

# Serving Faithfully

Newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Defence Force  
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Issue # 23



## From the Vicar General Monsignor Peter O'Keefe AM VG EV

Dear Friends of the Military Diocese

As this is the first edition of *Serving Faithfully* for 2016, I thank you for your ongoing support to this Catholic Defence community – OUR DIOCESE.

### Bishop Max

As most of you know the Bishop was found innocent of all six charges relating to historical sex abuse at his WA District Court trial in February 2016. The Bishop has returned to Canberra but has not as yet resumed his ministry of bishop on a permanent basis. An interim bar was placed on his 'Working with Children Check' by the NSW Office of Children Guardian, while a risk assessment is being undertaken. This risk assessment is necessary due to the nature of the allegations. The Bishop is also dealing with some medical matters. It is certainly hoped that he will resume full-time ministry as Bishop in the near future. Please keep up your prayers for the Bishop.

Prior to the interim ban, Bishop Max was able to celebrate the Chrism Mass on Wednesday 16 March which was a great gift, as this Mass of the Chrism not only consecrated the Sacred Oils to be used in the sacraments around the diocese, but also, importantly, commemorates the one priesthood of Jesus, the unity of all chaplains and people around the Bishop and calls us to Christian service in mercy. The photo below was taken at this year's Chrism Mass.

### The whereabouts of our Chaplains.

I wish to express my deep gratitude for the myriad work our chaplains are involved in this year. The start of 2016 has been relentless in its activities and all have taken up their duties with great commitment. The start of the year saw several postings of our chaplains. Fr Bryan Pipins SJ moves from Darwin to Enoggera, Fr Piotr Kowalczyk is posted to Darwin from Townsville, Fr Stéphane Sarazin moves to RAAF Amberley from Williamtown and Fr Damian Styles is taking a

year away from military chaplaincy and is working in the Parish of Mildura, Victoria for 2016.

All of our chaplains are positioned within Military Diocesan Teams located at Darwin, Townsville, South East Queensland (Enoggera, Canungra and Amberley), Canberra, Wagga and Melbourne (HMAS Cerberus, RAAF Williams and Watsonia). The images on page two and beyond give a small picture of the various activities of our chaplains on exercises overseas and within the country.

### 'The Joy of the Lord'

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April this year, Pope Francis published a new papal document called *Amoris Laetitia*, 'The Joy of the Lord - On love in the Family' at the Vatican. The papal document is known as an 'Apostolic Exhortation'. It is available to read from the 'Our News' link on the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference website: <https://www.catholic.org.au>

Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane speaking on behalf of the Australian Bishops states that, 'Pope Francis has spoken as a true pastor who really knows the human heart and is well aware of the pressures now facing marriage and the family.'

As a diocese committed to ADF family life, we chaplains together with our people need to explore this lengthy but very topical document in support of our families who have a unique and particular mission as military families.

### Deep appreciation

The Diocese wishes to thank sincerely you, together with our people and veterans, who generously contribute to the life of this diocese - spiritually, physically and financially. Most importantly, we thank you for your prayers for the Bishop, our chaplains and, in particular, for the mission that God has entrusted us with – the religious and pastoral care of ADF members and their families.



Bishop Max Davis, with chaplains, celebrates the 2016 Chrism Mass at the Royal Military College, Duntroon

## The Catholic Community at the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Kapooka (Chaplain Joel Vergara)

The sign **Soldiering Begins Here** on the main road inside the Kapooka Military Area welcomes the Recruits on their enlistment at the 1<sup>st</sup> Recruit Training Battalion. It aptly reminds them about the transformation they will go through: *They will arrive as civilians and they will march out as soldiers!* The basic training to become qualified soldiers of the Australian Army can be both exciting and fulfilling, as much as it can be daunting and challenging.

Training at 1 RTB is based on an eleven-week program for the regular Army Recruits, while reservist Recruits have a five-week program. Their training is designed to inculcate the knowledge, skills and Army values of courage, initiative, respect and teamwork required by all soldiers of the Army. Skills and subjects taught in Kapooka include shooting, weapon handling, navigation, radio, first aid, physical fitness, drill, and character guidance and development, among others.

The military environment imposes discipline, constant supervision and continual assessment, and it can be very stressful to the Recruits, regardless of age, maturity and experience. A normal day in Kapooka involves a lot of physical activity and mental concentration. 'A day feels like a week, and a week feels like a month!' is a common saying here. Self-doubt, homesickness and separation anxiety from their

families are common problems among the Recruits.

The Soldiers Chapel is a great blessing for the Recruits; it serves not only as a powerhouse of prayer, but also as a place of refuge for the 'tired and weary' away from the Lines. There are three chapels within the Soldiers Chapel, representing the Catholic, Protestant and Anglican denominations. The chaplains equally share the spiritual and pastoral support to the Recruits, staff and their families, through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments. A multi-faith room is also available for members who belong to non-Christian religions.

St Francis Xavier is the patron saint of the Catholic chapel. There are two Masses each Sunday, which are celebrated in sync with other chapel services. Chaplain Joel Vergara says that 'it's very overwhelming to see the Recruits actively participate and sing during the Mass. At Mass, Recruits somehow forget, if only temporarily, the amount of stress and pressure that they have on them. They are refreshed, blessed and empowered by God, through Jesus, who always comes to sustain our needs.'

**Please include in your prayers all our ADF recruits.**



CHAP Vergara with recruits at Mass



PTE REC Courtney Amos with her family on the occasion of receiving First Holy Communion and being confirmed.



PTE REC James Cummins on his First Holy Communion with CHAP Vergara



CHAP Andrew Osborne (Anglican), CHAP Joel Vergara, PTE REC Patrick Beer with processional cross, CHAP Andrew Robinson (PD)

## Exercise Balikatan—Philippines

Recently Chaplain Kevin O'Sullivan from RAAF Amberley was assigned to the Australian contingent on Exercise Balikatan where he worked with both US and Philippine Chaplains out of Chalke Air Force base.

This annual bilateral exercise between the Philippine and US military forces focuses on partnership, humanitarian assistance and disaster-relief capabilities. Some 5000 US, 3500 Philippine and 80 ADF personnel from the Navy, Army and Air Force and Defence Science

and Technology Organisation took part in this exercise over three weeks in April.

Chaplain O'Sullivan is a Pastoral Associate (non-



CHAP Kevin O'Sullivan (centre) with CHAP Dennis Floraldes PAF (on his right) and 710 Special Operations Wing Trainees following Mass

ordained) chaplain, who served in the RAAF for 20 years. In 2008 in the rank of Warrant Officer he transferred to Air Force Chaplaincy and undertook five years of civil schooling in theology and pastoral formation in Melbourne. In 2013 he commenced ministry with a posting to RAAF Amberley. He is currently discerning a call to the Permanent Diaconate, with a view to being ordained to the diaconate later this year.

## LTCOL Herbie O'Flynn KSG [Papal] Ret'd



LTCOL Herbie O'Flynn

In February the Holy Father, Pope Francis, announced that Herbie O'Flynn has been awarded the Papal Honour, Knight of the Order of St Gregory. The Order of St. Gregory the Great is one of the five pontifical Orders of Knighthood in the Catholic Church. The Order is bestowed on Catholic men and women in recognition of their service to the Church and the good example set in their Catholic communities and country.

Herbie said that he was both honoured and humbled by the award. He graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1963 and was commissioned into the Royal Australian Corps of Signals. He served as a troop commander in 1 Signal Regiment and 7 Signal Regiment, including employment in Singapore, and was also posted to the British

Army of the Rhine. On promotion to major he served at Cabarlah, Qld and as OC of 547 Signal Troop in South Vietnam. During his career he undertook various academic studies and attended the Army Staff College. This was followed by successfully undertaking demanding staff appointments in Canberra. He retired from the Army in 1981 and established a small business in Canberra.

Herbie married Lynette Cusack in 1964 and together they raised five children. It was in Canberra that Herbie became very involved in the Church. He was appointed Executive Director for the Papal Visit of Pope John Paul to Canberra, culminating in a Papal Mass attended by 100,000. In the following years he assumed senior financial management roles and subsequently became the Archdiocesan Financial Administrator for nine years.

Herbie said, 'The real enjoyment has been working as a layman in the Church and collaborating with the priests and religious. It's given me a great insight into my own spirituality and allowed me to benefit from working with a lot of gifted and dedicated people.'

## Long journey to the altar



Fr Long Hai Nguyen

Former Vietnamese Air Force helicopter pilot forced to flee the Communist regime finally reached his destination in February at the altar of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral (Adelaide) where he was ordained a priest. 'I've been waiting for this for quite a long time,' said Fr Long Hai Nguyen. Escaping war, resettling in Australia and sponsoring his family's reunification meant his childhood dream of becoming a priest was put on hold for more than 42 years.

'For me, it will be a wonderful day, and for my family, and my mum,' he said. 'Even though Mum is no longer here, she will be praying for me. I think on that day I will feel my desire finally fulfilled.'

He was in his late 20s when he arrived in Australia, migrating from a Malaysian refugee camp with his brothers John and Phuong. The three brothers, along with 70 others,

fled Vietnam by boat. They were adrift for a week before reaching an oil rig. Fr Long Hai said he could not remain in Vietnam after the fall of Saigon in 1975 because he had trained as a helicopter pilot in the United States for the South Vietnam Airforce.

He attempted to flee twice. The first time, he was caught by authorities and spent one week in jail. The second time he was imprisoned for six months with hard labour. It took him five years to escape.

'I went through many other struggles but I always felt that the providence of God was with me and the guidance of the Holy Spirit was with me.'

When Long Hai arrived in Adelaide, he began looking for work to support his parents and his siblings left behind in Vietnam and to eventually enable their migration to Australia. He worked for more than 20 years at the Simpson washing machine factory. His parents joined him in Adelaide in 1989 and his mother died here in 2013. He has six brothers, two sisters and 14 nephews and nieces.

His thanksgiving Mass was held at St Mary Margaret's Church on February 7.

Edited from article by Rebecca DiGirolamo Photo: Ben Macmahon. Courtesy of *The Southern Cross* newspaper, Adelaide

## On exercise

Deacon Mick Flew recently joined elements of the 1st Brigade during an exercise at the Cultana Training Area, SA.

Deacon Flew is a long-serving Army member who reached the rank of WO1 before discerning a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate and studying through the In-Service Training Scheme for ADF Chaplains.

He undertook his theological studies in Brisbane and was then posted to Sydney for his pastoral formation, which was undertaken at St Monica's Parish, Richmond.

After commissioning as a chaplain in late 2014, he took up his posting to Lone Pine Barracks, Palmerston, Darwin in January 2015.



Deacon Mick Flew (on the right) chatting with engineers in front of a Husky mine detector vehicle

## Donations

We greatly acknowledge the following donations:

- *Serving Faithfully* reader donations and general public donations \$5,500.

- Knights of the Southern Cross via the Archdiocese of Melbourne Priests' Support and Education fund \$16,000 and also the Knights' Qld Branch \$900.
- Diocese of Sale through collection at five parishes \$3,600.

## Padre Lionel Marsden, SM (Brigadier Alan Hodges AM [Ret'd])



Padre Marsden as a captain

In the May 2014 issue of *Serving Faithfully*, Major General Phillips gave a moving account of the Marist Mission in Japan and the key role played by Padre Marsden. This article provides some further details of the life of this remarkable man as a chaplain and of his commitment to bringing the faith to Japan.

Lionel Marsden was born on 12 July 1911 in Bundarra, NSW, about 80 km north-west of Armidale. He was ordained on 30 November 1940 and enlisted in the AIF on 23 August 1941 as an Army chaplain with the rank of captain and was posted to the 2/13th Australian General Hospital

(AGH). Shortly before, on 11 August, the unit was formed at Caulfield Racecourse following an appeal from the 8th Division in Malaya for more medical support. Notwithstanding the hasty formation of the unit, at the end of the month a successful unit march-past was held with the salute taken by the Governor of Victoria.

When the unit embarked on 1 September on the hospital ship HMAHS *Wanganella*, Chaplain Marsden was already on board as he had come on the ship from Sydney, bringing the total unit strength to 212. *Wanganella* arrived in Singapore on 15 September 1941.

Although there was a rush to send the unit to Singapore, Padre Marsden found that the social life there was undisturbed and that hospital units were the last thing wanted. 10 AGH in Malacca was easily able to cope with routine sicknesses among Australian troops. In November, 13 AGH moved to Jahore to occupy a large modern mental hospital. General Blamey visited the unit on 3 December and congratulated it on the achievement of establishing the hospital from 'such an impossible or unlikely start.' Five days later the Malay peninsula was under attack from the Japanese and the troops were further shocked by the sinking of the HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse.

As the wounded from the 2/30 Battalion were evacuated from Gemas, Padre Marsden gave the Last Sacraments to the urgent cases. He said, 'I stooped over one prone figure on a stretcher, and read his identification papers – Brennan, 2/30 Bn – R.C. That must be the name of scores of Diggers, but somehow feeling that my question would be answered in the affirmative, I whispered in this Digger's ear: "Come from Blacktown?" "Yes." "Go to Christian Brothers, Lewisham?" "Yes." We had only been together through five years of Schooling ... So those "first" Last Sacraments have vivid memories for me.' Under pressure of the rapid Japanese advance, 13 AGH returned to Singapore to continue providing medical support until the surrender. Subsequently, it functioned as a hospital in the POW Changi Camp.

Padre Marsden gave an extensive interview, which was printed in the Sydney Catholic Weekly on 15 November 1945. He reported that one of the unforgettable features of life at Changi was the way Catholic soldiers lived up to their religious obligations. They gathered together at convenient places for the celebration of Mass and recitation of the Rosary.

Within the camp a number of chapels were constructed, the most elaborate being that involving Padre Marsden, complete with stained glass windows salvaged from the ruins of the Garrison Church in Singapore, and tiles for the floor found around the camp. An Indian medical officer, who was an expert in Gregorian Chant, formed a choir which performed *Missa de Angelis* at the first Solemn High Mass. With the assistance of two Irish priests, there were three Masses daily, nightly Rosary, regular discussion groups, Benediction on Wednesday and Sunday nights and monthly Solemn High Mass.

In April 1943 the Japanese formed 'F' Force (3,662 Australian and 3,400 British) to work in Thailand on a 420 km rail line. The inducements to join the force included: a healthier climate, gramophones and canteens to be provided, no long marches, transport for the unfit, medicines to be provided, and 30 per cent of unfit men may be included. Of course, the reality could not have been more different. At a grand concert to farewell F Force, Padre Marsden made a toast to 'Our Visitors'.

Subsequently 'H' Force was also formed to go to Thailand. An unofficial history of 13 AGH records, 'The only 13th Australian General Hospital member in this party was our popular Catholic padre Lionel Marsden. This young priest, then aged 32, did sterling work on Konyu 2 (later known as Malayan Hamlet) in Thailand and comforted 179 Australians who died whilst working as Slaves of Nippon.'

Despite the terrible conditions, deprivations and treatment from the Japanese, Padre Marsden said that in this veritable hell on earth, God was not forgotten. On the first Sunday after arrival, Mass was offered on a table which had been hastily erected after being used the previous day for an acute appendix operation. Mass was then celebrated every Sunday before work started and daily Mass whenever possible. Padre Marsden was given permission to visit other camps along the track to which no chaplain was attached and was, therefore, able to bring the Sacraments to these men.

In June 1943 cholera broke out in the camp and by September, when H Force work on the railway had been completed, Padre Marsden had buried 149 Australians and 150 British. By that stage only 50 of the original 850 were able to work. When F and H Forces returned to Singapore after nine months, they had lost 3000 and 992 men respectively, and there were many deaths in 1944 from the after-effects.

On return to Singapore the forces were established in a new camp known as Sime Road. Padre Marsden was once again involved in construction of a chapel and had the assistance of Lieutenant Hamish Cameron-Smith, a Scottish Catholic architect who drew up plans, and English Lieutenant Hugh Simon-Thwaites who was converted, he said, somewhere between Cape Town and Bombay (and subsequently ordained as a Jesuit in UK after the war).

Padre Marsden said, 'A beautiful garden was laid out around the chapel, ... these two young officers spent hours each day keeping the church in repair, beautifying the garden and doing any odd job the chaplain required. In front of the chapel a memorial plaque was erected and on it was inscribed these words:



Padre Marsden with post-war admirers and a Japanese samurai sword

Continued p. 5

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*'This chapel is dedicated to Our Lady Help of Christians and in memory of our deceased comrades who died in Malaya, the Netherland East Indies, Thailand and Burma, over whose remains there was no Christian symbol.'*

In January 1945 all prisoners were moved to the civilian gaol at Changi and the civilian internees there were sent to the Sime Road camp. Among the internees were two Australian Redemptorists, seven Dutch and Belgian priests, three Little Sisters of the Poor and two Canossian Sisters, who were all able to resume religious life using the chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians. In the Changi gaol, new chapels were constructed, one in the hospital area and another in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Catholic life resumed quickly but, due to the shortage of altar breads, priests were permitted to celebrate only two Masses each week and soldiers were asked to receive Communion not more than once a month.

Some time after the Japanese surrender, Padre Marsden returned by ship to Sydney. He celebrated Mass on board every morning with the last Mass celebrated off Sydney Heads.

While Padre Marsden was a prisoner he made a commitment that 'If I ever get out of here alive, I will go to Japan as a missionary.' It took some years for the Marist authorities to support his vision, but in 1949 he went to Nara to the Japanese Diocese of Kyoto. The Melbourne Argus of 19 May reported that Fr Marsden and other survivors had decided that

the best monument to the men who died in the POW camps would be 'a mission work which would bring at least one soul to Christ for every man who died down there.' At that time Nara had only one small Japanese-style church and just a handful of Catholics.

After many years in Nara, Fr Marsden died on 5 May 1971, leaving a wonderful legacy. Six Marist Fathers continued his work until the order closed its mission in the city in 2012. As a result of this Marist commitment for over 60 years, there is now a Christian community in Nara of more than 4,000 together with eight churches, five kindergartens, a day nursery, two aged care homes, a toy library for handicapped children and a club for the parents of disabled children.



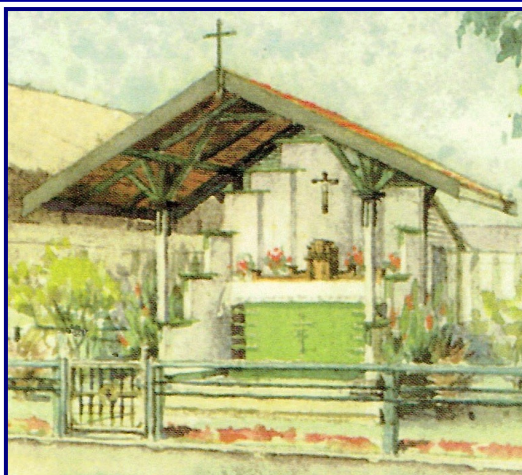
*Fr Marsden in later life*

## The Changi Chapel

The previous article on Padre Marsden gave details of the construction of Our Lady Help of Christians Chapel at Changi. Several months after the Japanese surrender Cpl Max Lee of the War Graves Commission was sent from Malaya to Singapore to continue with the task of exhuming bodies for transfer to the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Singapore. There, Cpl Lee was also involved in the supervision of Japanese prisoners who were put to work destroying structures built by prisoners, including 13 chapels. When it came to Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Chapel, he felt, however, that it should be preserved. Cpl Lee was granted permission by the British authorities to send the chapel to the Australian War Memorial. It was sketched, photographed, carefully dismantled and packed in 14 crates and ended up in storage at the Royal Military College, Duntroon.

In 1985, when the War Memorial was culling some of its storage collection the Director, Air Vice-Marshal Flemming AO, came across tiles and building materials packed in straw in the crates. When the contents were identified, AVM Flemming contacted Bishop Mayne, Catholic Bishop of the Services, and proposed the erection of the chapel and its dedication to Singapore POWs. The Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General O'Donnell AC, strongly supported the proposal and a site was provided adjoining the ANZAC Memorial Chapel in the grounds of the Royal Military College.

The late Mgr Gerry Cudmore AM, the Army Principal Chaplain, contributed greatly to the development



*The POW Chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians, Changi, Singapore. Original by Lieutenant Cameron-Smith.*

of the project. Max Lee was traced and guided Royal Australian Engineers in the chapel reconstruction, using photographs of the chapel, notes provided by Lieutenant Cameron-Smith and diagrams that had been drawn on rice paper. The reconstructed chapel is almost identical to the original with the addition of two brass plaques. One of these outlines the history of the chapel and describes it as 'an act of enduring faith in the midst of extreme adversity.' Conflicts resulting in Australian POWs are listed on the other plaque, which states that it was unveiled by 'a former prisoner of war.' All costs were covered through a national appeal sponsored by the RSL. Lieutenant General O'Donnell gave Mgr Cudmore an

official commendation recognising him as the founding father of the Changi Chapel.

The chapel was rebuilt, with the agreement of the POW Association, as Australia's National Memorial to our Prisoners of War. It was dedicated on VP Day, 15 August 1988, at the same time as, and on the anniversary of, the liberation of the Changi prison camp. Among the small number of services since

held at the Chapel was a Mass celebrated in 1989 to honour those prisoners who built the chapel, and another on VP Day 2003 to honour the spiritual support provided by POW Army chaplains to their fellow prisoners.

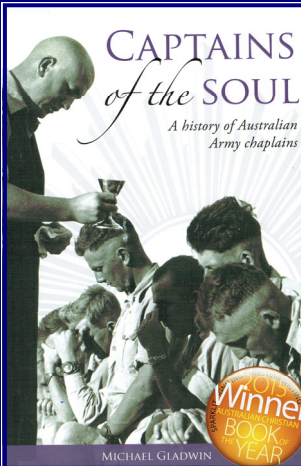
The National Capital Authority is now responsible for the memorial, on the same basis as those located each side of Anzac Parade leading to the Australian War Memorial.

A replica of the chapel is displayed in the Army Museum at Gaza Ridge Barracks, Bandiana, Victoria.



*Changi Chapel, National Prisoner of War Memorial  
Royal Military College Duntroon*

## Captains of the Soul



Dr Michael Gladwin, author of *Captains of the Soul*, was the winner of the 2015 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award. He is a Lecturer in History at the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, at St Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra. His research interests include the history of Christianity and its interaction with empires ranging from the Roman to the British; the interaction of Christian theology with 18th–20th century European thought and culture; and the place of Christianity in Australian

history, literature and popular culture.

Dr Gladwin's teaching is in the areas of early Church history, Reformation history, Christianity in Australian history, modern Christianity in a global context, and advanced historical research methods.

*Captains of the Soul* was recently reviewed by Chaplain Geoff Webb, former Principal Anglican Chaplain to the Australian Army:

In 1942 the Reverend Hugh Cunningham was serving as a chaplain with the elements of the Australian Army captured with the fall of Singapore to the Japanese. He went into captivity with the rest of that unhappy band finding his way to imprisonment on the notorious Burma Railway. There he was treated extremely badly by the guards until one of them gained an inkling into his special status among the men, and gave him an arm band with green Japanese characters on it. It was only after the war that Hugh Cunningham found out that they said, 'Captain of the souls of men'.

With this anecdote Dr Gladwin begins his history of Australian Army Chaplaincy which he entitles, in the light of this story, *Captains of the Soul*. He sums up the story of Hugh Cunningham this way, 'As I will attempt to show, Cunningham personified a model of practical service and religious and moral leadership that had been forged by the Australian Army Chaplains' Department during the Great War, and by the generation of chaplains before them in South Africa.' So he summarises in his typically clear, winsome and succinct style his aim in writing a history of the Royal Australian Army Chaplains' Department.

The book was commissioned and published to coincide with the formal centenary of the RAACHD on the 1st of December 2013. As such, it is part of the Army History Unit's goal of having an official history of every corps in the Army. *Captains of the Soul* goes well beyond simply an official history

to be a very accessible account of the courage and commitment of Australian clergy who left their parishes to bring the presence of God to men and women who had taken up the challenge of serving their country, and as a result often faced, death, injury, privation, disease and all the other horrors attendant on armed conflict.

*Captains of the Soul* grew out of the need for the story of Australian Army Chaplaincy to be told. Army Chaplaincy was one of the few Army Corps that had not yet been covered in an official history. In addition Army Chaplaincy had only been covered in part by a few scholars and by comparison with other Army chaplaincies around the world, Australian Chaplaincy had received relatively scant attention. Dr Gladwin's approach has been to provide a complete but not unnecessarily detailed history of Australian chaplaincy from its historical antecedents up to the time of writing. *Captains of the Soul* is a very accessible and readable account of the story of chaplains' ministry to soldiers as well as an acutely-realised account of the historical development of the Department within the Army. Dr Gladwin's aim was to produce a readable account of a vital but, as he puts it, 'undeservedly obscure' ministry. He has drawn as much as possible on the reminiscences of chaplains to illustrate and enliven his account of the role of the Padre (the common title used for chaplains by both officers and men). A title that captures that the chaplain's role is both unique and valued, as 'Padre' is generally used instead of sir as a form of address.

Dr Gladwin has succeeded in his aim, and the result is a warm but not uncritical account and appraisal of an often-overlooked ministry of the church. The book tells how Padres have pioneered both ecumenical and interfaith ministries, and have established themselves as a vital part of the life of the Australian Army. This tradition of service for God and mankind continues to this day and *Captains of the Soul* is a worthy testament to this vital ministry of God's people.



Principal Chaplain  
Geoff Webb

Reprinted by permission of Chaplain Geoff Webb and the Bible Society.

The book is available through Big Sky Publishing.



Author: Dr Michael Gladwin

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is a newsletter of the Catholic Diocese of the Australian Defence Force.

It is published quarterly by the Catholic Military Ordinariate of the Australian Defence Force.

The Diocese is composed of members of the Australian Defence Force and their families wherever they may be serving.

Its people are scattered widely across Australia and overseas.

*Serving Faithfully* aims to be a means of sharing events and experiences from across the whole Diocese.

Articles are welcome to be submitted for publication and should be addressed to

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## Sky pilot: Fr Pat reaches for more than the sky

(Lindy McNamara, *The Southern Cross* newspaper Adelaide)

On March 17 Fr Pat Woods celebrated 40 years of priesthood, much of which was spent serving as a chaplain in the RAAF. With Anzac Day later this month, he took time out of his busy schedule to talk to Lindy McNamara about what initially inspired him to join the priesthood and how his service took flight.

Bobby Kennedy, Martin Luther King and Bob Dylan were all inspirational men of the 1960s ... they brought messages of peace and justice and for a young Pat Woods they struck a chord, with the thought of being able to 'change the world' leading him to the doors of the seminary. 'In my generation you probably had a lot of people in the world who made an impact on us – they all had a message. In the '60s and '70s there was this message culture that we "have to change the world", that we were in a position to change the world.

'For me, my inspiration was probably Bobby Kennedy, from the point of view that he actually made a lot of sense in what he said. The guys who went into the seminary with me had a similar perception of the world ... that you could change things.'

But the Vietnam War – and in Fr Pat's case the assassination of RFK – had a huge impact on these idealistic young men.

'When I went to the seminary there were 80 guys there and by the time I left there were 22. The guys became a bit disillusioned and went off to do other things.'

However, this Scottish-born lad continued on his journey with God, ending up in the Elizabeth South Parish where he was ordained. Looking back on his service he is modest about any accomplishments. Others are more generous in their praise and those serving in the Air Force have a deep gratitude for Fr Pat's support during their tours of duty.

Joining the Air Force was never on the radar for the priest, who was content to serve his northern suburbs parish.

'I never had a plan to do this,' he admitted, but explained when a terminally-ill priest asked him to step in as his replacement as the chaplain at the Edinburgh base, he could hardly say no.

Initially Fr Pat joined as a reservist and then became a

member of the permanent Air Force, which saw him undertaking overseas tours, as well as assisting after the Bali bombings.

Chaplains play a unique role in the armed forces. They provide essential counselling and support – mentally and spiritually – to personnel across all faiths as well as those of no religious affiliation.



*Fr Pat (on steps) speaking with Air Force personnel preparing to fly*

Besides conducting Sunday church services, the chaplain is responsible for Anzac Day services, funerals and baptisms, pastoral care, and character and personal development.

While Fr Pat can't disclose specifics about much of his 30 years of service, he is quite open when it comes to praising the men and women who fight for their country. He said the 'hardest sermon' during his time as chaplain was given on the day before the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Only two days prior to this Pope John Paul II has said there was no justification for the war and Fr Pat had to talk

to the troops in a very diplomatic way.

In what he laughingly describes as 'back to the future' moment, Fr Pat returned to the Elizabeth Parish about five years ago. Now he works tirelessly for the local community helping parishioners to cope during difficult times as the closure of the Holden plant nears. While he is no longer in full time service with the RAAF, he continues as the Catholic chaplain at Edinburgh, conducting baptisms, weddings and other celebrations as needed.

Each year he is called on to lead the annual Anzac Day service at One Tree Hill and said he was extremely proud to conduct the blessing of the new war memorial unveiled at Two Wells recently, in honour of all the people killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

While March 17 may have been a milestone in his personal timeline, he described it as insignificant compared with the importance of April 25 each year.

And he hopes, just as Bobby Kennedy would have wanted, that his service to God has in some small way made a difference to the lives of men and women serving our country.

Photo and story courtesy of *The Southern Cross* newspaper Adelaide

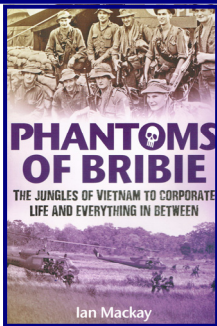
### A gift in your Will

Making a gift to the Catholic Military Ordinariate is a meaningful way to fund the education of future priests and deacons and to support our clergy in providing spiritual guidance to our service men and women and their families.

To make a bequest, you should consult your solicitor or trustee company. It may be sufficient to make an addition or amendment to an existing will by adding a codicil.

A useful website for more information is: [includecharity.com.au](http://includecharity.com.au)

## Phantoms of Bribie



Operation Bribie was an intense battle in Phuoc Tuy province of South Vietnam on 17 and 18 February 1967, between 6 RAR and two companies of the Viet Cong D445 Battalion with reinforcements of North Vietnamese regulars. Major Ian Mackay commanded B Company 6 RAR, with the support of artillery, air strikes and armoured personnel carriers. The company found itself quickly and heavily involved in fighting a determined dug-in enemy, which ended in a stalemate with 8 Australians killed and 28 wounded, while the enemy's losses were estimated to be between 50 and 70 killed.

Ian Mackay's book *Phantoms of Bribie* is a broad-ranging account of his military, sporting and Australian and international business experiences.



Author: Ian Mackay

Following the battle, Ian tells of a memorial service:

'With Easter upon us, the horror of Bribie casualties still fresh in our minds and our near-escape from a possible deadly accident with the artillery, I decided to hold a private memorial service for B Company. We found a very effective retreat in a deep dry-season river bed, which in Australia was commonly called a donga. I secured the services of just the right preacher, Padre Eugene Harley, the Roman Catholic priest attached to the Task Force Headquarters. Father Harley and I had first met in Holsworthy in the early 1960s and he had been in Malaya with us as Padre when I was Adjutant of 2RAR in Terendak Camp in Malacca.

'We had almost a full complement of B Company assembled complete with our Vietnamese Army interpreters and it was a marvellously uplifting service conducted by Eugene with great dignity in the simple creek bed setting. Over the following weeks I noticed the application and keenness of our interpreters was very much improved. I finally complimented the senior sergeant interpreter on his team's improved efficiency and responsiveness. The reply was not exactly what I expected. He said, "Sir, we did not know you were a Catholic:." To which I stupidly replied, "I am not a Catholic, it is just that the Padre Harley is my friend and happens to be the finest padre in the Army." It was not very clever of me, because within a few days, the standard of interpreter assistance reverted to its former low level.'

(A tribute to Mgr Harley on the occasion of his 60th anniversary of ordination was printed in the September 2013 issue of *Serving Faithfully*; and in the April 2015 issue there was a report of his award of an OAM in the Australia Day Honours.)

The book is available through Big Sky Publishing.



Chaplain Raphael Abboud  
(Photo courtesy of Parramatta Advertiser)

Father Raphael Abboud was brought up in Lebanon with his eleven brothers and six sisters. He was educated by the Maronite Order and then commenced engineering at university. However, he felt a strong call to the priesthood and spent several years following this vocation at Holy Spirit University in Kaslik, Lebanon. He was then sent to Rome to continue his studies at the Opus Dei University of the Holy Cross. Following his ordination in mid-2009, he accepted an invitation to come to Australia and arrived in April 2010. He is a priest at Australia's largest Maronite Parish, Our lady of Lebanon, at Harris Park in Sydney.

In 2014 Fr Abboud was enlisted as an RAAF Chaplain and twice weekly provides valuable pastoral support at RAAF Richmond.



'Blue' Doyle in South Vietnam 1968

### Vale: Major Mervyn Lawrence 'Blue' Doyle

Few men in the Australian Army could be said to have been so widely loved and respected as 'Blue' Doyle. Born of Irish stock on 11 April 1931 in Paddington, NSW, he died on New Year's Day 2016 in Brisbane.

In the March edition of the 3 RAR Association magazine, *Old Faithful*, Major General B W 'Hori' Howard pays tribute to 'Blue' saying that he enlisted in the Regular Army as a soldier in 1954 and served in 1 RAR in Japan, Korea and Malaya as well as 3 RAR in Vietnam and 9 RAR. He was commissioned in 1964 and he retired in 1974.

Always bright and cheerful, 'Blue' was a delight to be around. I remember him as honest and true and as one who never spoke an unkind word of others. Commissioned from the ranks he gave exceptional military service, notably as Mortar Officer at the Battles for Fire Support Bases CORAL and BALMORAL.

Perhaps more than for anything else, 'Blue' will be remembered for his Rosary beads which were always at hand. Even the non-believers respected 'Blue' for this and for his devotion to the Church.

I am sure that our Mother Mary will be looking after 'Blue' in that other place.

(By Peter Phillips)