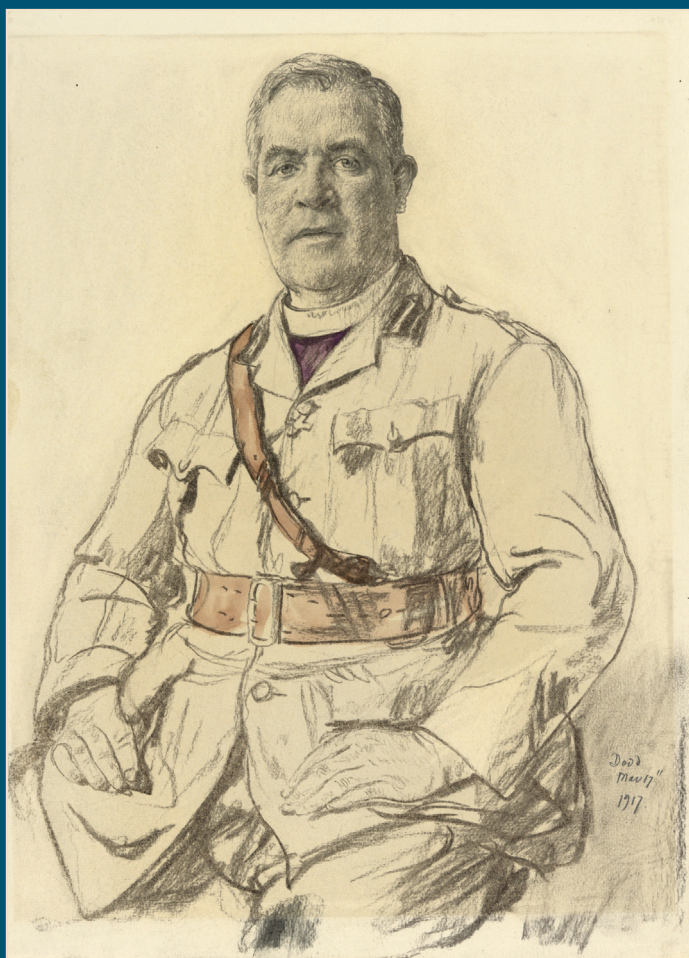


THE FIRST WORLD WAR
DIARIES OF THE
RT. REV. LLEWELLYN GWYNNE
JULY 1915–JULY 1916



Edited by
PETER HOWSON

Church of England Record Society

Volume 25

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This is possibly the photograph of Bishop Gwynne referred to in the diary entry for 5 August 1915. A copy is held in the Museum of Army Chaplaincy and is reproduced by permission of the Trustees.

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THE BOYDELL PRESS

CHURCH OF ENGLAND RECORD SOCIETY

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Acknowledgments

It was Canon Professor Michael Snape who first suggested to me that the Gwynne diaries, covering the time Bishop Gwynne spent as a member of the Army Chaplains' Department in France during the First World War, might prove a useful addition to the published documents that cover the conflict. He also suggested that an approach to the Church of England Record Society might prove the way forward for publication. As with all interested in the study of chaplaincy in the British army, I can never fully repay him for his interest and encouragement.

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Abbreviations

AChD	Army Chaplains' Department (from February 1919 'Royal' and thus RACHD)
ACG	assistant chaplain general
ADC	aide de camp
AG	adjutant general
ANZAC	Australia and New Zealand Army Corps
ASC	Army Service Corps
ASR	Army Scripture Readers
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
Bde	Brigade
CA	Church Army
Cav Div/Bde	Cavalry Division/Brigade
CC/CCS	Casualty Clearing/Casualty Clearing Station
CEMS	Church of England Men's Society
CG	chaplain general
C of E	Church of England
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CO	commanding officer
CRA	Commander Royal Artillery
CWGC	Commonwealth (formerly Imperial) War Graves Commission
DCG	deputy chaplain general
Div	Division
FA	Field Ambulance
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer in Command (or Commanding)
HC	Holy Communion
HLI	Highland Light Infantry
IEE	Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment
KHC	king's honorary chaplain
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
MC	Military Cross
NZ	New Zealand
QMG	quartermaster general
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RC	Roman Catholic
RFC	Royal Flying Corps
SCF	senior chaplain to the forces
SChap	senior chaplain to the forces
TF	Territorial Force
TNA	The National Archives (Kew)
VC	Victoria Cross
WO	War Office
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

Llewellyn Gwynne was an inveterate diarist. For almost every day of his adult life, he wrote about what he saw and did. The sixty-nine volumes in the Cadbury Special Collection of the University of Birmingham¹ together with the eight volumes in the Special Collection at Durham University,² along with a considerable amount of other material that have survived, have provided an invaluable insight into the life of a Church of England cleric, army chaplain and colonial bishop in the first half of the twentieth century. The diaries also represent an almost unrivalled example of reflection on the First World War by someone who served in France continuously between late August 1914 and February 1919.³ The entries reproduced in this work cover just over a year whilst Gwynne was serving as a member of the Army Chaplains' Department (AChD) with the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) in France and Flanders. These entries, from the start of July 1915 to the end of July 1916, spanned the second year of the First World War. It was a period that was to see great changes in the British army.⁴ It was also to see a change in the way chaplains of the Church of England were administered in the BEF, and Gwynne's *rôle* in overseeing them.

The importance of Gwynne's diaries to the understanding of army chaplaincy in the First World War

Few of the men who went to France with the initial deployment of the BEF in August 1914 returned to Britain in 1919 having remained in the same post throughout. There was one such, the Reverend Dr J. Simms, an Irish Presbyterian army chaplain. He had been about to retire at the end of a career in army chaplaincy⁵ when, in August 1914, he was appointed to be the principal chaplain to accompany the BEF on its initial deployment. His post was the only one for a chaplain that was specified in the mobilization tables for the BEF.⁶ The precise reasons for this situation are now lost but it was likely that they were the result of the unresolved tensions that existed

¹ Cadbury Research Library Special Collection of the University of Birmingham, CMS/ACC/18F1 Bishop Gwynne diaries.

² Special Collection of Durham University, SAD 34/10/1 – 120 diary of Bishop Gwynne for May 1915 to May 1916.

³ For comments on other First World War diaries kept by chaplains, see P. J. Howson, *Padre, prisoner and pen-pusher: the World War One experiences of the Reverend Benjamin O'Rorke* (Solihull, 2015), esp. ch. 6 and bibliography.

⁴ See, for instance, Anon., *The Times history of the war 1914–1920* (22 vols., London, 1920).

⁵ National Army Museum, NAM 2006-12-65, minutes of the Presbyterian Advisory Committee to the WO held on 30 July 1914.

⁶ TNA, WO 33/611.

within the army about the organization and function of the chaplains.⁷ Simms's task was to provide administrative oversight for such members of the AChD as were to accompany the troops as chaplains. It was that *rôle* he continued to fulfil until February 1919, when he was demobilized and returned to the United Kingdom. He then took his retirement from the army and returned to his home in Ulster. He was to reappear as the Member of Parliament for North Down, elected in 1922 to replace Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, whose death at the hands of members of the Irish Republican Army had caused a by-election.⁸ There was one important alteration to Simms's *rôle* in the supervision of chaplains. In July 1915, during the period covered by this volume of Gwynne's diaries, the chaplains serving with the BEF who belonged to the Church of England were placed into a separate administrative category, one to which Gwynne was appointed to be head. It is not possible to record what Simms thought about that change, or indeed any other event during his period in France. None of his personal papers appear to have survived. This gap has been made worse by the fact that no papers from his branch at the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the BEF appear to have been retained. The disappearance of branch records concerned with chaplaincy from the files of the War Office (WO) that covered the period of the war, destroyed in the bombing of London during the Second World War that was responsible for the loss of a significant part number of army records, has only added to the problem for scholars who wanted to discover the experience of chaplaincy on the Western Front.

Those losses make the survival of Gwynne's diaries even more important as a source to understand not only Church of England chaplaincy, but in some measure, all chaplaincy, in the BEF. This is especially true for the opening entries. At the start of the period reproduced in this volume Gwynne was a chaplain to the forces class 4, the lowest of the ranks in the AChD. The entries have thus given an insight into the life of a chaplain in the BEF at the level at which the majority of chaplains operated. It was, for both Gwynne and the AChD, a position of some oddity. This was reflected in the way in which the chaplain general (CG), the Right Reverend John Taylor Smith*, had dealt with Gwynne's application to serve as an army chaplain.⁹ When, in August 1914, Gwynne made his request to be commissioned as a chaplain with the British army, he was already the bishop of Khartoum.¹⁰ It was by chance that, on the day that war was declared with Germany, he was in London, on leave from the Sudan.¹¹

⁷ The organization of chaplains in the British army has been examined in M. Snape, *Clergy under fire: the Royal Army Chaplains' Department 1796–1953* (Woodbridge, 2008); J. Smyth, *In this sign conquer* (London, 1968); P. J. Howson, *Muddling through: the organisation of British army chaplaincy in World War One* (Solihull, 2013).

⁸ Information supplied by the Museum of Army Chaplaincy.

⁹ SAD 28/5: letter Gwynne to Taylor Smith, 4 Aug. 1914.

¹⁰ H. C. Jackson, *Pastor on the Nile* (London, 1960).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

Gwynne's life before 1914

Gwynne, in August 1914, was already fifty-one.¹² He had been born on 11 June 1863, at Foxholes, Lamsamlet Lower in the Kilvey valley on the outskirts of Swansea, the fourth of the six sons who – together with two daughters – made up the family of Richard Gwynne, the local schoolmaster, and his wife Charlotte. One of his brothers was Howell Arthur Gwynne who was later to have a noted career as a newspaper editor. There are many references to Howell at various points in the wartime diaries. Two other brothers were to be ordained and a further brother to be commissioned into the army. Gwynne was educated at Swansea Grammar School and, after a short spell as a teacher in Beverley in Yorkshire, he received his ordination training at St John's Hall, Highbury.

Gwynne was ordained deacon in 1886, and then appointed curate at St Chad's, Derby.¹³ He came to the notice of large crowds in the town when he played association football as an amateur for Derby County. His prowess in sports was also shown when, in 1891, he moved to Nottingham to serve as a curate to the Reverend Frank Woods at the parish of St Andrew's.¹⁴ A year later, he became the incumbent of the neighbouring parish of Emmanuel.¹⁵ Among those whom he prepared for confirmation in that parish was a teenager, Benjamin O'Rorke.¹⁶ They were to meet again during the First World War. Whilst studying for the ministry, Gwynne had been influenced by the stories of the final days, and death, in Khartoum, of Major General Charles Gordon. As a result, when the Church Missionary Society (CMS) appealed for volunteers to work in the Sudan, Gwynne applied.¹⁷ Selected to serve in Khartoum, he left London in November 1899 and arrived a month later. At that point, General Kitchener was coming to the end of his time as governor-general of Sudan and was unenthusiastic about Gwynne working with the local, and largely Islamic, community. He was, however, prepared to permit him to minister among the military. Following the battle of Omdurman in 1898, the British had retained a significant military presence in the Sudan. Thus began a long association with the British army that was likely to have been one of the factors that influenced Gwynne's decision to offer his services as a chaplain in 1914. There are numerous references in the diaries to those members of the army whom Gwynne had met previously in the Sudan.

It was in 1905 that Gwynne was appointed to be the archdeacon of the Sudan. His energetic style attracted attention, and in 1911 he was consecrated as the first suffragan bishop of Khartoum in the diocese of Jerusalem and assistant to Bishop G. F. P. Blyth, the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem (1887–1914). One of Gwynne's early tasks was to oversee the construction of a permanent church building in Khartoum. It was decided that it would contain a chapel which would serve as a memorial to General Gordon and would be larger than was needed for the Christian population of the city. The foundation stone was laid on Sunday 7 February 1904. It was an

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Howson, *Padre, prisoner and pen-pusher*.

¹⁷ Jackson, *Pastor*.

appropriate church to serve as a cathedral and the partly completed structure was consecrated, on 26 January 1912, as All Saints by the bishop of London.¹⁸

Kitchener was succeeded, at the end of 1899, as governor-general of Sudan, by Sir Reginald Wingate. Gwynne came to know him well. It happened that Wingate was also on leave from the Sudan, and in London, in August 1914. It was thus possible for Gwynne to raise with him the question as to whether he should offer to serve in the AChD.¹⁹ It was undoubtedly a delicate subject. Gwynne had discussed the matter with the CG, who, not unnaturally, thought that Gwynne was too old, at fifty-one, to be commissioned as a chaplain. There was also the question of leave of absence from his duties in the Sudan. Taylor Smith suggested that Gwynne consult the archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, perhaps hoping that the plan would thus go no further. Davidson, however, gave his blessing, and Gwynne was thus granted a commission as a chaplain to the forces class 4, being gazetted on 29 August 1914 along with fifty-one others.²⁰ It is interesting that Davidson should have agreed to Gwynne seeking a commission at a time at which he was involved with other African bishops, mediating in the row that had broken out over the 1913 Kikuyu Conference.²¹ The archbishop also had to deal with requests from other, British, bishops who were seeking approval to take up full-time chaplaincies, as a result of their commissions in the Chaplains' Department of the Territorial Force (TF). On 12 August 1914, Davidson had replied to Alfred Edwards, the bishop of St Asaph, about whether he might accompany the regiment to which he was the chaplain. The archbishop had advised strongly against such a course of action, arguing that the place of a bishop was in his diocese. He commented in a postscript, 'I have said the same to the Bp. of London, but much more strongly in his case.'²² The archbishop gave the same advice to several incumbents from parishes within his diocese who had sought his counsel about applying to become a chaplain. Before deploying to France, Gwynne had written, on 18 August 1914, to the archbishop about his posting.

I write to you to tell you that the Adjutant General is sending me out as acting chaplain to the Expeditionary force which I join on Friday. I am not due back in the Sudan until November. Please God the war will be over before then ... I am placing myself so entirely under the orders of the Chaplain General that even my moustache has to be sacrificed at his command.²³

It might have been the feeling that the war would last no more than a few months at most that had allowed the archbishop to agree to Gwynne's request when others were denied. The only bishop to serve as a combatant was Frank Weston of Zanzibar, a central figure in the Kikuyu crisis. He raised, in 1916, and commanded, the Zanzibar Carrier Corps.²⁴

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *London Gazette*, 3rd Supplement, 29 Aug. 1914, p. 6881.

²¹ For a discussion of the rôle of Davidson, during Aug. 1914, in handling the aftermath of the 1913 Kikuyu Conference, see David Law, 'Frank Weston, the Kikuyu Controversy, and the necessity of episcopacy', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 15 (2015), 214–43.

²² Lambeth Palace Library (LPL), Davidson papers, vol. 343, fo. 4: Davidson to Edwards, dated 12 Aug. 1914.

²³ *Ibid.*, fo. 20: Gwynne to Davidson, dated 18 Aug. 1914.

²⁴ C. Beresford, *The Christian soldier: the life of Lt. Col. The Rev. Bernard William Vann, VC MC and bar, Croix de Guerre avec palme* (Solihull, 2017), p. 284.

The AChD in August 1914

Amongst Gwynne's papers in the Special Collection of Durham University are various items of correspondence with Benjamin O'Rorke. The teenager, whom Gwynne had prepared for confirmation in Nottingham, had also become a priest, and had since 1901 been serving as a member of the AChD. O'Rorke was, in August 1914, stationed at Bordon in Hampshire and was preparing to go with the BEF as a chaplain, serving with 4 Field Ambulance (FA) of the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC).²⁵ Not unnaturally, Gwynne went to him for advice about the practicalities of service as an army chaplain.

The AChD into which Gwynne was commissioned as initially an acting chaplain, and then, when the WO rapidly reorganized the complicated range of commissions in the Department, as a temporary chaplain, was different from its post-war successor. After the end of the First World War, not only was the Department to be granted the prefix 'Royal',²⁶ but was also to undergo a reorganization that was to see its administrative structure changed. Furthermore, it also acquired a new understanding of the *rôle* of a chaplain in the army. Chaplains were no longer to be based at a garrison church acting as a quasi-parish priest, with a captive congregation each Sunday for the compulsory church parade. By the end of the war, they had become identified with individual units. Few, in the field, had taken a service in a consecrated building for years. The processes by which the AChD had evolved during the conflict, and in which Gwynne participated, contributed to both the need for the reorganization and the solution that was eventually produced. The need for these changes was reflected at several places in the diaries.

The AChD in August 1914 was a collection of men – there were to be no women serving as a chaplain in the regular army until the twenty-first century – who acted as the priests and ministers to the military garrisons to which they were posted.²⁷ The Department had been created by Royal Warrant in 1796.²⁸ It sought to replace the system of regimentally employed chaplains that, by the end of the eighteenth century was failing to provide the spiritual support for troops deploying on overseas operations. It was the creation of the secretary of state for war, apparently without any consultation with either the archbishop of Canterbury or any other church leader. It can be considered to have been an attempt by the military authorities to create for the army a system similar to the one provided by the Admiralty for the Royal Navy. Events rapidly showed that there were a number of essential differences between the army and the navy that meant that the naval model of chaplaincy came under strain in the army. During the early nineteenth century, it came to be recognized that the chaplaincies at the army fortresses within the United Kingdom, such as Fort George near Inverness and the Tower of London, needed to be included in the organization. It also became obvious that whereas the Royal Navy might argue for a homogeneity that included a unified approach to religious practice, and that such practice should be that of the Church of England, the army was formed of many units some of which had distinct affiliations to individual nations within the United

²⁵ Howson, *Padre, prisoner and pen-pusher*.

²⁶ Army Order, 19 Feb. 1919.

²⁷ *Army List* for July 1914 contained the names and stations of army chaplains.

²⁸ For the history of army chaplaincy since 1796, see Snape, *Clergy under fire*; and Smyth, *In this sign conquer*.

Kingdom. Regiments of Scots, such as the 93rd Foot, who prided themselves on their Presbyterian character, were unimpressed by the lack of government provision for their spiritual welfare by ministers of their own ilk.²⁹ Equally, Irish soldiers, not only in regiments that traditionally recruited in Ireland but also in the considerable numbers who joined other units, were in many cases Catholic.³⁰ Even as early as the wars of the Napoleonic period, unofficial arrangements were being made to employ Catholic priests to meet the spiritual needs of their soldiers. The total number of full-time chaplains employed before 1815 remained low. They were mostly used in the hospitals and the question of their status does not appear to have arisen. With no major deployment of the British army until the Crimean War started in 1854, the AChD had withered in much the same way as other branches of the army that were mostly required in any number only in a time of war. The experience in the Crimea showed that unlike the navy, where a chaplain aboard one of Her Majesty's ships was likely to be easily identifiable to the crew as such, and thus would not need any rank insignia to show entitlement to quartering and messing, the same was not true in the vastly larger and more complex situation of a battlefield. A chaplain might be known in a particular headquarters or unit but would be a stranger elsewhere. As such, he might find it difficult to obtain the resources he needed to carry out his ministry.

So it was that in 1858, following the end of the Crimean War, the Royal Warrant was amended. The recognition that had been gained, during the war, by Presbyterian ministers from Scotland³¹ and Catholic priests was formalized.³² More importantly a system of ranks was introduced into the AChD. It was done in such a way as to recognize that chaplains were appointed by their several churches and whilst administered by the army once they were in uniform remained a priest or minister. Thus, the rank of chaplain to the forces was created.³³ It was divided into four classes, with the class 4 being the most junior. To provide some indication of what that signified in the main rank structure of the army, and thus to indicate appropriate status, the chaplain to the forces class 4 was equated to a captain. The higher classes thus equated to major, lieutenant colonel and colonel. The system, with its inherent likelihood of confusion, has continued to the present. The CG was excluded from the structure and given the equivalent rank of a major general.³⁴

The appointment of CG was one that had continued, with a brief change of title to principal chaplain in the 1830s, from the 1796 creation of the AChD. The position remained, in 1914, as it always had been, solely responsible for those chaplains recruited from the Church of England. Presbyterians and Catholics, when, after 1858 they received commissions, were not placed under the authority of the CG. Church relations would never have permitted such an arrangement. They were the administrative responsibility of a civil servant. Since, in peace there were relatively

²⁹ D. Reid, *The kirk of the 93rd: a short history 1808 to 1968* (Plymouth, 1968).

³⁰ M. Snape, *The redcoat and religion: the forgotten history of the British soldier from the age of Marlborough to the eve of the First World War* (London, 2005).

³¹ See A. C. Dow, *Ministers to the soldiers of Scotland* (London, 1962), for discussion of Church of Scotland chaplains.

³² See T. Johnstone and J. Hagerty, *The cross on the sword: Catholic chaplains in the forces* (London, 1996), for details of Catholic chaplaincy in the army.

³³ Snape, *Clergy under fire*, p. 102.

³⁴ For an explanation of the AChD rank structure and how it related to appointments held during the First World War, see Howson, *Muddling through*, pp. xi–xii.

small numbers, and they were widely spread serving garrisons across the United Kingdom and the Empire, administration was minimal. Nobody, even in the WO, fully understood the complexity of the AChD and it remained a cause for concern to those who longed for a tidy structure.

None of these issues were far from the surface when, in August 1914, the AChD began to tackle the provision of spiritual care for the first expeditionary force being sent by Britain to mainland Europe for a century. Indeed, in various ways questions about the nature and shape of chaplaincy in the army had caused problems during the previous ten years. Following the end, in 1902, of the Second Anglo-Boer War, there had been an exchange of letters between Archbishop Bourne, the Catholic archbishop of Southwark, and the person responsible for the oversight of Catholic clergy in the forces, and the WO. It concerned the ability of a local hierarchy, in this case in South Africa, to bar the ministry of an army chaplain whom the WO intended to post there. Partly because of this case, Bourne, by now archbishop of Westminster, renegotiated the terms of service under which future Catholic chaplains would serve in the army. It included a provision that all such chaplains would remain at the same rank, effectively as a chaplain to the forces class 4.³⁵ The immediate effect of this decision was masked by another decision taken after the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War. In this case, it was the decision of the WO that chaplains, not on operations, would not wear uniform. They were instead to wear clerical dress.³⁶ Again, it mirrored a practice in the Royal Navy, where until the Second World War most chaplains wore a suit with a clerical collar, even when aboard ship. Whatever the effect in the navy, the result in the army was to emphasize the garrison *rôle* of the chaplain in peacetime. Chaplains were not identified with individual units. They do not appear to have had any *rôle* in the exercises of the period except to conduct the compulsory church parades required by the regulations.

The AChD of 1914 was also required to recognize another dynamic. It was one that was to have an immediate and profound influence once war was declared and the expansion of the army started, with the immediate appeals for new recruits. It concerned the needs of those who did not belong to the Anglican, Catholic or Presbyterian communities. During the second half of the nineteenth century, there had been a growing desire amongst other religious groups for recognition of the spiritual needs of those soldiers who belonged to such groups. The best organized had been the Wesleyan Methodists.³⁷ With a committee to oversee their work, they had eventually obtained, in 1881, the right for their members and adherents to declare themselves as 'Wesleyan' on their army documents. The number of soldiers who claimed a connexion with the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion, or Church as it retitled itself in the 1890s, was sufficiently large that it could not be discounted. Most other groups had so few members in the forces that their needs could usually be ignored. The exception was the Jewish community. Jewish soldiers were identified as such from 1886. Neither group had commissioned chaplains in the regular army prior to 1914. In the case of the Jewish community, it was because the total number was small and spread throughout the army, a situation that would have made the task of a chaplain almost impossible. The presence of local synagogues meant that those based in Britain could attend worship should they so desire. The Wesleyans had

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–5.

³⁶ TNA, WO 32/6624.

³⁷ Howson, *Muddling through*, pp. 25–8.

no commissioned chaplains for a different reason; the controlling conference had decided that they did not wish those ministers who were set aside for work with the forces to receive commissions. It was feared that to allow commissions would tip the delicate balance of control away from the church and towards the army. Having negotiated a financial arrangement with the WO in respect of those ministers whom it directed to work with the forces, the Wesleyan Conference felt no inclination to accept commissions into the AChD for its ministers, when the offer was renewed after the end of the Second Anglo-Boer War.³⁸

Curiously, the Wesleyan Conference appeared to have no such disinclination when it came to their ministers being commissioned as members of the AChD in the newly formed TF. This had become a possibility once the old confusion of militia, yeomanry and volunteer units had been reorganized, in 1908, into the new structure of the TF.³⁹ Among the many changes was the creation of a branch of the AChD into which chaplains would be commissioned. With prior service being accredited towards the rank granted, it resulted in several chaplains in the TF holding ranks above chaplain to the forces class 4, including a number who were appointed chaplain to the forces class 1 solely on the time served. The creation of the TF AChD also allowed formal recognition for a number of religious communities that did not have commissioned chaplains serving the regular army. Locally raised units could well have a religious concentration unknown in the regular army. It was this that had resulted in commissions for Wesleyan ministers. It also allowed the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, distinct from the Wesleyans in their adoption of Calvinism rather than Arminianism, to appear in the list of chaplains. The opportunity was also taken to commission the first rabbi into the army. The Reverend Michael Sadler was commissioned into the AChD of the TF in 1912. His appointment was not to a single unit, but centrally, although it was expected that his duties would mostly be with London units.

By the summer of 1914, the chaplains serving with the TF had developed a different ethos from their regular counterparts. On occasion, this brought them into conflict. This should not have been a surprise. TF chaplains were recruited locally to serve men whom they might know in daily life. Their requirement was to be with the unit at its regular drill nights and when on its annual camp. Their ministry thus had an overwhelmingly operational context, in contrast to the regular chaplains whose ministry centred on the conduct of worship in garrisons. Whilst this involved an element of pastoral concern that would have included the families of the units in the garrisons to which they were posted, it lacked the pastoral focus on the needs of the soldier that came to characterize the work of the TF chaplain. Unsurprisingly then it was the TF chaplains who reacted to the restriction on the wearing of uniform. They needed to be seen as part of the organization of the army when they appeared at camp. Uniform was thus essential to them to achieve this degree of identification. In 1911, the Army Council was forced to reverse the decision on the wearing

³⁸ J. H. Thompson, 'The free church army chaplain, 1830–1930', Ph.D. thesis, University of Sheffield, 1990.

³⁹ For a discussion of the AChD in the Territorial Force, see P. J. Howson, *Ministry to Saturday night soldiers: the formation of a Chaplains' Department for the new Territorial Army of 1907*, United Board History Project (n.p., 2016).

of uniform, at least in so far as TF chaplains were concerned, by the unearthing of a claim that King Edward VII had personally allowed it.⁴⁰

There was one other issue that came to the fore when the consequences of the creation of the AChD for the TF came to be recognized. It centred on the position of bishops within the new organization, and thus might be thought to have had some bearing on the position of Gwynne when, in August 1914, he was seeking to be commissioned into the AChD. There would appear to have been a tradition in a few dioceses that the bishop would be the chaplain to one of the voluntary units.⁴¹ Since such units had no liability for full-time military service, other than possibly within the United Kingdom if invasion threatened, this imposed no exceptional expectation upon them. The formation of the TF did not require any different liability, although those who understood the military scene in the first decade of the twentieth century might well have foreseen that the reorganizations taking place were a response to the shambles that had accompanied the need to put together a credible force to assist the regular army in South Africa, and which might thus be required to do the same in any forthcoming European war. Since the rule for what rank a chaplain would have in this new branch of the TF was based on time served with previous units, several bishops found themselves in the rank of chaplain to the forces class 4. Notable amongst these was the Right Reverend A. Winnington-Ingram, since 1901 bishop of London. At that point, he had also become chaplain to the London Rifle Brigade (Bde), a volunteer unit. Thus, with the formation of the TF, he had less than the ten years required service for promotion, and was commissioned, on 13 July 1909, as a chaplain to the forces class 4. The same list also included the bishops of Liverpool and Kensington, again commissioned as chaplain to the forces class 4.⁴² There must have been some concern that this would not adequately recognize the status of the bishops. Thus, on 26 June 1912, the *London Gazette* recorded that the bishop of London, along with four other diocesan bishops, Liverpool, St Asaph, Bath and Wells, and Southwark, together with the suffragan bishops of Colchester and Hull, and the dean of Westminster, would now rank as chaplains to the forces class 1.⁴³ The rationale behind the decision was set out in a letter that the CG wrote, in October 1914, to the archbishop of Canterbury. It was, he wrote, 'To prevent absurdities – e.g. a bishop who takes up chaplaincy having as his senior officer a curate who has only served a few years.'⁴⁴ This gave them the equivalent status of a colonel and explains why when Winnington-Ingram appeared, in the early days of the war, in photographs wearing uniform he had the badges of rank of a colonel.⁴⁵

The detailed mobilization proposals for the TF included some 250 serials that referred to chaplains. Since the official doctrine for the TF was that its *rôle* was to defend the United Kingdom, many of the posts earmarked for chaplains were in association with the fixed defences around the coasts. The tables for the regular army contained only one specific post for a chaplain. The Expeditionary Force headquarters that deployed had a post for a chaplain to the forces class 1 to serve as

⁴⁰ TNA, WO 32/6624.

⁴¹ This is reflected in names in the list of 'Honorary Chaplains' contained in *Army List* for July 1914.

⁴² *London Gazette*, 13 July 1909, p. 5387.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 26 June 1912, p. 5535.

⁴⁴ LPL, Davidson papers, vol. 343, fo. 57: Taylor Smith to Davidson, 15 Oct. 1914.

⁴⁵ As in A. Wilkinson, *The Church of England and the First World War* (London, 1996 edn).

principal chaplain. His task would be to administer the chaplains who were to be deployed with the BEF. Exactly how many chaplains there would be, and in what posts, was not made clear. The introductory remarks to the table simply referred to chaplains being deployed, 'as required'.⁴⁶ It might have been this to which the Reverend H. Blackburne, a regular chaplain who served in the BEF throughout the war and who appeared regularly in the diary entries, was referring, in remarks, made after the war was over, that the Chaplains' Department had been unprepared for war. They were, however, comments made by someone who at that time was not in the WO, and have more than a little sense of hindsight about them.⁴⁷

The deployment of the AChD to France

Whatever the apparent lack of planning among the diverse elements of the organizational structure in the WO that oversaw the AChD, it was able to provide chaplains for the BEF. At the same time, however, as it was finalizing the plans for deployment, there were other headaches for the chaplaincy oversight in the WO. The CG had to deal with applications from numerous clergy who felt that they were exactly what the army was looking for to serve as a chaplain. The civilian staff who administered the non-Anglican chaplains were shielded from that problem. The Catholics, in the person of the by then Cardinal Bourne, the Presbyterians with a committee co-ordinating the work of the four main churches that provided chaplains – the Church of Scotland, United Free Church of Scotland, Presbyterian Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Church of England – and the Wesleyan Methodist Church with a committee that oversaw their involvement with the forces, were responsible for recruiting men to serve as chaplains. The WO was only required to indicate the number of men that were needed and then to undertake the paperwork that went with their being commissioned. This had increased because the Wesleyan Methodist Church Committee on Chaplains to the Royal Navy and Army had, immediately following the declaration of war, decided to accept the outstanding offer of commissions for those of their ministers who were to accompany the BEF.

The first decision that had to be made was the name of the principal chaplain who would be a member of the headquarters of the BEF. As was noted at the start of this introduction, the choice fell on the Reverend Dr J. Simms. He was a chaplain from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland who was about to retire after a career that had taken him to the battle of Omdurman and the war in South Africa. He had been one of the four chaplains who had conducted a memorial service for Gordon after the capture of Khartoum. There is no indication as to why he was chosen for this post. It might have been that his Sudan service had brought him to the attention of Kitchener, the secretary of state for war,⁴⁸ and thus made him an acceptable candidate. He was also by some margin the most senior of those who held the rank of chaplain to

⁴⁶ Anon., *War establishment, Great Britain, army*, Part I, The Expeditionary Force (London, 1912).

⁴⁷ H. W. Blackburne, 'Existing organisation and work of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department', *RUSI Journal*, 67 (1922), 421–33.

⁴⁸ Field Marshal Lord Herbert Kitchener was credited, in 1898, with winning the battle of Omdurman and securing control of the Sudan for which he was made Lord Kitchener of Khartoum.

the forces class 1, and who were available to be deployed. Again, whilst there is no evidence that he had any input into the acceptance of Gwynne for a commission, it is possible that the shared experience of life in the Sudan would have encouraged him to support the application.

The second decision to be made was how the limited numbers of chaplains were to be used. Within the regular army, there were few close links between regiments and chaplains. There were in any case only some 160 regular chaplains to meet the needs of the whole army outside India. It was another of those oddities that marked chaplains out from the rest of the army that the AChD had no responsibility for the spiritual care of British troops in India. Their needs were provided for by chaplains of the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment (IEE).⁴⁹ Its chaplains were to accompany the Indian Corps to France where their administration remained partially separate from that of the British chaplains. The IEE also provided chaplains for the Indian army-led deployment to Mesopotamia. Gwynne was involved with IEE chaplains from the start of his time as DCG. On 25 August 1915, he was recording conversations with 'Horwood', an IEE chaplain at Calais, about his relationship with a clergyman working for the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). That issue, the relationship between clergy serving with the YMCA and those commissioned as chaplains, was to be one of the major themes in his first months in office as DCG.

The decision that was made, at the start of the war, was to attach chaplains to medical units. In such contexts, the chaplains would be able to provide spiritual comfort to those who were at the point of most need. In the light of the experience of chaplains during the protracted fighting in the Second Anglo-Boer War, where many of the casualties had been the result of sickness rather than wounding, there was some sense in this as the hospitals handled the sick as well as the wounded. The RAMC had used the years before 1914 to work out a strategy for how to handle the casualties of battle. The treatment started at the Regimental Aid Post, where the unit doctor and his team of medical orderlies would provide immediate care and then decide which of the casualties would benefit from further treatment where there were more facilities.⁵⁰ It was the responsibility of the FAs, attached to each brigade, to collect the casualties from the Regimental Aid Post, provide further treatment and then to arrange for those that needed still more treatment to be sent to General Hospitals based in the rear areas. The plan that was devised was for two chaplains to be posted to each of the FAs and for either two or three chaplains to be attached to the General Hospitals. Amongst the documents in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew is an envelope, marked SECRET, which contained the plans for the location of the hospitals should the BEF deploy to France. The chaplains had to be attached to a unit as there were no chaplaincy units on the establishment of the army.⁵¹

As Gwynne's diary for August 1914, together with diaries kept by other chaplains deployed with the BEF, and memoirs written by still others, showed, the deployment went well.⁵² All the FAs and hospitals deployed to France with their complement of

⁴⁹ M. Snape, 'The First World War and the chaplains of British India', in *The clergy in khaki: new perspectives on British army chaplaincy in the First World War*, ed. M. Snape and E. Madigan (Farnham, 2013).

⁵⁰ TNA, WO 106/49A/8 (details of mobilization of medical units).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Howson, *Padre, prisoner and pen-pusher*; see ch. 6 for a discussion of other diaries covering the deployment of the BEF in Aug. 1914.

chaplains. Not all the FAs had been expecting chaplains to be posted to them before they deployed, and there were some issues about what equipment was available. Since the chaplains were 'attached' to the FAs rather than part of the establishment of the unit, there were varying attitudes as to how much they were part of the unit. Most of the chaplains attached to the FAs soon proved their worth. As the BEF engaged the German army at Mons and then began its long strategic withdrawal to the Marne, the number of casualties that needed to be treated rose with each of the delaying battles that were fought. Two Church of England chaplains, including Gwynne's acquaintance the Reverend B. G. O'Rorke, were captured. O'Rorke with members of 4 FA⁵³ and the Reverend J. T. Hales, who was taken prisoner when he stayed with wounded under the care of 7 FA. Other chaplains, including the Wesleyan, the Reverend O. Spencer Watkins,⁵⁴ and the Reverend D. F. Winniffrith, an Anglican,⁵⁵ also recorded being heavily engaged in the fighting in which the BEF was involved.

It was at that moment that the carefully worked out evacuation chain that was to take the casualties back to Britain failed. The depth of the German thrust alarmed the military leaders who had command of the base areas to the British rear. It was in these areas that the hospitals were located. With the possibility that there might be a break through, much as was to happen in the Second World War, the decision was taken to move the hospitals to the west coast of France. Having recently disembarked from the ships that had carried them across the channel the personnel and equipment were re-embarked and moved to the Atlantic ports around St Nazaire. The hospitals were to be based around Nantes. Whilst the decision might have saved the bases and preserved the hospitals, it had an unintended consequence. With the German thrust held at the battle of the Marne and then pushed back, the hospitals were badly placed and received few casualties. It was easier to transport them back to Britain through the channel ports.⁵⁶

For two months, the hospitals were thus divorced from the battles taking place in the east of France and had little to do. As a result, the chaplains allocated to them also found themselves with little call for their services. The dichotomy between the two groups of chaplains could not have been more striking. Two things followed, a blame game to seek to show who was responsible for the underuse of the chaplains, and a sense that the chaplains would have been better used by being deployed in a different manner. As Gwynne's diary for 1 September 1914 showed, he was not above taking part in the unhappiness that spread through the staff of the hospitals.⁵⁷

The decision to deploy chaplains with the medical units was undoubtedly a sensible one. It was also the most logical one given both the number of chaplains available to accompany the BEF and their experience of ministry in the peacetime army. The result was, however, that the front line units rarely saw a chaplain once the fighting had begun at Mons. There appear to have been few services taken with units. Those who looked for chaplains who could serve in the *rôle* of priests

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ O. S. Watkins, *With French in France and Flanders* (London, 1915).

⁵⁵ D. F. Winniffrith, *The church in the fighting line: experiences of an army chaplain* (London, 1915).

⁵⁶ J. E. Edmonds (ed.), *The official history of the war military operations France and Belgium 1914, I* (London, 1933).

⁵⁷ CMS/ACC/18F1: Gwynne diary entry for 1 Sept. 1914.