

Institution: University of Birmingham
Unit of Assessment: UoA 30 History
Title of case study: Using History to inform Armed Forces policy and training
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Research by staff in the Centre for War Studies at the University of Birmingham, has informed continuing professional development (CPD) and training in the Armed Forces in the UK and overseas. This includes the design and delivery of training, study tours and materials for chaplains and NATO senior officers. Additionally academics have facilitated access to research to stimulate policy debate in the Armed Forces through invited presentations to professional conferences, and nationally and internationally by informing the content of Select Committee expert evidence.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) The Centre for War Studies within the History department at Birmingham has long made contributing to CPD a core aspect of its research and other activities, including its teaching, expert consultancy and public outreach. All members of the centre are engaged in these activities, but the co-ordinated areas delineated here draw on the underpinning research carried out by two members of the Centre in particular: Dr Peter Gray (appointed 2008 as Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) Air Power Fellow); and Dr Michael Snape (appointed 2004, Reader in Religion, War and Society).</p> <p>Gray's research, built on his long career as an RAF Air Commodore. His research involved an analysis of the major conflicts in which air power had been used from the British Air Offensive against Germany (see output R1 below) through the first Gulf War in 1991 and the period in which the Northern and Southern No-Fly Zones were enforced, to the latest action over Libya in support of UNSCR 1973 (R2, R3). Its key findings spoke directly to current policy debates about strategic planning for air power in future conflicts by emphasizing the way in which 'lessons' from earlier conflicts are used and misused to support the case for specific equipment procurement priorities within Defence, or to make the case for higher numbers of force elements at readiness. This has had 2 main elements. First, as military doctrine evolves from 'fundamental principles' inevitably drawn from history, the 'lessons' are often distorted to fit pre-ordained conclusions. Second, once these principles are generated they are reinforced by their inclusion into training at military colleges and more widely, with the result that ensuing dissertations and papers incorporating the received wisdom. The result is that policy makers at the strategic level are often offered only one interpretation of these lessons, and often a simplistic one, which is of little utility to leadership at this level, given the ambiguities and trade-offs of strategic planning.</p> <p>Snape's research, which culminated in R4 below, was undertaken at the request of the Chaplain-General and was funded by the Royal Army Chaplain's Department (RACHD) Association. It spoke to the long-standing debates, especially among British Christians, about the presence of chaplains in the British Armed Forces, which were given renewed impetus by the 'War on Terror' and by widely unpopular operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Snape's monograph was the first scholarly history of British army chaplaincy up to the end of the Korean War, and was specifically conceived to place these debates within their broader historical context. Its key findings have been threefold: 1.) that the presentation, nature and organisation of British army chaplaincy has been profoundly moulded by the interplay between changing political and public pressures as well as common patters of personal, professional, moral and theological problems experienced by British army chaplains; 2.) that chaplains in the British army played a significant role as 'force multipliers'; 3.) that the nature and development of British army chaplaincy strongly shaped and was shaped by other models of military chaplaincy (e.g. in Commonwealth countries and the United States). All of these issues have direct relevance for the role and training of army chaplains, and since the publication of R4, Snape has continued to research and publish on closely related subjects: e.g. the religious and welfare work of civilian organisations in the British army (R5); how questions about the afterlife have been addressed and understood in the British army (R6); comparing religious organisation and experience in the British, American and Canadian armies; and the public perception of British army chaplains.</p>

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- R1) Gray, P., *The Leadership, Direction and Legitimacy of the Strategic Air Offensive against Germany from Inception to 1945* (Continuum, 2012). **[Listed in REF2]**
- R2) Gray, P., 'RAF Air Policing over Iraq – Uses and Abuses of History', *Royal Air Force Air Power Review*, Vol. 14, No., Spring 2011. **[Listed in REF2]**
- R3) Gray, P., 'Balanced Air Power in an Age of Austerity – The Leadership challenge'. *Royal Air Force Air Power Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Summer 2011. **[Available from HEI on request]**
- R4) Snape, M., *The Royal Army Chaplains' Department 1796-1953: Clergy under Fire* (Boydell and Brewer, 2008), **[Listed in REF2]**
- R5) Snape, M., 'Anglican Army Chaplains in the First World War: Goodbye to Goodbye To All That', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 62, 2011, 318-345. **[Listed in REF2]**
- R6) Snape, M., *The Back Parts of War: The YMCA memoirs and letters of Barclay Baron, 1915 to 1919* (Church of England Record Society, Volume 16, 2009) **[Available from HEI on request]**

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

1) Professional development and consultancy has been a core priority of the Centre for War Studies since its inception, as evidenced not only through the research outlined in section 2 above and its long-standing focus on training current and former Armed Forces staff through postgraduate programmes (including the MA Air Power Studies, which in 2013 had enrolled 11 RAF officers), but also on-site battlefield studies for senior military commanders. As a result, CPD is the chief mechanism through which the research conducted in the Centre for War Studies has achieved impact. This has predominantly focused on two communities: a.) military chaplains and b.) air force officers and professionals.

a.) Military Chaplaincy CPD

On the basis of research in output R4 above (which is required reading for newly commissioned chaplains as they undertake their basic training' within the Army Recruiting and Training Division – see source 1 below), Snape has **designed and delivered historical training** that has been embedded in the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre (AFCC) course for new entry army, air force and navy chaplains from the UK and internationally. Training takes the form of a twice yearly, five-day study tour of the Ypres Salient, and places emphasis on the importance of historical context (here the First World War) in the training and professional development of Armed Forces chaplains; for many it is the first time they have studied the period in depth. Ten trips took place in the period 2008-2013, with Snape delivering the training to an average of 10 trainees each trip. Snape's historical training has been subjected to rigorous evaluation processes by the AFCC and is described as 'tremendously successful' by the Chief Instructor and contributing 'significantly to the quality of life and training of student chaplains' (source 2). Training continues, and further study tours took place October 2013 and May 2014.

In addition, since 2008 Snape has designed and led three two-day training courses for serving army, Royal Navy and RAF chaplains, each attended by more than 80 participants as part of their mandatory CPD (delivered June, September and December 2011). These training courses addressed the interaction of war with British religious experience and identity since 1700 in order to help chaplains put their professional experiences into a broader historical and cultural context. Snape also went on to contribute the historical content of a five-day training course for senior army chaplains held in Malta, in December 2013. According to the Army Recruiting and Training Division, Snape's 'contribution and impact to date have been hugely significant.' (source 1).

In 2013 Snape also began assisting the Chaplain-General in the **development of a new form of moral values training** for the army, involving a March 2013 conference of thirty-five of the army's most senior chaplains.

b.) Air Force Officers and Professionals

Gray's work has fed directly into professional training via the MA Air Power Studies mentioned above. In addition, in Autumn 2011, Gray delivered seminars for the French Air Force at the Centre for Aerospace Strategic Studies. He presented to a multinational audience of French,

American and other NATO senior officers (an invited audience of 50+ drawn from senior ranks in the US, UK and France and consisting of policy makers and air power planners) in Paris in December 2011. The seminars came from the UK and French governments' desire, expressed in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, to seek much closer defence relations, and the paper provided a foundation for future thinking on the problematic issues surrounding integration of French air power into coalitions of choice and NATO. The French Air Force welcomed the challenge to their thinking offered by Gray's input (source 3).

2) More broadly, Snape and Gray have contributed to professional development by **facilitating military professionals' access to research** via directing and presenting to relevant professional conferences. This has the additional impact of **stimulating policy debate** among the military communities.

In conjunction with the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, Snape organises and directs an ongoing series of international training conferences on religion and war that have significant implications for chaplaincy policy. Established in 2009 by the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, four of these 'Amport House Conferences' have been held to date (June 2009, June 2011, June 2012, July 2013) and have been attended by around one hundred academics and Armed Forces chaplains, including an increasing number of US chaplains. These conferences serve as three-day forums in which scholars and chaplains **deepen their understanding of religion and war** by sharing, respectively, their academic research and their first-hand experiences and insights (source 1).

Since his appointment in 2008 Gray has presented research findings at over a dozen (on average three per year) Heads of Air Forces conferences (UK, Australia, Baltic countries, NATO/European Defence Agency, RAeS), all of which have two primary functions: to educate their officer cadre on key thinking on contemporary air power debates through expert speakers; and to utilise that thinking to influence the policy formulation process. Audiences have numbered between 85 and 350 participants, comprising: senior members of the Armed Forces of the host nation; chiefs of air forces from many other countries; the attaché community as well as a large tranche of staff officers; press; and speaking academics. The conferences are explicitly conceived as forums in which the latest research is used to inform training and policy. This is typified by a 2013 conference at the RAAF Air Power Development Centre in Canberra, to which Gray was invited to return to Australia (having presented on the Leadership Challenges facing air forces in an age of austerity in 2011) to speak in order to 'highlight the important meta-trends in the use of military force' and thereby afford 'fresh insight into the forces and factors that have shaped air power development to date and may shape it yet in the years ahead' (source 4).

3) In addition to promoting policy debate within the Armed Forces, research has **contributed to national and international policy debate** on a number of occasions. Gray's research in output R3 provided the requisite academic rigour for the expert evidence provided by the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS) to the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence in preparation for the Strategic Defence and Security Review (submitted August 2010) (source 5). The same applied to the specialist evidence to the same committee that the RAeS submitted on drones and their legality in August 2013. According to the Head of Research at the RAeS, 'the combination of Dr Gray's research, writing and briefings has had a significant on policy formulation in Government, the Armed Forces and in the Corporate world' (source 6).

Gray's research in output R2 had an important influence on the Select Committee's deliberations as the United Nations imposed a no-fly zone over Libya under UNSCR 1973 in 2011. This was achieved via both formal workshops held by individual members, and informal contacts who had sought Gray's professional opinion, and culminated in an invited article by Gray published in *The House Magazine* in March 2011 (source 7).

Demonstrating the ongoing nature of these relationships, Gray will be serving on a one year Policy Commission launched on 23 Sept. 2013 at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton; it will investigate the implications for policy makers of warfare becoming more remote, in particular

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through increasing use of drones.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- [1] Factual statement provided by Chaplain, Army Recruiting and Training Division.
- [2] Factual statement provided by Chief Instructor, Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre.
- [3] Factual statement provided by Director, French Air Force at the Centre for Aerospace. Strategic Studies.
- [4] Factual statement provided by Director, RAAF Air Power Development Centre.
- [5] RAeS report for the House of Commons Select Committee.
- [6] Factual statement provided by the Head of Research, RAeS.
- [7] House of Commons magazine: <http://centrallobby.politicshome.com/latestnews/article-detail/newsarticle/no-fly-zones-lessons-from-the-1990s/>