A Community Covenant is usually signed by the local Armed Forces and Local/Unitary Authorities, but it may also additionally be signed by charities, volunteer groups and other parties in the local community, such as churches and faith groups, keen to support the principles of the Community Covenant. Community Covenants are intended to complement, at a local level, the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligations between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces. Community Covenants aim to:
  - encourage local communities to support the Armed Forces Community in their areas;

- nurture public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the Armed Forces Community;
  - recognise and remember the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community;
  - encourage activities which help to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local life; and
  - encourage the Armed Forces Community to help and support the wider community, whether through participating in events and joint projects, or other forms of engagement.
33. Over 250 Local Authorities (LA) have so far signed up to the scheme and some are taking a very innovative approach to supporting their Armed Forces populations. Most LA's have a dedicated page for the Armed Forces Community on their websites which provide details of how community stakeholders, including churches can support the AFCC. Generally each LA who has signed the AFCC will have a regular meeting of Partners to consider actions within the Covenant. These partnership meetings will be open to all those who have signed the Covenant pledge, including churches and faith groups. The draft Community Covenant document and some guidance notes from the MoD can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-covenant-pledge>

#### *The Community Covenant Grant Scheme*

34. LAs (and local groups within those authorities) that sign up to the Community Covenant Scheme can bid for grant funding (£100 - £250,000) for projects that deliver tangible results that meet the overall aims of the scheme. The scheme is open to churches and faith groups. Some of the Church projects funded to date include:
- £4,983 for Reaching Out Through Messy Church in Temple Herdewyke - a project run by the Dasset Magna Group of Churches in Warwickshire that provides regular opportunities for Armed Forces families and civilian families to participate together in events for the whole community so leading to better public awareness of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
  - £45,000 for the redevelopment of the entrance to the Church of St John the Evangelist Carterton in the Diocese of Oxford so assisting those with disabilities to access the main Church building. Those who have died in Afghanistan and other theatres of war are repatriated through RAF Brize Norton which is mostly in the Parish of Carterton.
  - £79,000 for floodlighting for a multi-play area and the building for an out of school club at Brompton-on-Swale CE Primary School that provides local community services to the Catterick Garrison.
35. Further information on the Community Covenant Grant Scheme can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/armed-forces-community-covenant-grant-scheme>

#### *The Church and the Armed Forces Covenant*

36. The Armed Forces Covenant and its subsidiary Community Covenants and supporting Grant Scheme provide a framework for the Church of England at all its levels to help

build inclusive communities that in turn strengthen the relationship between the Nation, the State and the Armed Forces. Unfortunately, awareness across the Church of the Armed Forces Covenant is patchy with the result that the Church is in danger of overlooking an important mission responsibility and opportunity.

37. In order to act as catalyst for wider Church action, the Mission and Public Affairs Council recommends that the Archbishops' Council draws up and signs an Armed Forces Corporate Covenant. The principles of the Corporate Covenant are consistent with the Church's own mission to combat disadvantage and marginalisation. The Armed Forces Corporate Covenant is not a legal or social contract that sets out the rights of individuals. Rather, signatories to the Covenant set out ways in which they can help reaffirm the national narrative of the social and common good.
38. It is not necessary for the General Synod to agree the exact terms of any Corporate Covenant - that is a task for the Archbishops' Council. When drawing up this Corporate Covenant the Archbishops' Council should think carefully about how it could uphold the Covenant's key principles. The Mission and Public Affairs Council recommends that the Covenant might include amongst other things commitments to:
  - Value and affirm the work of the chaplains to the Armed Forces;
  - Recognise and remember the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community on Remembrance Sunday and through appropriate liturgical material;
  - Ensure that those who work in relevant areas of Church ministry are alert to the specific needs of veterans young and old;
  - Ensure that wherever possible our buildings and facilities are accessible to all in the Armed Forces Community especially veterans with disabilities;
  - Support NCI employees who choose to be members of the Reserve Forces, including by accommodating their training and deployment where possible.<sup>3</sup>
39. These commitments should be refreshed on a regular basis to ensure that they remain relevant for the Armed Forces Community in the years ahead.
40. Working within the framework provided by the Corporate Covenant, dioceses should reflect on the Armed Forces Covenant and consider signing a Community Covenant or take steps to participate in partnership schemes organised by Local Authorities. Such steps would enable each diocese to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by the Armed Forces Community and help nurture awareness within the diocese of current issues affecting the Armed Forces Community.
41. This approach would enable each diocese to look again at its mission work and to take the necessary steps to integrate the Armed Forces Community into local Church life. It would provide the opportunity to develop new community partnerships both with the Armed Forces Community, but also with LAs and other service providers as well as other religious and charitable bodies.
42. There is no one size fits all approach to Community Covenants. How a diocese approaches the scheme will depend in no small part on how large the Armed Forces presence is locally. A diocese with a large serving or veteran presence will already be

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<sup>3</sup> Many of the commitments expressed here are already ones that the National Church Institutions seeks to uphold. Para 2.27 of the NCI employee handbook states that "if you are a member of the Reserve Forces or Territorial Army, your Head of Department may grant Special Leave with pay for periods of training."



doing a lot of work with their Armed Forces contacts, so signing up to the Community Covenant Scheme might be the natural next step. Dioceses with a smaller Armed Forces population may also want to reflect on the merits of the scheme. The serving and ex-service community in the UK comprises over 9 million people so the scheme is likely to be of relevance to all dioceses.

43. It does not follow that all dioceses should sign Community Covenants. A diocese might decide for a variety of reasons to support their Local Authority by nominating a representative to attend the Covenant partnership meetings that are open to churches and faith groups. Regardless of the starting point, dioceses should involve the Armed Forces from an early stage in any work around the Community Covenant scheme. This will help to ensure that the work focuses on the most appropriate areas of concern.
44. As well as the Armed Forces themselves, charities working with the Armed Forces Community can also be very useful in the process. The main charities who work with the Armed Forces, their families, Reservists and Veterans include: The Naval Families Federation; The Army Families Federation; The Royal Air Force Families Federation; The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund; Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces Help (SSAFA); The Royal British Legion; Help for Heroes; ABF The soldiers Charity; Seafarers UK; Combat Stress and Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund (RMCTF). This is a far from exhaustive list. There are a multitude of organisations working in this area.
45. Taken together, the Corporate Covenant and the Community Covenant(s) would provide encouragement to parishes and Church institutions and voluntary bodies to apply for funding under the Covenant Grant Scheme for projects that deliver tangible results that meet the overall aims of the scheme.
46. To help support the steps taken by dioceses and parishes, the Mission and Public Affairs Division could support the efforts of the Chaplains to the Armed Forces in providing suitable training opportunities to raise awareness as to the specific issues facing the Armed Forces Community and the opportunities provided by the Armed Forces Covenant, Community Covenant and Grant Scheme. If these proposals are agreed the Mission and Public Affairs Council will report to Synod in the next Quinquennium on the implementation of these recommendations and any lessons and/or models of best practice that could usefully be shared more widely.

## **Conclusions**

1. To honour those who have given their lives in the service of their country and to protect those who have suffered life changing injuries is not to glorify war. The use of armed force, even when justifiable in certain circumstances, has its roots in human sinfulness and is a visible sign of the brokenness of human relationship in our fallen world.
2. The Church must be alert to the current welfare needs of veterans and their families from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and make adequate provision to ensure that their specific pastoral needs are met both now and in the future.

3. With the boundaries between civilian and military life set to become ever more porous, the task of providing pastoral and spiritual care for the Armed Forces Community needs to become a responsibility for the wider Church, not just its chaplains to the Armed Forces.
4. The Armed Forces Covenant and its subsidiary Community Covenants and supporting Grant Scheme provides a framework for the Church at all its levels to help strengthen the relationship between the Nation, the State and the Armed Forces. Unfortunately, awareness of the Armed Forces Covenant is at present patchy across the Church with the result that the Church is overlooking an important mission opportunity.

### **Recommendations**

- a. In order to act as a catalyst for wider Church action, the Archbishops' Council should sign a Corporate Armed Forces Covenant acknowledging publicly their pastoral and spiritual support for the Armed Forces Community.
- b. Working within the framework provided by the Corporate Covenant, dioceses should reflect on the Armed Forces Covenant and where necessary and appropriate sign a Community Covenant or take steps to participate in partnership schemes organised by Local Authorities.
- c. To help support the efforts of dioceses and parishes, the Mission and Public Affairs Division should support the efforts of the Chaplains to the Armed Forces in providing suitable training opportunities to help raise awareness of the specific pastoral and spiritual issues facing the Armed Forces Community and the opportunities provided by the Armed Forces Covenant, Community Covenant and Grant Scheme.<sup>4</sup>
- d. Through the Mission and Public Affairs Council the Archbishops' Council should report to Synod in the next Quinquennium on the implementation of these recommendations and any lessons and/or models of best practice that could usefully be shared more widely.

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<sup>4</sup> The human resources and financial cost of this commitment is difficult to calculate with any degree of precision, but it is anticipated that the cost will be minimum since the MPA Division will play a supportive rather than lead role. Costs might include the provision of meeting rooms at Church House, the mailing of resources out to various networks and assistance with organising occasional meetings. These commitments can be met within existing work plans and budget.

### Current Practice: Chaplains to Her Majesty's Armed Forces

1. For centuries the Chaplains, lay and ordained, have ministered to the Royal Navy, Army and the Royal Air Force in times of peace and war.<sup>5</sup> The last two decades have perhaps been the busiest for Military Chaplains since World War II. Chaplains are at the very heart of their community, responsible for the spiritual welfare of all, irrespective of rank or religious background. Chaplains are recruited from the main denominations, and their ministry of prayer, presence, and proclamation is lived out daily on bases and garrisons and ships at home, overseas and in areas of conflict.<sup>6</sup> Chaplains of the Royal Navy, the Royal Army Chaplains' Department, and the Royal Air Force may wear different uniforms, have different traditions, minister in three very different cultures with their own unique ethos, but they do so from the same calling as Priests and Ministers of the Gospel proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ.

#### *Church of England chaplains*

2. Church of England priests serving within the Armed Forces do so under the licence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, who exercises Episcopal oversight through the Bishop to the Forces. The Archbishop also appoints a senior priest to be Archdeacon for each service. These appointments are usually held in addition to a senior chaplaincy position. Currently the Venerable Ian Wheatly is Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, the Venerable Peter Eagles is about to become Deputy Chaplain General for the Army and the Venerable Ray Pentland is Chaplain in Chief for the Royal Air Force.
3. Church of England priests are required to have completed a minimum of two years in priests' orders, need to be aged between 26 and 49, be physically fit and be eligible to join the services as a regular Chaplain. In exceptional circumstances the upper age can be extended. Parish priests can also serve in the Reserve Forces of the three services in a part-time uniformed capacity. Many more civilian clergy offer a few hours a week as Officiating Chaplains to the Military. Regular, Reserve and Officiating Chaplains are entirely funded by the Ministry of Defence.
4. The recruitment process is slightly different for the three Services although the principles are the same, in that a Priest or Minister who applies must be recommended by their ordaining Church. After a series of interviews including vocational discernment, and attendance at a military selection board, successful candidates attend the Military College of their service, Dartmouth, Sandhurst or Cranwell before beginning their new ministry.

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<sup>5</sup> The Church Army helpfully documents the role that lay Chaplains have played and continued to play in administering to the needs of those in the Armed Forces. See <http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/ww1> and <http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/pub/nc/News/News2013/20130806navybaptisms.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> In November 2005 the Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon John Reid, appointed 4 non-Christian chaplains to provide for the pastoral and spiritual needs of Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists and Muslims serving in the Armed Forces. This was in addition to an existing arrangement for a Jewish chaplain. Unlike Christian padres who are commissioned officers, these chaplains to the military are civilians.

### *Ministry on the front line*

5. Far from “building up the indomitable spirit of the army”, as Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig said in 1919, the role of the Armed Forces Chaplain is to offer spiritual support and pastoral care to members of the Armed Forces, regardless of whether the Chaplain or the Chaplain’s sending Church, believes the war to be morally right. Chaplains bring the Gospel message of God’s love to some of the world’s darkest situations. Chaplains from all three Services minister wherever British servicepersons are located. The focus has been on Afghanistan and Iraq over the last ten years, but they have also been deployed across the globe in the many less known environments as sailors, marines, soldiers and air personnel. This can mean personal sacrifice - physically, spiritually and mentally - as the military seeks to serve the demands of the Nation, often far from home and in places of danger (although chaplains never bear arms even in areas of conflict). Chaplain’s families too face the cost of separation and the sacrifice of such service.
6. Chaplains are central to the education and training of the military community at all levels. Offering a moral and ethical insight to the everyday challenge of life from a Christian perspective is a highly privileged role. This may take place in a classroom with new entrant recruits, or in a command bunker in an operational environment or in the highest offices of the Ministry of Defence. It may be in a pastoral situation or it could be offering a prophetic voice within a leadership situation. Chaplains are encouraged and expected to be that Christian presence in every situation.

### *Church life*

7. Fresh Expressions has been the military experience for generations. Worship may take place in the great Cathedrals of our Nation, a tent in Afghanistan, a porta-cabin in the Falklands, a compartment in a ship or a chapel set aside for the purpose on a garrison. There are Alpha and Emmaus courses, Bible Studies and marriage courses. Service personnel seek out Church for the same reasons as most people, but just occasionally it may be in the most trying of circumstances, and when that happens they expect the Chaplain to be there with them.
8. Like any worshipping community in mission people are baptised, confirmed, grow in faith, and some find a vocation to the priesthood, many of whom are now serving in parishes. Among a significant number of former personnel from the three Armed Forces in theological training, one theological college has an RN and an RAF ordinand - both former General Synod Members - among their number. There is a rich experience and history of Chaplains working in ecumenical teams while maintaining the integrity of their Sending Church which speaks to the Armed Forces Community as a whole.

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