

FRONT LINE NAVAL CHAPLAINS



Patron's message:

The Duke of Wellington is said to have remarked that the whole art of war consists in guessing what is at the other side of the hill. As Patron, I hope that the work of this charity will help future generations do just that, learning what pressures they may face in peace as well as war, and becoming equipped with some resources to face them.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic the charity has had a busy and successful first year and I commend to you the trustees' summary of what has been achieved.

The Venerable Martyn Gough QHC; The Chaplain of the Fleet

Why we exist

We exist to advance the education of the public in the subject of the history of Royal Navy Chaplaincy; in such ways as the charity trustees think fit, including by:

- a. research into the history of Royal Navy Chaplaincy and its contribution to the wellbeing of the Naval Service, naval service veterans and their families; in particular, but not limited to, the impact of such ministry during armed conflicts, and
- b. the creation and secure storage of an archive of relevant learning and material, in both digital and physical forms, to illustrate and evidence that history, and
- c. the dissemination and publication of that material and knowledge through the use of information media such as the internet, books, photographs, exhibitions, conferences and lectures.

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Preserving and sharing the experiences of Royal Navy Chaplains from the Falklands War and other conflicts



Reflection, healing and the
development of best practice

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Registered Charity Number: 1187195

Achievements and Performance

In this first year of operation the charity planned to concentrate on the Falklands War, undertaking three initial in-depth interviews with former Royal Navy chaplains, all of whom were involved in that war. The restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic meant that only a single, albeit excellent, interview, along with a superb supporting portfolio of photographs, was completed; nevertheless this has been sufficient to validate the format and demonstrate the value of the work. Full transcripts of the interview have been made, and selected excerpts and photographs curated into a moving and thought-provoking audio-visual exhibition, supported by a striking publicity stand.

The single showing of the exhibition gave 50 serving Naval Chaplains, and a number of other personnel at RNAS Yeovilton the opportunity to discover and reflect on some of the personal, pastoral and theological practicalities of ministry on board a warship in action. Amongst comments which demonstrate the value of the work are:

I learned about the difficulty moving around the ship at action stations, and about the chaplain helping to care for the wounded: it brought home both the difficulty and the value of the chaplain's ministry.

Insights into the pressures on the family back home were a reminder of the conflicting pressures on all on board at a time of intense danger and activity.

The description of the funeral on South Georgia brought home how a chaplain can help to maintain humanity even in the midst of war.



As the Covid-19 vaccination scheme progresses we continue to plan against an aspiration to resume the gathering of material and our programme of exhibitions from May 2021.

Wartime skills v Covid spills.

Seeing the effects of lockdown, self-isolation and quarantine on Royal Navy veterans in Plymouth has pointed up the practical value our work can have for this community. In response, we have put together an exciting project to allow participants both to develop their own resilience and to contribute to the resilience of the community. Those involved will explore how others have responded and reacted in time of conflict, and so be encouraged to apply skills learned during Naval service into

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self-reflection and personal development; understanding others and themselves better, and able more successfully to navigate the stresses and pressures of lockdown. We are very grateful to the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity for recognising the value of the project and allocating us a Covid Hardship Fund grant to enable it to go forwards in the new year. A skilled local facilitator will use our existing material, together with material from some local retired naval chaplains, to focus on techniques and resources to support mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health at what is a difficult time for so many. The project will run through the first six months of 2021, and once it is



completed a representative sample of the content will be preserved in the charity's archives, with highlights copied to the charity's website.

Developing strategic partnerships

Throughout the year we have been in close liaison with the Naval Chaplaincy Service project which is seeking to commission academic work leading to an updated version of Gordon Taylor's definitive – but now outdated - 1978 book "The Sea Chaplains". Both parties recognise the clear scope for mutually beneficial collaboration, and we look forward to continuing to work closely together.



Our web presence

You can find selected elements of our work on the charity's website (<https://flnc.org.uk/>); a forward leaning presence which aims to be of value to researchers, veterans, practitioners and more casual visitors and which will, we hope, generate interest in hosting an exhibition of the charity's material.

Be a supporter!

Please be a supporter of our work. Our administrative costs are so modest as to be almost non-existent, and any donations will be used to produce; to protect; and then to present our work to the widest possible audience. Full details and a donation form are available on our website, and if you are a UK taxpayer you can use the Gift Aid scheme to increase the value of your gift. Thank you – in advance - for any support you are able to give.

The Trustees:

Simon Springett RNR
Dr Linda Parker
John Spurr
Paul Springett

