Foreword

The Reverend Peter Mills
QHC BD CPS RAF
Chaplain-in-Chief

The last 90 years have seen amazing advances in aeronautical design and technology. From fragile aircraft of wood and canvas to the world leading technology of the Typhoon. Today’s Mission Statement aims for a Royal Air Force that is agile, adaptable and capable, and in order to make that a reality a process of transformation is underway that will maintain its relevance for the next decade and beyond. In all the changes, however, some things remain the same. The God in whom we trust is the same yesterday, today and forever and is the Rock upon whom we can build with confidence. The fundamental ministry of chaplaincy is another constant. Little has really changed since the first chaplains donned a Royal Air Force uniform in 1918. We still have a 3 fold ministry: priestly, prophetic and pastoral.

Chaplains who have left the Branch are often surprised at how quickly they lose their currency. The Branch they see today is very different from the one in which they served. However, if they were to look a little more closely they would find a familiar pattern and a mission that continues to reach back to that of Jesus himself. The structures and the framework may be different but the fundamental need of people has not changed in 90 years. Nor are chaplains at the sharp end particularly phased by all the changes or even interested in what goes on within places like Air Command. They just get on with the job, serving God and the people of the Royal Air Force. That they are able to do this is attributable to 2 things. The first is the unchanging Gospel with which they are entrusted and the second is the foundation that has been laid within the Royal Air Force by successive generations of chaplains who have been faithful to their calling.

Today we look back over 90 years of Branch history and it is fitting that we remember the service and sacrifice of so many chaplains. But we also pay tribute to the current generation who carry the chaplaincy baton today. The pastoral ministry alone that they discharge day after day, on operations or in support of operations, makes them worthy successors of a very fine heritage and I am indeed privileged to be their current Chaplain-in-Chief. Finally, we look forward to the next generation, confident that those who wait for the Lord will inevitably mount up with wings like eagles.
This has been a very significant year in the history of the Royal Air Force, as we celebrated our 90th Anniversary. The early use of aircraft during the Great War highlighted the momentous impact that air power would have on the nature of warfare. In order to capitalize on the huge potential offered by this new capability, the Royal Air Force - the world’s first independent air force – was created on 1 April 1918. Within a few weeks, our founding fathers had the foresight to appoint The Reverend H D L Veiner to establish a Chaplains Department for the Royal Air Force in May 1918.

Over the next 90 years, air power has very convincingly demonstrated the essential role it plays in delivering military success – whether over the skies of Southeast England during the Battle of Britain, delivering food to the beleaguered population of Berlin during the Berlin Airlift, maintaining a deterrent force during the Cold War, or supporting current coalition operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. To have come so far – from wood and fabric biplanes to high-tech, high performance multirole jet fighters – in such a short time is a tribute to the wisdom and vision of many distinguished individuals, but none more so than Lord Trenchard, the founder of the Royal Air Force.

In the midst of the immense changes experienced over 90 years, Chaplains have served with a sense of purpose to bring a unique dimension to our community, enriching the spiritual life and supporting the welfare of our people. Although cutting-edge equipment is a key component of the Royal Air Force’s capability, our people are at the heart of our Service and we are fortunate today to have highly motivated and extremely well trained servicemen and women on the frontline, all of whom are able to cope with the demanding and complex tasks they have to undertake. Many are grateful for the presence of a Chaplain in training establishments or on a deployed unit, at home, or in Iraq or Afghanistan.

In this, our 90th Anniversary year, we can look back with considerable pride on the achievements of our predecessors, whilst at the same time looking towards a future in which air power will play an ever more important role in world security. The Service has a proud heritage and reputation for excellence, which shines through today’s frontline. Thank you, past and present Chaplains of the Royal Air Force.
Former Chaplains-in-Chief

Reverend R E V Hanson
OBE MA KHC
1926 – 1930

Reverend J R Walkey
CBE MA KHC
1933 - 1940

Reverend J R Walkey
CBE MA KHC
1933 - 1940

The Venerable L S Giles
CB CBE QHC MA
1953 – 1959

The Venerable L J Ashton
CB QHC
1969 - 1973

The Venerable W E G Payton
CB QHC MA
1965 - 1969

The Venerable H J Stuart
CB QHC MA
1980 – 1983

The Venerable B H Lucas
CB QHC BA FRSA
1991 - 1995

The Venerable R D Hesketh
CB QHC BA DPS FRGS RAF
2001 - 2006

Reverend S L Clarke
MA BSc KHC
1930 – 1933

The Venerable F W Cocks
CB QHC MA
1959 – 1965

The Venerable J H Wilson
CB QHC MA
1973 - 1980

The Venerable B N Halfpenny
CB QHC MA
1988 - 1991

The Venerable A P Bishop
CB QHC LTh MPhil FRSA FRAeS
1998 - 2001

Reverend M H Edwards
OBE BA KHC
1940 – 1944

The Venerable L S Giles
CB CBE QHC MA
1953 – 1959

The Venerable L J Ashton
CB QHC
1969 - 1973

The Venerable W E G Payton
CB QHC MA
1965 - 1969

The Venerable H J Stuart
CB QHC MA
1980 – 1983

The Venerable B H Lucas
CB QHC BA FRSA
1991 - 1995

The Venerable R D Hesketh
CB QHC BA DPS FRGS RAF
2001 - 2006

Reverend H D L Viener
CBE MA KHC
1918 - 1926

The Right Reverend J A Jagoe
CB CBE MA DD KHC
1944 – 1949

The Venerable F W Cocks
CB QHC MA
1959 – 1965

The Venerable J H Wilson
CB QHC MA
1973 - 1980

The Venerable B N Halfpenny
CB QHC MA
1988 - 1991

The Venerable A P Bishop
CB QHC LTh MPhil FRSA FRAeS
1998 - 2001
We, the members of the Royal Air Force Chaplaincy Board, commit ourselves and those whom we lead to a ministry of spiritual leadership, moral guidance and pastoral care within the Air Force. On behalf of our Sending Churches we furthermore commit ourselves to work together in harmony of purpose as a united Branch bound together in a common mission of service to all.

Taking full account of the individual traditions, histories and doctrines of our Sending Churches it is agreed that ‘we should do together everything which conscience does not compel us to do separately’. Furthermore we will support each other in the maintenance of individual Denominational integrity and identity.

We agree that the Protocols for Chaplaincy, endorsed by the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Policy Board, the Sending Churches and the Endorsing Authorities, will form the basis of a shared chaplaincy where all Faith Communities represented within chaplaincy are equally respected and an ‘all souls ministry’ is offered to all Royal Air Force personnel and their dependants.
The Chaplaincy Board of the Royal Air Force 2008

The Reverend (Air Vice Marshal) P W Mills
QHC BD CPS RAF
Chaplain-in-Chief (RAF) and Principal Chaplain
(Church of Scotland and Free Churches)

The Venerable (Gp Capt) Ray J Pentland
QHC BA DipPS MTh RAF
Director Chaplaincy Personnel, Principal Chaplain Church
of England and Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force

The Reverend (Group Captain) G T Craig
QHC BD Dip Min RAF
Director Chaplaincy Operations and Training

The Reverend (Group Captain) N B P Barry
BA RAF
Director Chaplaincy Strategic Policy and Plans

The Reverend Monsignor (Wing Commander) J M Walsh
CTh VG RAF
Principal Chaplain Roman Catholic and Vicar General
for the Royal Air Force

Mrs Roshnara Jobsz
Finance Manager
Former Chaplains-in-Chief Greetings

The Venerable H J Stuart CB
Chaplain-in-Chief
1980-1983

When one meets up with former members of the Royal Air Force the conversation usually comes round to ‘Chaplains I have known’. The stories told are a testimony to the high esteem in which chaplains have been held and are still held. So it is right that on this 90 Anniversary we should pay tribute to all who have served in the Branch down the years.

I suppose our first thoughts should go to those wise men who at the beginning laid down the foundations on which the ministry of the Branch was to be built. Then we will remember those who served, mostly volunteers, in the Second World War. The numbers were great, the task demanding, and so often heart breaking. Also at this present time we must not forget the men and women of this generation, who have had to adjust to a changing style of ministry involving dangerous operational theatres throughout the world.

As we salute them all we are conscious of the immense privilege of having been called to serve our Lord and Master in such a worthwhile ministry. We have indeed been richly blessed.

So I send greetings and best wishes to you all as we come to celebrate 90 years in the life of the Branch and look forward to the future with faith and confidence.

The Venerable Brian Lucas CB
Chaplain-in-Chief
1991-1995

Congratulations to all chaplains serving in the Chaplains’ Branch of the Royal Air Force today for enabling us to celebrate 90 glorious years.

It is because of your dedicated and professional approach to caring for the spiritual and social needs of our service personnel that the Branch has endured to the present day. Many a notable and respected Branch has not survived reorganization or the effect of a taut budget, but we have done so and continue to form an integral part of the service.

During my first year as ‘the Chief’ there was a total review of the RAF; we were told that there were to be no sacred cows! As a result some Branches merged, others disbanded and many famous stations were closed. Together with Peter Bishop, my Staff Chaplain, I put up a furious attack when it was our turn to be reviewed, and the Branch survived the review pretty well intact. But that result had little to do with me, it was because the ministry of the Chaplains was held in high regard throughout the service and especially by the members of the Air Force Board, who remembered how much they valued their chaplains when they were Station Commanders.

So ‘well done’ chaplains past and present; it has been a privilege to have served with you.

The Venerable Brian Halfpenny CB
Chaplain-in-Chief
1988-1991

Congratulations to all members of the Royal Air Force Chaplains’ Branch in this our 90 Anniversary Year. It was a privilege and a joy for me to spend two thirds of my full time ministry in the Branch, for which I shall be eternally grateful. Now my prayers are daily for those currently serving in this challenging abut always fulfilling ministry. The Lord be with you all.
Looking back ten years after my retirement from the Chaplains’ Branch, I realise that, having served for 28½ years between 1970 and 1998, I was a member of the Branch for nearly a third of its life as it now celebrates 90 years. For me, and I suspect it will be the same for any of my colleagues who served more than a short time, it was the defining period of my ministry. It was an enormous privilege to have been appointed Chaplain-in-Chief for my last three years and to be the primus inter pares of what was effectively a very large and interdenominational team ministry, serving the needs of the men, women and families of the Royal Air Force. During that time we managed, with the help of representatives of the sending churches, to restructure the management of the Branch on interdenominational lines. This has worked well and I would hope that the example of such working could be an example for all the churches to follow in the wider life of the nation. To those men and women currently serving as chaplains I send my greetings and the assurance of my continuing prayers as they face the very demanding challenges of military chaplaincy in the 21st century.

The Venerable Peter Bishop CB
Chaplain-in-Chief
1998-2001

I offer my congratulations to all members of the Chaplains’ Branch and their supporters on achieving a grand age. The Psalmist wrote, “The years of our life are threescore and ten or even . . . . . . four score, yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone and we fly away”. Those words may apply to us as individuals but not to the Branch! I continue to delight in the friendships and contacts made during my time in the Branch, taking particular pleasure in seeing ecumenical co-operation advance to the point of an integrated management structure and the recruitment of the first woman Anglican priest. I know that new challenges are always arising. I know too that the love of the God we see in Jesus is a constant strength and inspiration. May these words of George Herbert be our hope and our prayer always:

“Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me,
With faith, with hope, with charity;
That I may run, rise, rest with thee”.

The Venerable Ron Hesketh CB
Chaplain-in-Chief
2001-2006

It is privilege to greet the Branch on this significant anniversary. Pride might well be one of the deadly sins but I take great pride in my service to the Royal Air Force through the Chaplains Branch. I think it is very important that we take the occasion of an anniversary to thank God for the opportunities of service granted to the Branch in the past and to ask His strength for future challenges.

Each year I receive the Annual Review and the Branch seems to go from strength to strength. This might not always seem the case in terms of recruiting! However, the Chaplains Branch continues to punch above its weight and to give chaplaincy of a very high calibre. The Annual Review is just a snapshot of all that is being achieved but I take pride in leaving it on view!

I am delighted that in the welter of thing to be done, the Branch has found some space to explore and remember its roots. At the same time we should rejoice in the ability of each generation of chaplains to meet the technological and strategic challenges which have ever marked the Royal Air Force.

I salute all current serving members of the Branch, and greet all like me, who take such pleasure in having had some part in our 90 years of service to the Royal Air Force.
The following Royal Air Force Chaplains, who laid down their lives during times of conflict are remembered on the memorial which will be dedicated in today’s service. All these men have stories, some we know, others we have little other information than where they are buried. Today we give thanks for their service to humanity for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

**Denis Ashill**, killed in crash on active service, is buried in Cambridge City Cemetery.

**A C Bawtree** died in Calcutta and is buried in the Calcutta cemetery.

**G Campbell** drowned in an air crash in North Africa and is buried in Bari cemetery, Italy.

**James Ernest Cox MID**, was listed as ‘Killed in Action’ on 28th April 1941. His name is on the Alamein Memorial.

**Alexander Hepburn** and **I Taylor** were both killed in an air crash in Dum Dum, India. They are buried in the Calcutta cemetery.

**Dewi James** and **Eric McKeeman** were drowned when LST 420 hit a mine in the English Channel outside Ostend. Their names are on the Runnymede memorial.

**Cecil Pugh** was drowned when he chose to remain with trapped men in SS Anselm as she sunk. His name is on the Runnymede memorial.

**Douglas Roberts** was killed in an accident. He is buried in Bari War Cemetery, Italy.

**Alexander Ross** was killed during the Indonesian Campaign in 1963 by small-arms fire.

**James Sutcliffe** is listed as ‘killed in action’. His name is on the Hadra war memorial in Egypt.

**Philip Usher** died of a cerebral haemorrhage and is buried in Ramleh War Cemetery, Israel.

**John Thirlwell Wanless** died of dysentery and malnutrition as a POW in Borneo. His name is on the Singapore memorial.

According to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission the following Chaplains are buried in the United Kingdom, however beyond this we have no information.

**Percy Gordon Duff**

**William Davies**

**James Greany**

**Hubert Harries**

**Michael Kelly**

**Thomas Kenny**

**Bernard MacCroskey**

**Hugh McMullan**

**Wilfred Newsome**

**Arthur Whitmore**

**Ministrare Non Ministrari**
This anniversary brochure is dedicated to all who serve and have served as RAF Chaplains. The following pages tell the stories of all but a few of our number whose service has been recognised by honours and awards, however they represent the many thousands of ministers of the gospel who have willingly responded over the years ‘To Serve, not to be Served’.

The motto of the Royal Air Force Chaplains’ Branch, Ministrare Non Ministari, is based on the words of Jesus in Mark Chapter 10, verse 45, ‘The Son of man not to be served but to serve.’

Today on duty at home and abroad, Royal Air Force Chaplains continue to follow the words of Jesus as they strive to ‘Serve not to be Served’.

As you read these pages, take time to give thanks for the past, honouring those who have served, and to pray for those who are serving today and for those who will serve tomorrow.
‘Ministrare Non Ministrari’

Padre Stanley William Harrison

George Medal Citation 1941
One night in November, 1940, an aircraft crashed and burst into flames about three miles from the aerodrome and, although it was not his duty to do so, Mr. Harrison boarded the ambulance which was proceeding to the scene. On arrival, he immediately plunged into the wreckage and despite the scorching heat and exploding machine gun bullets, commenced to drag a member of the crew from the burning debris. He then supervised the work and led the fire picket, himself extricating a second member of the crew and assisting to remove a third. Further efforts were unavailing, however, as the remaining members of the crew were completely buried under the wreckage. Throughout he displayed the utmost courage and an entire disregard for his own safety.

OBE Citation 1957
On 5th March, 1957, a Royal Air Force Beverley transport aircraft carrying R.A.F. personnel and police dogs crashed on the village of Sutton Wick, Drayton, Berkshire. The aircraft, which had a large quantity of petrol on board, immediately caught fire and a major conflagration ensued. Wing Commander Harrison, Station Chaplain, and Flying Officer Evans, a Medical Officer from Royal Air Force Station, Abingdon, were soon on the scene of the crash and for three hours they worked together to rescue the occupants of the aircraft. They extricated fourteen bodies from the wreckage and displayed courage and resourcefulness of a high order, refusing to give up while there was hope of finding survivors among the wreckage. Some 1½ hours after the crash, Wing Commander Harrison rescued a police dog alive. At one stage a Calor gas cylinder bottle exploded near these officers and the fire thereupon began to gain ground. Undeterred by this, they continued their search of the wreckage until it was clear that there could be no survivors. Whilst Wing Commander Harrison was undoubtedly the leader in the rescue operations, Flying Officer Evans was conspicuous in always being with him in the most dangerous places.
The Revd Geoffrey Clarence Harding

Padre Harding joined the Royal Air Force Chaplains' Branch in 1943. Attached to a Mobile Radar Unit in 1944, he is believed to be the first RAF chaplain to land on the Normandy beaches during D-Day.

Military Cross Citation

"This chaplain landed with a unit on the beaches of Normandy on "D" day. The beach was under intense bombardment and was strewn with dead and wounded. Mr Harding worked for 36 hours, most of the time under direct fire, giving help to the wounded and burying the dead. He set an inspiring example and was responsible for saving many lives. During the evening of "D" day he walked along a road, which was under fire, into a village in enemy hands. He entered a house in which were many snipers and obtained water which he took back to the wounded. His gallantry and disregard for his own safety were worthy of high praise."

"Well, we were plagued by that beastly 88 millimetre. In fact in the end we had 25% casualties. We rushed up and down the beach one way or the other but we couldn't get out of the range of the beastly thing. I thought we really had had it. I was giving myself up to an early grave and I must admit that most of my remarks on the previous Sunday to the congregation now felt rather thin. But it came to me very very strongly indeed, almost as though a voice spoke in my ear that we must get off that beach at all costs and take refuge under the shadow of the cliffs. So I went forward, found a suitable site in the 3rd house up on the left where there was an open courtyard. The few Germans ran away and apparently bid themselves in the house next door thus proving no trouble to us. And I then waved forward everybody I knew to get off that blasted beach - I use the word in its proper sense - as fast as we could. Technically I think I committed mutiny, though technically I think I made the proper choice. But somehow we got off the beach and got our wounded off too."

"Somebody told me at the time I walked up and down the beach as calmly as if I were walking up and down an aisle in the church, but that was simply due to the fact that I'm constitutionally lazy and entirely refuse to be hurried, least of all by the enemy."
‘Ministrare Non Ministrari’

The Revd J T Wanless - Prisoner of War

There were 5 RAF chaplains who became Prisoners of War at the hands of the Japanese. Most, if not all, of these men ended up in Javanese camps. During their time in the camps the chaplains continued to minister to those among whom they lived, taking services, giving sermons, and marking significant occasions such as Armistice Day, Christmas and Easter. While four of the RAF chaplains survived their time of imprisonment one, Padre John Thirlwell Wanless, suffered a very different fate.

Padre Wanless was part of the group of POWs who made the ‘Death March’ from Sandakan to Ranau in Borneo in the spring of 1945. This march took almost 2500 prisoners to their deaths. 641 of the prisoners were British, Padre Wanless among them. The rest of the prisoners were Australian. 6 Australians were able to escape and were the sole survivors. Those who managed to complete the death march found themselves at Ranau, where they either died from illness, exhaustion or starvation. The very few who survived were executed just before the end of the war. Padre Wanless died of enteritis on 30th June 1945 having managed to make the march, carrying baggage like a mule, with no food. His body has no identified grave. His name is found on the Singapore memorial.

Padre Wanless was mentioned in a Dispatch for Distinguished Service in October 1946.
The Royal Air Force
Chaplains’ Branch
90th Anniversary Service

Thursday 27 November 2008
The church is equipped with a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

Music during the Service by
The Choir of St Clement Danes

Director of Music:
Peter Long MSc FTCL ARCS ARCM
ORDER OF SERVICE

Conducted by
The Reverend Adrian Gatrill BTh FRSA RAF
Resident Chaplain

All stand as the choir sings THE INTROIT

*Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts;*
*shut not thy merciful ears unto our prayer;*
*but spare us, Lord, spare us, Lord most holy,*
*O God most mighty,*
*O holy and most merciful Saviour,*
*thou most worthy Judge eternal,*
*suffer us not, at our last hour,*
*for any pains of death, to fall from thee. Amen.*

_Henry Purcell_

All turn to face the Chaplains’ Branch Memorial.

_Then are recited the names of those Chaplains who have given their lives in times of conflict._

_They shall grow not old as we that are left grow old. Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them._

_All_ _We will remember them._

_The Last Post_

_Reveille_

_The Reverend Peter Mills QHC BD CPS RAF, Chaplain-in-Chief, says_

_Hear the words of Jesus: ‘If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it’. To the glory of God, and sacred to the memory of those members of the Royal Air Force Chaplains’ Branch who have given their lives in the service of their country and of the Gospel, we dedicate this memorial in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit._

_All_ _Amen._
All remain standing to sing the HYMN

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory though o’er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

Then be the glory, risen conquering Son,
Endless is the vict’ry thou o’er death hast won.

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.

No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of Life;
Life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife,
Make us more than conquerors through thy
deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:

E Burdy (1854-1932)
Tr. R Hoyle (1875-1939)

The Resident Chaplain shall then say

We are gathered in the Central Church of the Royal Air Force to give thanks to God for the foundation of the Royal Air Force Chaplains’ Branch and to commemorate the ninety years uninterrupted service during which it has, with distinction, served our country in peace and war in many parts of the world.

Above all we are met to give praise and thanks to God; to seek his continued guidance of our lives, and his grace to fulfil, both now and in the future, the various duties to which he has called us.

But first, let us kneel and humbly confess our sins and ask for God’s mercy and forgiveness.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

The almighty and merciful Lord
grant us pardon and forgiveness of all our sins,
time for amendment of life,
and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.
Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

All stand as the choir sings JUBILATE DEO

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands: serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us and not we ourselves, we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him and speak good of his Name.
For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting: and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

(Tune: Martindale Sidwell)

The First Reading Lamentations 3. 22-26, 55-58

Read by Monsignor John Walsh CTh VG RAF
Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain

Remain seated as the choir sing Psalm 84

O how amiable are thy dwellings: thou Lord of hosts!
My soul hath a desire and longing, to enter into the courts of the Lord:
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
Yea the sparrow hath found her an house, and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young: even thy altars, O Lord of hosts my King and my God.
Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee: in whose heart are thy ways.
Who going through the vale of misery, use it for a well: and the pools are filled with water.
They will go from strength to strength: and unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Sion.
O Lord God of hosts hear my prayer: hearken O God of Jacob.
Behold O God our defender: and look upon the face of thine Anointed.
For one day in thy courts: is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God: than to dwell in the tents of ungodliness.
For the Lord God is a light and defence: the Lord will give grace and worship, and no good thing shall be withhold from them that live a godly life.
O Lord God of hosts: blessed is the man that putteth his trust in thee.
All sing

Ye servants of God, your master proclaim,
And publish abroad his wonderful name;
The name all-victorious of Jesus extol:
His kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
And still he is nigh, his presence we have:
The great congregation his triumph shall sing,
Ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

Salvation to God who sits on the throne!
Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son:
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
Fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give him his right:
All glory and power, all wisdom and might,
All honour and blessing, with angels above,
And thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

C Wesley (1707-88)

The Sermon

The Venerable Brian Halfpenny CB MA
Chaplain-in-Chief (RAF), 1988-1991

The Anthem

‘On thee each living soul awaits’ and
‘Achieved is the glorious work’
from The Creation

Haydn

All remain seated for

The Licensing of
The Reverend Christopher Lawrence
Conducted by
The Venerable Ray Pentland QHC BA DPS MTh RAF
Principal Church of England Chaplain & Archdeacon for the Royal Air Force

All stand to sing
All stand to sing

I will offer up my life
In spirit and truth,
Pouring out the oil of love
As my worship to You
In surrender I must give my every part;
Lord, receive the sacrifice
Of a broken heart

Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name For the things You have done?
Oh my words could not tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed By this thankful heart

You deserve my every breath
For You’ve paid the great cost;
Giving up Your life to death,
Even death on a cross
You took all my shame away,
There defeated my sin
Opened up the gates of heaven
And have beckoned me in.

Matt Redman  Copyright (c) 1994 Thankyou Music

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

You stepped down into darkness,
Opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore You,
Hope of a life spent with You.

So here I am to worship,
Here I am to bow down,
Here I am to say that You’re my God;
And You’re altogether lovely,
Altogether worthy,
Altogether wonderful to me.

King of all days,
Oh so highly exalted,
Glorious in heaven above;
Humby You came
To the earth You created,
All for love’s sake became poor.

And I’ll never know how much it cost
To see my sin upon that cross.

Tim Hughes
Copyright (c) 1994 Thankyou Music
The Prayers

Led by
The Reverend Nick Barry BA RAF
Director, Chaplaincy Strategic Policy & Plans

All stand to sing

Thy hand, O God, has guided
Thy flock, from age to age;
The wondrous tale is written,
Full clear on every page;
Our fathers owned thy goodness,
And we their deeds record;
And both of this bear witness,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
To greatest, as to least;
They bade men rise, and hasten
To share the great King's feast;
And this was all their teaching,
In every deed and word,
To all alike proclaiming
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,
Through many a scene of strife,
The faithful few fought bravely
To guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
Sin pardoned, man restored,
Was all in this enfolded,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
Shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
Shall we evade the conflict,
And cast away our crown?
Not so, in God's deep counsels
Some better thing is stored;
We will maintain, unflinching,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave thy work undone;
With thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won;
And then, by men and angels,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

E Plumptre (1821-91)

All remain standing.
The Chaplain-in-Chief addresses the Royal Air Force Chaplains, saying

The ministry we share is none other than the sacrificial ministry of Christ, who gave himself up to death on the cross for the salvation of the world. By his glorious resurrection he has opened for us the way of everlasting life. By the gift of the Holy Spirit he shares with us the riches of his grace.

My fellow chaplains, we are called to proclaim his death and resurrection, to administer the Sacraments of the New Covenant, and to care for his people in the power of the Spirit.

Do you, in the presence of Christ and his Church, renew your commitment to this ministry?

I do, with the help of God.

Do you reaffirm your commitment to prayer and to study?

I do, with the help of God.

Do you reaffirm your commitment so to minister the Word of God and the Sacraments of the New Covenant that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received?

I do, with the help of God.

Do you reaffirm your commitment to be a faithful servant of all those committed to your care?

I do, with the help of God.

The Chaplain-in-Chief addresses the congregation, saying

People of God,

will you pray for us as we minister to the men and women of the Royal Air Force and to their families, and support us in the work to which we have been called?

All We will.

May the Lord who has given you the will to do these things, give you the grace and power faithfully to perform them.

All remain standing for THE BLESSING

God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest; to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth, and to all mankind, peace; and to us and his servants, life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you now and always.

All Amen.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save The Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save The Queen.
‘Ministrare Non Ministrari’

The Reverend Dermot McKavanagh MA BD AKC

Padre McKavanagh received an urgent message from his Station Commander asking him to report to an aircraft hangar on his unit.

An airman working in the hangar had climbed into the cockpit of a jet aircraft and removed the safety pins from the ejector seat. The man was unable to cope with a deteriorating marital problem and was sitting in the aircraft threatening to pull the handle of the now live seat. He warned everyone to keep away; he would allow only Padre Dermot to come near. Padre McKavanagh visited the section regularly and was well known to the airman.

Dermot called out to the man that he was climbing the cockpit ladder to talk with him, and having mounted the steps, he was obliged to lean over the side of the cockpit to talk to the man confidentially. At any moment the man could have pulled the handle and decapitated the chaplain.

After a long time in conversation, Padre McKavanagh persuaded the airman to replace the safety pins and leave the aircraft. They both returned to the church for further discussion, which resulted in a reconciliation of the man with his wife. In due course they had a child who was christened Dermot.

For this pastoral care Padre McKavanagh was awarded The Queen’s Commendation for Brave Conduct.
Padre Giles

The Fall of Singapore and imprisonment

"...the senior chaplain out there at the time was Alan Giles and, obviously the Air Force was having to get out, he decided that the chaplains who would go first would be the ones who were married, and then next the ones who were engaged and that left me - because I was neither married nor engaged - and himself. Of course, he was married, he had his own family out there but of course he stayed behind."

Padre Giles could have left Singapore with his family, but, having seen them safely onto the ship, he went back to his post. He and Padre Goss, who is quoted above, along with Padres Rorke, Wanless and Tucker became prisoners of the Japanese.

Speaking of their time as prisoners, Padre Goss recalls an episode when Padre Giles was put into solitary confinement:

"Yes, Alan Giles was suddenly hauled in and we all got very frightened and I'm sure he did too. He really didn't know what it was for and I don't think we've discovered even to this day. But I think it was something to do with, possibly, preaching at one of these services. They may have thought he said something which he shouldn't have said. Anyway they hauled him in. Rather sensibly he put his cassock on before he went to the head office and I don't think they hit him at all-surprisingly. They shouted at him a good deal, shouted at him and then put him in prison, right underneath one of these sentry points in the wall. They had a little box under there and he was locked in. But there was a tiny little flap in the door and fortunately just near to it there was a loo. So we used to go to the loo and then slip round the corner, hoping we wouldn't be spotted and we could talk to him through there. He was all by himself more or less in the dark and we'd pass him little bits of things to eat and so forth. And I remember one day I asked him was there anything special he wanted. He said 'Yes, I want my prayer book.' So next time we went to the loo we took a prayer book with us and passed it through. He was in there about 4 or 5 days but I don't think anybody knows why to this day."
'Ministrare Non Ministrari'

Padre A M Ross

From an account written by Padre Briggs

'During my posting to Singapore as Assistant Principal Chaplain a very nasty but hardly remembered little war broke out between Indonesia and our small forces in North Borneo. Very rapidly as the battles developed, the original small garrisons were supplemented by units from the UK and our station at Labuan became a very busy and hard-pressed centre for both army and RAF personnel. So much so that it quickly became obvious that a full-time chaplain (RAF) was needed.'

Padre Briggs made us of a visit to the UK for the annual conference to press for a chaplain to be nominated by the Branch. It was felt no-one should be made to go into such a dangerous setting, but the Chaplain-in-Chief asked if anyone wished to volunteer. Padre Alec Ross said he would go, despite being told that at his age (50 or so) he would find the rough field conditions very taxing.

'I thereafter returned to Singapore, and shortly before Christmas Alec Ross reported to FEAF HQ for duty in Labuan. Within a single week, I had to go to the Changi airport to receive Alec back from the front - in a coffin! An incredible story was told me by accompanying officers. Apparently, Alec had insisted on being taken straight away to the centre of the fighting so that 'the lads' might know that there was a padre close at hand and also so that he might take to them something of the Christmas message and a few simple seasonal gifts. The fact that a padre had come among them seems to have travelled like a bushfire among the forward troops, and signals for him to fly hither and thither. It was on such an errand of mercy, when flying in a light spotter aircraft near the enemy lines with an Army Sgt-pilot that an enemy shot entered the craft, passed through the leg of the pilot and into the heart of the padre sitting alongside.

So ended the tragically short 'active service' ministry of one of our most beloved chaplains... The influence for good which his enthusiastic determination to see as many troops as he could before that fateful Christmas dawned was quite immeasurable, and it is no exaggeration to say that his image left such an impression out there that the way was wide open to the next chaplain who was subsequently sent out to try and replace him.
Padre Cecil Pugh

Padre Pugh was posthumously awarded the GC in 1947. If the letters we have in our archive are anything to go by, he may never have been honoured at all, were it not for The News of the World. In October 1946 a Flt Sgt Sharp wrote to the paper asking why Padre Pugh had never been acknowledged. This letter caused many others to write adding their support, and the Air Ministry looked into the case. From one of the letters sent in 1946:

'I was one of the more fortunate members of the troops on board, and in actual fact came out the same hold as the one the RAF Padre entered. I didn't see him enter, although while in the lifeboat waiting to be picked up by the escorting Corvette I heard several members of the boat remark to the effect that they saw the Padre enter the hold containing the trapped personnel, he must have known full well that it was impossible to come out again alive, in view of the fact that the hold when I left was covered in at least five feet of water and was still gushing in, only a few moments after I left the Anselm it gave one definite plunge and passed below the water out of sight in few seconds, in view of this I doubt very much if the Padre could have survived more than a few moments in that hold of death. Whilst I was scrambling out I passed literally dozens of screaming men with their heads fastened between the rungs of the connecting ladder, it was horrible to hear their screams and to pass them by, knowing full well that it was absolutely hopeless for them to get out alive.'

GC Citation:

'The Reverend H. C. Pugh, after seeing service in this country, was posted to Takoradi and embarked on H.M.T. Anselm, carrying over 1,300 passengers for West Africa at the end of June, 1941. She was torpedoed in the Atlantic in the early hours of the 5th July, 1941. One torpedo hit a hold on Deck C, destroying the normal means of escape. Mr. Pugh came up on deck in a dressing gown and gave all the help he could. He seemed to be everywhere at once, doing his best to comfort the injured, helping with the boats and rafts (two of these were rendered unserviceable as a result of the explosion) and visiting the different lower sections where the men were quartered. When he learned that a number of injured airmen were trapped in the damaged hold, he insisted on being lowered into it with a rope. Everyone demurred because the hold was below the water line and already the decks were awash and to go down was to go certain death. He simply explained that he must be where his men were. The deck level was already caving in and the hold was three parts full of water so that, when he knelt to pray, the water reached his shoulders. Within a few minutes the ship plunged and sank and Mr. Pugh was never seen again. He had every opportunity of saving his own life but, without regard to his own safety and in the best tradition of the Service and of a Christian Minister, he gave up his life for others.'
‘Ministrare Non Ministrari’

‘In all that he has done, he has been the epitome of a successful station padre, caring for those who seek his support and counsel in an unobtrusive but extremely effective manner. His hallmark is his strength of character which has been so vital in his meeting the many demands placed upon him.’

‘Our Padre carries out all his duties with the highest degree of professionalism, and is equally at home in the classroom, visiting sections on the unit, or offering pastoral counselling. Typically, much of this work goes on out of the public gaze, but it is there in abundance.’

‘Although largely invisible in the UK, the tempo of ops throughout his tour has been exceedingly high, and this has placed a tremendous burden on the personnel here. Add to this the relentless loss of life, punctuated by numerous Repatriation Ceremonies, the terrible injuries we have seen and the hostile deployed environment, and one can begin to appreciate the incredible emotional strain our people are living with. It is not overstating the issue to say that this chaplain has been the outstanding shining light of understanding, compassion and humour for all those he has met; his altruism and resolve are inspirational and I consider him the finest padre I have seen in 15 years of ops.’

‘The Padre does not shy away from a challenge and I was touched recently by the sensitive, caring and highly professional manner in which he dealt with a particularly tragic death of a young girl. He has a delightfully deft touch, is the soul of discretion and has elicited nothing but praise from the families who have benefited from his support.’

‘There can be few ministers of the Church who compare with him. I have no doubt he is one of the best, and most effective, padres it has ever been my pleasure to work with.’

‘Finally, he has been a good friend and provided wise counsel. He has enjoyed my complete trust and features high on my ‘must take on ops’ list.’
A Brief Historical Reflection

‘It is very difficult to know what one can do for these RFC people as Chaplain… I am now living with the fourth out of my six squadrons; and to my horror today I was told that another squadron is just about to come into the Wing- making a total of 7… they are ripping fellows these officers and I like them muchly- but it still remains to be seen whether one can be of any use to them or not.’

So wrote The Revd R W Dugdale in a letter home from France during WW1. Such thoughts are sure to resonate with any RAF chaplain at the start of their service since the inception of the Branch in 1918. While the RAF has made immense technological advances, and has changed almost beyond recognition in the past 90 years the heart of our work and calling remains the same.

The Foundation Years
The Revd H D L Veiner was asked to establish a Chaplains Department for the Royal Air Force in May 1918, having been seconded from his work in the Royal Navy. By the 1919, the RAF Chaplains’ Branch consisted of 21 C of E commissioned chaplains and 14 ‘other denomination’ chaplains. Veiner writes of those early years

‘Just as for the next few years determined attempts were made to break up the RAF, and divide it up again into a Naval and Military Wing, so attacks were directed against the independence of this Chaplaincy Service. At times it was, in spite of strong opposition, within an ace of being absorbed by the Army.

Brought up… in an atmosphere free of uniform, and of the possible difficulties which do sometimes attend the holding of rank, I felt that in the new Force, which was more akin to the Army, Chaplains would be better in uniform. At first I held out against rank, but it seemed rather impossible to devise any uniform without badges of rank- such a kit too closely resembled the Church Army officer, or the canteen worker of that time, and, admirable as they were, they perhaps did not wish to be mistaken for a Chaplain. And so it came about that uniform was worn, and rank held, and both are retained today- on the whole, I think, for the better. Whether uniform is a hindrance or not depends upon the type of man who wears it, and how he wears it.

It is most satisfactory to know that Prayers are read during the week in practically every station, and in some every day- by the Chaplain, by the Commanding Officer, or by some other officer. They were introduced at the very start, and in spite of difficulties have prevailed.’

By the mid-1930s, there were chaplaincies in Egypt, Aden, Palestine & Transjordan, Iraq, India and Singapore. Small RAF units in the UK were cared for by Officiating chaplains from the local community, while commissioned chaplains operated in teams on the larger units.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, the RAF Chaplains Branch was deployed across all continents. Over 1000 clergymen would serve in the Branch between 1939 and 1945, several becoming Prisoners of War in Europe or the Far East, and a small but significant number losing their lives during active service.

During this period church life was generated and nurtured. Bible study groups were set up, confirmation classes held, and Churches were created from tents, barrack blocks, corners of hangars, and tea-bars. Daily prayers were offered at every unit, and in the POW camps. An extract from Padre Fisk’s letter home from Iraq in 1943 gives us some sense of life in the ‘quiet moments’:

‘I am having a very happy time with my new Unit and feeling very much at home already. Did I tell you I hired the cinema in a town nearby for last Sunday evening’s service. To my surprise, they almost filled the place and we had a very fine and inspiring service preceded by some community hymn singing. There was a wonderful atmosphere. I also had three services in the morning and felt the day was very encouraging. We have a Bible Class on Wednesday Evenings in my
Vienar The First Chaplain-in-Chief

Ven Wilson shown around Nimrod at Kinloss

Padre's Hour at RAF Waterbeach

Funeral of Padre Roberts

WWI service

The Padre welcomes new arrivals

Chaplains Conference at Cambridge
tent and have decided to study the Acts of the Apostles. We also have a very good Toc H meeting on Fridays. I am also Welfare Officer and what with one things and another, seem to find plenty to do. There are some famous Roman ruins somewhere near here which I hope to try to find tomorrow so I can take some parties out. We seem to get a lot of wind here so that dust gets into everything in the tent. But on the whole we cope very well indeed and I am enjoying the life.’

Just as today, chaplains during this period could truly say that they went everywhere with their people and faced the same dangers that their people faced. Even those chaplains who served at home were exposed to real challenges.

Padre Martin, based for a time at Oakington in Cambridgeshire received a daily postbag of requests for news from relatives of downed aircrew.

Dear Sir,

I wonder if you can give me advice. My husband has wrote to me, he is now a POW. Well I have been writing to his crew’s next of kin. We promised each other we would write as soon as we get news. Well, Frank says the other ‘boys’ were killed. I don’t feel as if I can write and tell them. What shall I do, if I write and say I’ve heard from my husband they will want to know about thier (sic) loved ones. Please let me know what you think I ought to do.

Yours sincerely

Padre Martin’s experience was replicated across the country as chaplains took on the task of writing to bereaved relatives, recovering bodies from the wreckage of aircraft, or burying the dead. Overseas or at home, the work of the Royal Air Force Chaplains’ Branch during this period was truly one of service and sacrifice.

The Cold War Years

Building on the experiences of chaplaincy in the Second World War, the Branch was now an established part of RAF life. Moral Leadership courses were now being provided worldwide, along with the pastoral and liturgical roles that had been ‘bread and butter’ from the very start.

This period represents a very settled era in the Branch’s history. Chaplains served all over the world under many different commands and each denominational group had its own chain of command.

The daily work of a chaplain at unit level could be recognised by those who serve today.

Padre R S Meadows, who joined the Chaplains’ Branch in 1943, wrote the following in the 60s when he was serving as the Assistant Chaplain-in-Chief, Bomber and Transport Command:

‘Being few in number (for instance, there are only 88 C of E commissioned chaplains in the whole of the Royal Air Force), the padre can expect to spend half his career overseas- “You have been selected for posting to Iceland” read a friendly little note I received in 1943! There is no lack of variety! Certainly in the course of 16 years a chaplain can expect posting to one of the Youth Schools, to Operational Units in the Home Commands, interspersed with probably three overseas tours one of which may well be unaccompanied.

In addition to the normal parochial duties which absorb weekdays and Sundays and with probably up to three evenings a week, there is always the unexpected, usually in the shape of visitors to the office with problems of every kind. There is no limit to the nature and scope of queries that confront us day by day, but it is our privilege to be there for our interest is people.’

But while the structure and work of the branch had become settled, the world had not. This was a period of turmoil, when issues such as the ‘The Morality of Pacifism and the Nuclear Deterrent’ were debated at Amport House.

Chaplains continued to be involved in work in the most hostile places. Padre Alexander Ross freely volunteered to minister to small groups of RAF personnel who had been deployed during the Indonesian campaign. When the light aircraft in which he had been travelling came under small arms fire, Padre Ross was fatally wounded. His loss was keenly felt by the Branch.
Operational Chaplaincy

The Argentinean invasion of the Falkland Islands in 1982 saw RAF Chaplains supporting Operation Corporate from home and overseas bases. However, Port Stanley and later Mount Pleasant quickly became part of life for RAF Chaplains who have had a continuing ministry and presence on the Island to the present day. Many things have changed, and yet most would recognise the surroundings, however Chaplains now serve accompanied for 12 months.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse and disintegration of Soviet Union ushered in a new era in world history which brought with it new and challenging roles for the Royal Air Force and therefore the Chaplains Branch. Since the end of the ‘Cold War’ the RAF has been under constant change and development while facing almost constant operational commitments.

In August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the RAF mounted the largest operation since 1982. However, this time Chaplains deployed with their people. Within weeks a full Chaplaincy team was in theatre and working to full capacity. This marked a new beginning for RAF Chaplaincy. No longer were Chaplains ‘nice to have’ but considered an essential part of any deploying force. Indeed in recent years a Joint Service Chaplaincy post has been established at the Permanent Joint Headquarters to ensure an appropriate and timely Chaplaincy input to any emerging operation.

Throughout the 1990’s RAF Chaplains have served in all Operational Theatres, from the Gulf to Bosnia, and Kuwait to Kosovo. Gulf War 2 marked a further development in Operational Chaplaincy with the British Forces deploying a Joint Chaplaincy Command Structure, under the leadership of a Senior RAF Chaplain, Padre Stephen Ware.

As we gather in St Clement Danes to celebrate 90 years of ministry, Chaplains continue to serve in the operational theatres of Iraq and Afghanistan.

From Padre’s Hours to the Belief’s and Values Programme and beyond

In 1940 the Air Member for Personnel expressed concern about the spiritual and moral welfare of the quickly expanding Royal Air Force. Chaplaincy responded with the formal introduction of the ‘Padre’s Hour’ which ranged from a chat with tea and biscuits to preparation for confirmation and church membership. Over the years these sessions changed and developed with each generation until a major review beginning in 1992 resulted in the introduction of the groundbreaking Beliefs and Values Programme (BVP).

The BVP, developed by a working group led by Padre Phil Sladen and supervised by Dr Michael Grimmit of Birmingham University, changed the dynamic of Chaplaincy input to the training world. The latest version of the BVP continues to influence the men and women of the Royal Air Force as it explores the core values of Respect, Integrity, Service and Excellence in all things from a spiritual perspective.

The BVP has also been the basis of chaplaincy involvement in the work of Force Development which engages with personnel on a regular basis throughout their carrier, dealing with ethical, moral and welfare issues. The BVP is also widely used in NATO, and has influenced the training programmes of our sister services.

Branch Structures

The structures of the Chaplains’ Branch remained fairly static, for the first 70 years or so. However, the restructuring RAF and the reduction in numbers from 100000 to 41000 over the last 20 years had an impact in the way in which the Branch was structured. The work of the Branch management in the 1990’s shaped the way for today’s unified management structure, with a Chaplaincy Board chaired by the Chaplain in Chief, who can now be of any denomination.

Ministrare Non Ministrari

To serve not to be served continues to be the motto of today’s Chaplains Branch, and I hope and pray that in a changing world our founding Fathers would still recognise that our ministry to the Royal Air Force is one of service in the name of our Lord and Saviour.
Padre Radley visiting the line

Padre Frizzell with radio apprentices

Padre Prenton leads a discussion

Padre Williams in Kandahar

Padre Pentland takes Memorial Service in Sarajevo

Padre Jones - church in a tent
Could you be vicar of this parish?

The RAF needs full-time and part-time Chaplains to take the church to where it’s needed most. As an RAF Chaplain you’ll be responsible for all our personnel, regardless of rank or religious background. Your personal sacrifice may be considerable as you move with troops and air-crew, providing vital support in areas of conflict, including on the front line. Your non-operational duties will be equally important as you bring spiritual succour to personnel at our RAF bases. And as well as offering counsel, mediation and advice, you will fulfil more traditional roles, holding weekly services and officiating at weddings, christenings and funerals. If you’re ready for a challenging, highly rewarding position, contact us now. A whole new congregation awaits you.

Text CHAPLAIN followed by your email address to 88RAF (88723)
rafcareers.com

The Royal Air Force values every individual’s unique contribution, irrespective of race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation or social background. Usual network charges apply.