

NEWS RELEASE
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Sarum Lecture Draws WW1 Chaplaincy Lessons for Today's Church

Today's Church can learn lessons from the experiences of World War One chaplains confronted with the horrors of the Western Front. That's the message that will be given by a former head of chaplaincy to the armed forces in a February lecture in Salisbury.

All are welcome to the inaugural Robbins Lecture, which will be given by the Ven Stephen Robbins CB, who was a chaplain for 27 years and Chaplain General from 2008-2011. Stephen's service included tours in Iraq and Northern Ireland.

The lecture will take place at Thursday 15 February at Sarum College in Salisbury Cathedral Close. Drinks and canapés will be served from 6.15pm, and the lecture will begin at 7pm.

The Ven Stephen Robbins CB, said: "It is 100 years since the publication of *The Church in the Furnace*, which was a collection of essays by temporary chaplains in the First World War whose understanding of the Church had been shaken up by their experiences at the front. I am going to speak about their writings on their relationship with soldiers, and soldiers' relationship with God.

"One thing they noticed was how the soldiers looked after one another, and the sacrificial life they showed. Although many of them weren't religious, they lived out values of self-giving love far better than most members of the Church.

"There are still important lessons from First World War chaplaincy for the Church today. There are also many insights learned of contemporary military chaplaincy from which the Church as a whole could benefit.

"Service personnel continue to be exposed to horrifying experiences at times. One of the most harrowing moments of my ministry as a Chaplain was being in the morgue as the victims of the 1998 Omagh bombing were brought in, the worst atrocity of the Northern Ireland Troubles. Through incidents of that nature, service people continue to love one another without asking for reward. That is the core job of any Christian."

The Revd Canon Professor James Woodward, Principal of Sarum College, added: "Stephen is an entertaining and knowledgeable speaker, and this lecture will be of interest to people inside and outside the Church, with or without military experience, and is particularly appropriate as it takes place almost exactly a century after the final, bloody, campaigns of World War one began.

“In future years, this lecture will be given by holders Vann Fellows, postdoctoral researchers studying the relationship between Christianity and the armed forces at the University of Durham’s Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies.”

Stephen will be introduced by Brigadier Allan Mallinson, who writes as a journalist, a military historian and author of military fiction.

As well as the lecture, the College’s new display of Padre William Addison's war medals, including a replica of his Victoria Cross, will be unveiled at 6.30pm. Addison was a former student of Salisbury Theological College who was priested in 1913.

The lecture was first given at Durham University in November 2017 and is a collaboration with the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies.

The speaker will be introduced by Brigadier Allan Mallinson, who writes as a journalist, a military historian and author of military fiction.

Prior to the lecture, we will unveil the College’s new display of WWI medals awarded to the Salisbury Theological College graduate Padre William Addison, including a replica of his Victoria Cross.

Drinks and canapés will be served from 6.15pm with the lecture beginning at 7pm. The Addison display will be unveiled at 6.30pm.

Kindly RSVP to info@sarum.ac.uk by Friday 9 February.

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For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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