

Westminster Abbey



A SERVICE TO CELEBRATE
THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE
SOLDIERS, SAILORS, AIRMEN
AND FAMILIES ASSOCIATION
(SSAFA) FORCES HELP



Thursday 18 February 2010
11.00 am

HISTORICAL NOTE

The history of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) – Forces Help is the history of the men and women of Britain's Armed Forces and their families.

The charity was formed in 1885 through the vision and determination of one man. On 14 February 1885, as the Second Expeditionary Force set sail for Egypt, Major (later Colonel Sir) James Gildea wrote to *The Times* appealing for funds and volunteers to look after the families left behind. So was born the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association whose initial object, quite simply, was to 'aid the wives and families of men of all branches of the Land and Sea Forces of the United Kingdom'.

Things got off to a flying start. Committees of volunteers were quickly established around the country and the then Princess of Wales (the future Queen Alexandra) was appointed President. Soon afterwards, a Nursing Branch was set up to provide district nursing for servicemen in garrisons and seaport towns at home and abroad. In the years that followed, the Association supported thousands of families struggling to cope while men were away on active service.

Before, during, and after the two World Wars, the Association, whose name changed in 1921 to The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association, stepped up to assist those in need. A unique blend of very practical support and advice, coupled with the commitment and dedication of thousands of volunteers, shaped everything that the charity did.

Much has happened in the last half century, including the amalgamation with the Forces Help Society in 1997. But the ability to adapt to the changing needs of the Armed Forces remains at the very heart of the Association. New services continue to be established to provide vital practical support wherever and whenever it is most needed. The SSAFA Forces Help Norton Homes and the two new Families Support Groups are just the latest examples.

For 125 years, through three different centuries, SSAFA Forces Help has been there for millions of different servicemen and women and the people they love, believing that their bravery, dedication, and loyalty deserve a lifetime of support.

Most of the church, with the exception of the North Transept, is served by a hearing loop. Users should turn their hearing aid to the setting marked T.

Please ensure that mobile phones, cellular phones, and pagers are switched OFF.

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Westminster Abbey Special Service Choir, conducted by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Robert Quinney, Sub-Organist.

The Band of the Grenadier Guards is directed by Major Kevin Roberts.

Music before the service:

Samuel Rathbone, Organ Scholar, plays:

Praeludium in C Buxwv 137 *Dieterich Buxtehude (c 1637-1707)*

Andante espressivo from Sonata in G *Edward Elgar (1857-1934)*

Nun danket alle Gott *Sigfrid Karg-Elert (1877-1933)*

The Band plays:

Royal Ceremony: SSAFA March *Roger Swift (b 1938)*

David of the White Rock *Philip Sparke (b 1951)*

Lux Aurumque *Eric Whitacre (b 1970)*

Catskills *Nigel Hess (b 1953)*

Amazing Grace *William Himes (b 1949)*

The Organ Scholar plays:

Three Preludes on Welsh hymn-tunes *Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872-1958)*

The Lord Mayor of Westminster is received at the Great West Door by the Dean and Chapter of Westminster and conducted to his stall in Quire. All stand, then sit.

His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent is received. All stand.

Hymns covered by Christian Copyright Licensing (Europe) Ltd are reproduced under CCL no 1040271.

ORDER OF SERVICE

All remain standing. The Choir sings

THE INTROIT

KEEP me as the apple of an eye: hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

Humphrey Clucas (b 1941)

Psalm 17: 8

All remain standing to sing

THE HYMN

during which the Collegiate Procession together with His Royal Highness moves to places in the Quire and Sacrarium.

The SSFA Forces Help Standard is borne through the Church, presented, and laid upon the High Altar.



A - men.

ALL people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
him serve with fear, his praise forth tell,
come ye before him, and rejoice.

The Lord, ye know, is God indeed,
without our aid he did us make;
we are his folk, he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,
approach with joy his courts unto;
praise, laud, and bless his name always,
for it is seemly so to do.

For why? the Lord our God is good:
his mercy is for ever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom heaven and earth adore,
from men and from the angel-host
be praise and glory evermore. Amen.

Old Hundredth 334 NEH
Genevan Psalter 1551
arranged by Ralph Vaughan Williams

William Kethe (d 1594)
after Psalm 100

All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, says

THE BIDDING

ON behalf of the Dean and Chapter I welcome you warmly to Westminster Abbey. Here are buried and memorialised, alongside the kings and queens (and many of the greatest men and women of our island story), soldiers, sailors, and airmen who have served the Crown. Some of these are great and renowned; others once famous are little known now; one, buried here 90 years ago this year, is the unknown warrior, known only to God.

We gather, surrounded by their memory, to give thanks for the hundred and twenty five years of service, love, and help provided by SSAFA Forces Help. At this time, when forces help is as necessary as it has ever been, we commit ourselves afresh to support the older and younger generations of serving and ex-servicemen and women.

We shall pray for the forces of the Crown and for God's peace in our lives, our nation, and our world. As we come into the presence of almighty God, let us now pray for a moment in silence.

We unite our prayers as we say together:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All sit for the

TESTIMONIES

by

Zoe Charlton, SSAFA Forces Help Caseworker, Lancashire Branch
and
Major Simon Shirley, Royal Irish Regiment

All remain seated. The Choir sings

THE ANTHEM

THOU wilt keep him in perfect peace; whose mind is stayed on thee.
The darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day:
the darkness and the light to thee are both alike.
God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
O let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for evermore.
Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace; whose mind is stayed on thee.

Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-76)

*Isaiah 26: 3; Psalm 139: 11; 1 John 1: 5;
Psalm 119: 175; Matthew 6: 13*

*Lieutenant General Sir Robin Ross KCB OBE, Chairman, SSAFA Forces Help,
reads*

MATTHEW 25: 31-40

JESUS said to his disciples: ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory,
and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.
All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one
from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will
put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will
say to those at his right hand, “Come, you that are blessed by my Father,
inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for
I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me
something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and
you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison
and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was
it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you

something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.””

All stand to sing

THE HYMN



FOR all your blessing, Father, we praise you,
gracious in mercy, strong to console,
you to our need bring comfort and healing,
love and forgiveness, making us whole.

Daily around us pain and confusion
crumble our feeble faith into dust.
Yet still we find you love in the darkness,
changing our anxious thoughts into trust.

We carry with us into your presence
prisoners of sickness, sadness, and fear;
grant them to know your peace in their suffering
and new life flowing when you are near.

Grant us your servants grace to work with you
that in your loving task we may share;
mind's understanding, hands skilled for healing,
hearts of compassion, joined in love's care.

*Bunessan 415 AMNS
Old Gaelic melody*

*Alan Luff (b 1928)
Precentor of Westminster Abbey 1979-92
Commissioned for SSAFA Forces Help*

THE ADDRESS

by

The Right Reverend Dr Stephen Venner DL
Bishop to Her Majesty's Forces

All remain seated. The Choir sings

THE ANTHEM

THE Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; to give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations as the earth bringeth forth her bud.

Edward Elgar
from The Apostles Op 49

from Isaiah 61

All kneel or sit. The Reverend Graeme Napier, Minor Canon of Westminster, leads

THE PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Let us pray to God our Father, whose mercy is everlasting:

FOR the peace and stability of the world; for a proper sense of penitence for the mistakes of the past; for reconciliation for divided peoples; for the hastening of the time when war shall be no more, when swords are beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks;

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For the heroism and courage of the peacekeeping forces of the world, especially for those who work to secure peace in the Middle East; for the work of the United Nations; for all who serve in the armed forces, on land, at sea, and in the air; for their well-being, safety, and protection;

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

Jan Dowlen-Gilliland, Director of Nursing, SSAFA Forces Help, continues:

FOR SSAFA Forces Help; for those whose work is to bring comfort, healing, restoration, and hope in places where there is fear, anxiety, turmoil, or strife;

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

For all who suffer as a result of war; for the injured and the disabled, for the mentally distressed, for those whose faith in God or man has been weakened or destroyed; for true reverence for human life, and for the coming of God's kingdom among us;

Lord, in your mercy:

Hear our prayer.

God our Father, infinite in wisdom, love, and power, have compassion on those for whom we pray, and turn the hearts of men and women everywhere to seek that peace which is your will. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Minor Canon continues:

LET us give thanks to almighty God for all the ways in which he blesses us and enriches our lives, and especially for the work over the last one hundred and twenty-five years of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces Help.

Let us bless the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

Colonel John Royle MBE, Chair of Regional Representatives, SSAFA Forces Help, continues:

FOR Colonel Sir James Gildea, who first drew attention to the special needs of the wives and families of servicemen, and for those who joined with him to provide help;

let us bless the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

For those who formed the Association and worked to build it up throughout the county organizations;

let us bless the Lord:

Thanks be to God.

For the extension of the work to widows and orphans, and the pioneering of nursing in the homes of service families;
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For those who campaigned for the rights of servicemen's families
and continue to do so;
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For those who have given their resources, their time, and their talents to provide funds for the Association;
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

For the dedication of the full-time staff and the self-sacrifice of the voluntary workers whose time spent with those in need is at the very heart of this endeavour;
let us bless the Lord:
Thanks be to God.

The Minor Canon continues:

All these our thanks and prayers let us offer to our Heavenly Father, as we say together:

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men.
We bless thee for our creation, preservation,
and for all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,
and that we shew forth thy praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives;
by giving up ourselves to thy service,
and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost
be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Book of Common Prayer 1662

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

during which the SSAFA Forces Help Standard is returned to its Bearer



O JESUS, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou for ever near me,
my Master and my Friend:
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me:
the world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self-will;
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak and make me listen,
thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end:
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

O let me see thy foot-marks,
and in them plant mine own;
my hope to follow duly
is in thy strength alone:
O guide me, call me, draw me,
uphold me to the end;
and then in heaven receive me,
my Saviour and my Friend.

Wolvercote 235 AMNS
William Harold Ferguson (1874-1950)

John Ernest Bode (1816-74)

All remain standing for

THE ACT OF DEDICATION

His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent says:

As we look to the future with hope, so let us dedicate ourselves to the service of God and our fellow men and women, remembering in particular those who have served, and those who still serve, in the maintenance of peace and justice among all nations and peoples.

All say together:

IN faith and hope, we seek to fulfill our commitment to the men and women of Britain's Armed Forces and their families; to provide help and support where there is need, and to ensure that they may enjoy the years which lie ahead in comfort, dignity, and happiness. Further, we pledge ourselves in support of all generations of servicemen and women in recognition of their personal bravery, dedication, and loyalty; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

GO forth into the world in peace; be of good courage; hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak; help the afflicted; honour all people; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

All sing

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

GOD save our gracious Queen.
Long live our noble Queen.
God save The Queen.
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us:
God save The Queen.

After the Service the Band plays:

Coronation March:
Crown Imperial

*William Walton
(1902-83)*

All remain standing as the Collegiate Procession, together with His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent, moves to the west end of the church. Presentations are made.

Members of the Congregation are requested to remain in their places until directed to move by the Stewards.

The bells of the Abbey Church are rung.

Printed by
Barnard & Westwood Ltd
1 Chelsea Wharf, 15 Lots Road, London SW10 0QJ
By Appointment to Her Majesty The Queen
Printers and Bookbinders
Printers to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster
