



DIOCESE OF TRURO
DISCOVERING GOD'S KINGDOM
GROWING THE CHURCH

CHANCELLOR'S GUIDANCE ON MEMORIALS FOR THE FALLEN IN RECENT ARMED CONFLICTS 2010

General Considerations

1. This guidance is intended to help all those in the Diocese of Truro involved in the memorialisation of members of the armed forces who have lost their lives in war. The following paragraphs primarily concern individual as opposed to collective memorials, but the advice may also help in the planning of public memorials in churches and churchyards.
2. It is an established tradition for the monuments to be placed in churches to the memory of service personnel killed in conflict. Apart from the familiar memorials of commemorating the dead of the two World Wars, parish churches hold many monuments from the Napoleonic and Victorian eras. There will be the desire to record for the future those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.
3. For many reasons it is appropriate for death on active service to receive permanent recognition in the parish church. Sacrifice for the common good is brought before God. Comfort is afforded to the bereaved, of who see that the loss of life has not passed unrecognised. A lasting reminder is given to all of the heavy human cost of war.
4. In modern times the Church Courts have very sparingly granted faculties for monuments inside churches. The Court of Arches, in *re St Margaret's Earham* (1981) 1 WLR 1129 drew attention to the undesirable consequences of allowing a church to become overstocked with memorial tablets, and indicate^{4d} that a faculty should be regarded as a special privilege for very exceptional cases. Although the Court of Arches was not therefore concerned with memorials to the war dead, it is necessary to have due regard to the Court's underlying decision, which discourages the proliferation of this type of memorial.

Location

5. The need for memorial tablets initially arose because in earlier wars the remains of the dead were not brought home, so that (but for the memorial) the deceased would have no mark of recognition. Where, in accordance with modern practice, the remains are repatriated for burial, it will usually be appropriate to provide a record of the deceased person's service and death (for details, see paragraph 8) on the headstone or horizontal tablet at the grave. A fitting and suitably inscribed headstone should not be duplicated by another personal memorial in the church itself, but names may not suitably be added to existing twentieth century war memorials.

6. In some instances commemoration on a tombstone will be impracticable or inadequate. If the remains have not been recovered, or have been buried in the United Kingdom at a distance from the home parish, if there is some other special reason for additional commemoration, the provision of a memorial plaque inside or affixed to a church with which the dead person has some close connection may properly be considered. The question will arise whether the church already has an excessive quantity of memorial plaques. Moreover, in every case a decent fitting place has to be found for the proposed memorial.

The Form of the Memorial

7. Before committing themselves to a memorial plaque, parishes and the families concerned should always give careful thought to other means of commemoration, such as a Memorial book or a donation to the church.
8. Where the provision of a memorial plaque is appropriate, it must display high standards of quality and design. The inscription ought to bear the name, rank, regiment or other unit and age of the person commemorated. The date and place of death (or war zone) should be given. Where the inscription is of a formal character, personal expressions of affection or grief are best avoided. Care must be taken in selecting the site of the memorial, proximity to any existing memorials of a similar nature being desirable.

Procedure

9. A faculty is always needed for a memorial to be fixed to a church building. The petitioners ought normally to be the minister and churchwardens, as custodians of the church. The petitioners will be expected to have sought the views of the bereaved family, whose wishes must always be taken into account, and also to have consulted more widely in the local community.
10. The general rule (see paragraph Q. 54 of the Diocesan Handbook) is that a faculty for a memorial tablet inside a church will not be granted until a period of five years has elapsed from the date of death of the person commemorated. It is intended in this way to provide a period of reflection about the best means of commemoration, which is often found to be helpful. In the case of the victims of war, there are additional considerations including the possibility that after the conflict public memorials, or standard designs of military memorial, might be introduced; while in areas with a tradition of recruiting there may by the end of hostilities be several names brought together on a single parish church memorial. The Chancellor will therefore require good reason to be shown before authorising a memorial within the five year period. Some form of temporary memorialisation may be permitted during the waiting time.
11. Where a petition for a faculty is presented, the Chancellor will be assisted by a covering letter from the petitioners explaining the full background to the application.