



News & Prayer

'serving those who serve since 1779'

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Dear Christian Friends,

It's official!

NMAFBS is a growth industry. Since 2004 the distribution of full Bibles has tripled from around 1,500 to 4,500 last year and may reach 5,000 in 2009. However the increasing demand for Bibles, New Testaments and booklets will be of little use if they are not read. The Bible is often spoken of as being the world's least read best seller. I often ask chaplains in the armed forces, cadet corps and ports if this is so. I was encouraged by the remarks of Rev John Ellis RAF, recently back from Iraq, who said that it was now acceptable for Bibles to be taken on deployment and reading them no longer invited ridicule.

Care and Repatriation

With the surge in Helmand of US forces, the war seems to have increased in tempo resulting in an increase in deaths and serious injuries to our own troops. This issue of the newsletter focuses on medical teams and chaplains whose work includes repatriation of the

dead, Op Pabbay, and wounded and meeting with families and friends.

Lt Cdr Neale Piper ARRC RN recently returned home from running the Intensive Care Unit with the Joint Force Medical Group at Camp Bastion. The Group meet the needs of UK, Allied and Afghan patients. The hospital management cell with his group received the Brigade Commander's special mention for their compassionate attention in the repatriation of the wounded. He writes that life for the deployed medics is a mixture of feelings. The hospital at Camp Bastion is always full, often with injured Afghan children, many of whom are newly orphaned. He recognizes the tangible desperation in their lives as their future is bleak.

The clinical staff work very long hours. To save young men's lives with traumatic injuries requires aggressive fluid resuscitation. The bleeding must be arrested with clamps and tourniquets before admission to surgery. This requires concentration, accurate calculation,

meticulous record keeping and a level head in traumatic situations. Prayer is needed for them as well as for the surgeons and their teams.

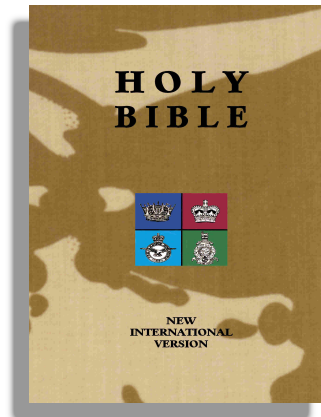
He feels the Lord's presence when things could have taken a turn for the worse and asks us to pray too for the safety of retrieval teams who extract the injured, often under fire, and for the wisdom of front line commanders responsible for organising medical support and getting the teams in the right place at the right time. The medical staff and Chaplain at Selly Oak hospital face more challenges when meeting with the families and loved ones of the repatriated wounded.

Operation Pabbay

Meeting with the families of the repatriated dead, is the job of RAF Lyneham senior chaplain, Tim Wright, and his team. Padre Kevin Bell, other senior army padres and those from the other services, receive the coffins from the aircraft before conducting a short service for the families at RAF Lyneham's chapel. These are obviously very sensitive times and much prayer is needed. Padre Bell offers the next of kin camouflage covered Bibles which are much appreciated.

Inscribed inside each NMAFBS Bible, is a brief tribute to the fallen soldier, his regimental collect and

insignia as shown in the following example. Mrs Julia Jones working with Padre Kevin does this task:



Presented
in Proud and Loving Memory
of

Corporal I N Memory (1234567)

of 1st Battalion The Rifles

killed by enemy action in Afghanistan
whilst bravely serving in harm's way,
and to commemorate his Repatriation Ceremony
to Royal Air Force Lyneham.

Collect:

O Almighty God, the sure stronghold of each
succeeding age, guard us your servants of
The Rifles, that we may uphold and be worthy
of the great traditions of our former Regiments;
and as we were chosen to be swift and bold, may
we seek with courage your grace in every time of
need, and so be patient and persevere in running
the race that is set before us, as did your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



May he rest in peace

Why Ethics?

Former NMAFBS Chairman and Army Chaplain General, The Revd Dr Victor Dobbin, has recently written a thought provoking book on Christian military ethics entitled, *Why ETHICS? Why CHRISTIAN? Why YOU?*

With Jesus sidelined to a minor role in our society, Christianity is now seen as a private opinion for most believers, rather than a public truth. The book aims to provide resource material to help Christians in the armed forces understand ethics to enable them to give a Christian view on an ethical issue.

He writes that Christians will always regard critically the laws of society, being convinced of Jesus' words that love is the fulfilment of the law and thus the essence of the Christian ethic is the law of love.

Christians have always struggled with military service and theologians hold different attitudes to war. Churches question whether "The Just War" theory is appropriate for 21st century conflicts including humanitarian intervention and the fight against terrorism. Dr Dobbin considers how much easier it would have been if Jesus had given his followers clear directives on these issues. The Christian can only make a balanced judgment. Dr Dobbin's

own feeling is that the dilemma will remain until Christ returns and all Christians, pacifist and non-pacifist alike, must pray, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

As moral authority in our society has fragmented, individualism is emphasised. Dr Dobbin considers that the armed forces should become local moral communities. The spirit which inspires soldiers to fight depends on "core values", underpinned by Scriptures that challenge us to be virtuous in our booklets: *Little book of character* and *Corps Values* for Sea Cadets.

The Army core values are courage, commitment, loyalty, discipline, integrity and respect. He would rather these were called *virtues*, since *values* can be subjective beliefs or opinions. If values were regarded as virtues the Army might stand a greater chance of becoming a moral community. One cannot say of virtues as one can of values that anyone's virtues are as good as anyone else's.

Dr Dobbin's book is published by The Leadership & Ethics Centre.

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In the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,



Richard Prendergast

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion. Isaiah 61:1-3

Items for Praise and Prayer

- **Praise** God for his continued provision of prayer and financial support and **pray** for the successful publication of new Bibles and booklets for merchant seafarers and new cadet corps booklet, *Let's ask God*.

- **Pray** for wisdom, endurance and safety of Joint Force Medical Group personnel in Afghanistan including:

 - Retrieval teams extracting the injured

 - Intensive care personnel carrying out resuscitation

 - The work of surgical teams

 - Commanders on the ground organising medical evacuation

- **Pray** for the safety of all service personnel facing daily danger in Afghanistan or deployed elsewhere, also for wisdom, endurance and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for padres and serving Christians.

- **Pray** for medical staff and chaplains at Selly Oak hospital caring for the wounded and meeting with their families and loved ones.

- **Pray** for chaplains and other staff of all three services involved with the repatriated dead and meeting their families at RAF Lyneham.

- **Pray** for port chaplains dealing with issues of poor working conditions, job insecurity and long separations of merchant seafarers.

- **Pray** for the work of the Padres and staff in the **Army, Air and Sea Cadet Corps** distributing New Testaments, booklets and prayer cards, and bringing the Gospel to cadets especially at annual Summer Camps.

Naval Military & Air Force Bible Society

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