

## 16. Methodist Forces Board

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1. The centenary of the outbreak of WW1 is a reminder to the Methodist Forces Board of the moment when its predecessor, the Wesleyan Royal Navy and Army Board regularised the Church's relations with the Armed Services and we moved toward embedded commissioned chaplains which continues to this day.
2. Our complement of chaplains has remained stable (Total 29 chaplains: 7 Royal Navy; 12 Army; 10 Royal Air Force). Since the last Conference, we have seen three chaplains retire from the Services. In this year all three retirees were from the RAF: Matthew Olanrewaju, Roger Hardman and Alastair Bissell who in his final period was Principal Chaplain (Church of Scotland and Free Churches) as well as being Principal of Amport House. During the same period we have seen the successful recruitment of three chaplains: Mark Noakes for the Royal Navy and Darren Middleton for the Army; also for the Army, Robert Birnie, a presbyter of the Nazarene Church in Northern Ireland who will serve as a Chaplain who is Recognised and Regarded as a Methodist presbyter admitted into Full Connexion.
3. The Secretary and the Chair were delighted to accompany the President on the annual visit to the Forces which this year was to the RAF. We welcomed the Revd Ruth Gee at RAF Brize Norton and also at Headquarters Air Command RAF High Wycombe where the Chaplain in Chief held a dinner in the President's honour. We were also glad to welcome the President to the Methodist Tri-service Forces Chaplains Conference at Amport House in February. We were also joined for this conference by the Revd Dr Heather Morris, President of the Methodist Church in Ireland. With the title *What is God doing?* the conference explored the role and task of military chaplaincy in the context of contemporary culture and the contemporary church. Speakers included Paul Griffiths from the Ugly Duckling Company and Terry Hogg, the leader of the Coracle Community in Belfast.
4. The Forces Board wishes to thank the Aldershot Methodist Military Trust for their excellent financial provision. In particular, this has allowed the Board to fund a range of projects including a children and youth work project within the Aldershot garrison town and remarkably supported by North Camp Methodist Church. The Board also sustains two workers at the Haven Project at HMS SULTAN in Gosport and has just recruited a pastoral worker to support the chaplaincy at the Tri-service Permanent Joint Head Quarters (PJHQ) in Northwood which fits well with our portfolio of activities.
5. The Board has been able to support a number of small grants to chaplains for activities within the Forces communities this year. One such grant was used to purchase copies of *Singing the Faith* for use in Camp Bastion. With the withdrawal of Forces from that base we have been delighted that those resources have been repatriated and will now be available for all chaplains at Amport House, the Tri-Services Chaplaincy Training Centre.
6. We are particularly glad to welcome to the Conference the Chaplain of the Fleet (RN), the Chaplain General (Army), and the Chaplain in Chief (RAF) – heads of chaplaincy for the three services. We have been very well supported through a very creative period under their leadership and wish to convey to them and record our profound thanks.
7. The Board wishes to extend to the Conference its thanks for the prayerful support given to all our chaplains and encourage anyone who would like to know more about Forces Chaplaincy to speak to members of the Board.

8. The Board is grateful for the ongoing diligence and commitment of its Secretary to the ministries of the chaplains and the Board.
9. Members of the Methodist Forces Board for 2014/15 will be: the Revds David Barrett, Scott Brown, Janice Honey Morgan, Jean Quick, Jonny Wylie, Mr Ian Davies, Lieut Colonel Jeremy Drage, Mr Peter Green, Col Philip Harrison, Lt Cdr (retd) Shirley Hewitt, Mrs Liesel Parkinson, Mr Mark Powell, Mr Doug Swanney (Chair), Lt Cdr (retd) Matthew Thomas, the Revd Robert L Jones (Secretary and convener).

**\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**16/1. The Conference received the Report.**