



The ministry of a PCI army chaplain



Rev Ivan Linton

Forces chaplain

Since 2014 I have served as a chaplain in the British Army, the area of ministry I felt called to, and after going through the various application processes, this call was confirmed when I was offered a position as an army chaplain.

What have the past eight years looked like for me? I have served with Armoured Engineers, three Infantry battalions, and currently work in a Brigade headquarters. Each of these postings has brought its own challenges and opportunities, some of which I'd like to share with you now as they illustrate the type of ministry our PCI army chaplains undertake.

Our remit is to look after serving personnel and their families, providing pastoral care to everyone, spiritual support to those who ask for it, and moral guidance to individuals and the Chain of Command. Sometimes that can be in barracks, during a field exercise, or on operations; sometimes it's in a phone call in the early hours from someone who needs to talk. Wherever and whenever that may be, I am certain that God has called us to this ministry for his purposes and for his glory.

In 2016 I was deployed to Jordan for three months to be chaplain to a major exercise and I ran a Christianity Explored course, in a tent, in the middle of the desert. That was a very special time; myself and 10 or so soldiers thinking together about the Christian faith in that biblical landscape. I am still in touch with two of those soldiers, both now actively involved in churches.

I served two operational tours in Afghanistan – December 2016 to August 2017, and May 2020 to November 2020. These were very

busy times, and visiting the congregation always involved moving either by helicopter or armoured vehicle, to the locations where we had troops based. The opportunities for ministry with soldiers and contractors from around the world were a real blessing, and on my first tour we were touched to receive parcels from the boys at Loughbrickland Presbyterian Church Boys' Brigade. Thank you

to the boys and leaders for thinking of us!

In October 2017, I dedicated a headstone for a Royal Irish Fusiliers soldier who was killed in action in Sicily in 1944. This fusilier had been buried in a grave marked 'An unknown Royal Irish Fusilier. Known unto God'. His twin sons, who were 21 days old when their father

died, had never given up hope of finding their dad's final resting place, and, in their 70s, they did. It was a very humbling experience to be part of their journey of grief and loss.

I know I speak for all the PCI forces chaplains when I say we value and appreciate your prayers and support as we undertake the role of an army chaplain in God's strength.

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Please pray:

- Pray for Ivan and PCI's other forces chaplains as they follow God's call and serve him.
- Pray for wisdom and guidance as they provide pastoral care, spiritual support and moral guidance.
- Pray too for opportunities to share their faith with others.