



A message from Chaplain Kerry Larwill – Australia

Malo/Gday/Bonjour/Hola/Bula/Kia ora/Halo olgeta

As Australian chaplains, we are reflecting on how we can practically support our 2026 Forum theme of “Deep Roots”. This raises the question, “how can our ADF chaplaincy teams identify skills and learning to share with our PDFN partners to support each other with training, skills and education initiative?”

A good news story from Australian chaplaincy is that we have been utilising chaplain coaches during large exercises. These mentor/coaches provide a safe opportunity to reflect, learn and practice our chaplaincy skills.

Like you, Australian chaplains are ministers of religion who then have to learn the military culture, its language and acronyms, and many practical skills. In order to fulfil our foundational role; to bring honour to the dead, comfort to the dying, hope to those in distress and support to all, we need to learn some completely different skills. The coaching and mentoring of our chaplains in the field aims to assist them with practical skills like communication, military planning, legal obligations, where to be on the battlefield prior/during/post battle, know and respond to the commander’s intent, offer feedback on morale and the will to fight, and ensuring preparedness to honour the dead.

Our aim is to share what we are learning in order to enhance PDFN chaplains’ preparedness in our region for when our people are called to serve in tough and difficult circumstances.

Blessings,

Kerry Larwill



Australian Chaplain Kerry Larwill, Head PDFN Secretariat.



An Australian Army Chaplain supporting infantry soldiers on Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025. (Photo courtesy of Senior Chaplain Stephen Brooks)

Updates

Royal Australian Army Chaplains 414 Award 01 Dec 2025 - Chaplain Wendy Robertson

Chaplain Wendy Robertson, who many of you will know from her attendance at our Defence Faith Forums, has been recognised for her contribution to the Royal Australian Army Chaplains Department as a result of her engagement and provision of pastoral care with inspiring servant hearted leadership in fostering international relationships as a delegate to the Pacific Defence Faith Network.

The 414 Award is an Australian Army Chaplaincy Award named in honour of the four hundred and fourteen courageous religious practitioners - Chaplains of the Great War. It seeks to honour their legacy, but also the service and sacrifice of all Australian Army Chaplains from that conflict, and through various campaigns to today. The 414 Award was developed by CHAP Kerry Larwill in 2018, in order to encourage Esprit de Corps and a positive culture within the Royal Australian Army Chaplain's Department. The recipient receives a medallion and a certificate to acknowledge their contribution.

Today's Army Chaplains continue this long-standing service of providing Religious, Spiritual and Pastoral care to the women and men of the Australian Army and Defence Force.



*The Australian Army Chaplains 414 Award Medallion is presented to a recipient in December each year.
(Stock Photo Supplied)*

From the Naval and Defence Attaché - Chile

In October 2025, Chile hosted the Defence Ministers or their representatives from Australia, Chile, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga gathered in Viña del Mar for the 10th South Pacific Defence Ministers' Meeting (SPDMM). This was an extremely successful meeting enhancing people to people links and driving Pacific-led responses to shared regional security challenges. The Pacific Defence Faith Network (PDFN) is an initiative of SPDMM.

It was privilege to meet Captain Carlos Ruiz, the Chilean Naval and Defence Attaché, who attended our 2025 Faith Forum, once more at his office in Canberra. Captain Ruiz presented a copy of the book 'Prat.' Arturo Prat was a Chilean Navy officer and lawyer. He was killed in the Battle of Iquique, during the War of the Pacific. During his career, Prat participated in several naval engagements, including battles at Papudo (1865), and at the Abtao (1866). Following his death, his name became a rallying cry for Chilean forces, and is today a national hero. We look forward to sharing more about Arturo Prat in our future newsletters and if you are in Canberra, please ask to read this wonderful book.

Navy Day is a Chilean national holiday celebrated on 21 May each year, commemorating the naval engagement mentioned above. This year CAPT Ruiz will receive his 30 year service medal on Naval Day.



*CAPT Ruiz (Navy) presents the PDFN Secretariat with a copy of "Prat."
(Photo Supplied)*

Updates

The Story of Chaplain Taniela Tama - The Fiji contingent Padre on Exercise Diamond Strike and Exercise Talisman Sabre

I thank God and the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) for placing their trust in me to serve as a Padre during Exercise Diamond Strike and Exercise Talisman Sabre in 2025.

Over two months, I had the privilege of serving alongside chaplains from 19 nations, supporting more than 30,000 troops across both exercises. This marked my first experience operating in a simulated battlefield environment, a time that was both spiritually enriching and professionally challenging.

One of the key challenges I encountered was adapting to the high intensity tempo and operational demands of field ministry. Providing pastoral care in a combat simulated environment required emotional resilience, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to offer meaningful support to personnel dealing with fatigue, isolation, and operational stress.

Throughout this experience, I discovered the profound power of presence over words that simply being there, listening, and walking alongside soldiers in the field holds deep spiritual significance. I also gained greater insight into the vital role of spiritual leadership in sustaining morale, guiding ethical decision-making, and fostering unity within diverse teams during complex missions.

This deployment has sharpened my pastoral skills and reaffirmed my calling: to serve those who serve, especially in times of challenge and uncertainty.

Rev. Captain Taniela Tama

(RFMF Land Force Command Padre)



Rev Tama 'out bush' on Exercise Talisman Sabre (Photo Supplied)

Below: RFMF field church service on Exercise Talsiman Sabre



Updates

France - Catholic and Protestant Chaplaincies of the Armed Forces in New Caledonia.

The year 2024-2025 has been both demanding and deeply blessed. Together, the Catholic and Protestant chaplaincies serving the Armed Forces in New Caledonia have shared in a common mission of presence, prayer, and pastoral care.

Throughout the year, we were actively engaged in worship services, patronal celebrations, and the spiritual accompaniment of military personnel during major exercises, including Exercise Croix du Sud, as well as in the context of the PDFN. These moments strengthened not only the faith of individuals, but also the bonds of fellowship within the Defence community.

We were also grateful to welcome allied naval vessels to New Caledonia, including ships from United States and New Zealand. Meeting with their chaplains from the United States

and New Zealand was a meaningful opportunity for mutual encouragement and shared prayer. These encounters reflected the unity we experience beyond denominational and national boundaries.

With thankful hearts, we acknowledge God's faithfulness throughout this year. Trusting in His guidance, we look ahead to 2026 with hope, committed to continuing our shared ministry of service, compassion, and peace.

May the Lord help us all !

Blessings from

Father Arnaud Babin and Pastor Johnatan Djouate



Pastor Johnatan linking with the Customary Senate that represents the Kanak people in New Caledonia (Photo Supplied)



Celebration of Saint Michael, patron saint of paratroopers and intelligence, by Father Arnaud (Photo Supplied)

Updates

New Zealand

Kia ora from New Zealand and NZDF Chaplaincy. I think that to say 2025 has gone in the blink of the eye is probably a bit of an understatement. I've been reflecting on what a busy year it has been for us all and to be honest, the Canberra PDFN forum in March seems like a lifetime ago. NZDF Chaplaincy started 2025 having six vacancies in the Regular Force which when we only have 27 positions is quite a gap. Then when I consider we have had chaplains deployed to the UK, multiple chaplains away on Naval deployments and chaplains away in PNG, Fiji and the Cook Islands, understanding why we have been so busy becomes obvious.



Above: PDFN Chaplaincy engagement in Suva (Photo Supplied)

Spending two days in Fiji in November with the PDFN senior leaders was another great opportunity to grow the relationships that being part of the PDFN enables. The RFMF were superb hosts at Black Rock and after seeing the proposed program for the 2026 PDFN forum, I am excited about this event. It will be another wonderful chance for chaplains from our nations to gather, not only for fellowship and food (which was amazing) but to continue to explore ways in which we can support and learn from each other. I look forward to continuing this journey with you all through 2026 and into the future.

Peace and blessings to you all,

Dave Lacey

Principal Defence Chaplain - NZDF

Senior Defence Faith Leaders Meet - Blackrock

Several of the updates in this newsletter have mentioned the Senior Defence Faith Leaders' group meeting in Nadi Fiji. This was an exciting time as it was the first in person gathering of this group. It enhanced people-to-people connections and provided a wonderful opportunity to consider the PDFN five year plan and how we might work together to enhance chaplaincy capability in the Pacific together. Here is a photo of the delegates and RFMF support staff in front of the Joint Task Force Command Headquarters at Blackrock Camp (BC) Nadi, Fiji.



Senior Defence Faith Leaders' group meeting with RFMF support staff at the Joint Task Force Command Headquarters at Blackrock Camp (BC) Nadi, Fiji.

Updates

Papua New Guinea Army Chaplaincy

To my brothers and sisters in the Pacific Defence Faith Network across the beautiful horizon of the Pacific Ocean, I wish to convey our warm seasonal greetings on behalf of my Brethren Chaplains and their families from Papua New Guinea Defence Force Chaplaincy Services.

As we celebrate the joy of entering into the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ Two Thousand Twenty Six (2026), I am grateful to share with you all the many exciting things the Lord God Almighty has done to us in Papua New Guinea Defence Force Directorate of Chaplaincy Service.

I declare in the glorious name of Our Lord Jesus Christ that I have experienced the power of our prayer network across the Pacific Defence Faith Network. The real bond of spiritual love and union of spirit de corps was felt through our prayers and interaction through the open WhatsApp and Email conversations. I applaud all who have been sharing and updating each other through these very vital medium.

At this juncture, I would like to thank the Lord Our God for humble and dedicated service and Leadership of the team in the Secretariat of the PDFN for keeping us informed and for the successful achievement of the Key priority projects endorsed in PDFN – Forum in Canberra, Australia.

Towards the end of 2025, I was honoured to be nominated by the Force Chaplain Maj. David N'Dramen to attend the SDFLG conference in Black Rock, Nadi, Fiji hosted by RFMF. It was indeed refreshing and reunion with our brothers and sisters of PDFN. The most significant experience of the trip to Fiji was welcome reception at Nadi International Airport where the passengers were welcomed on arrival with the harmonious Pacific song by three men dressed in their beautiful Bula attire and singing with friendly smiling faces. As I stepped out of the terminal I was met by the helpful porters who directed me to the waiting vehicle. In saying so, all these indicates to me that the 2026 Defence Faith Forum in Fiji will be so blessed with its hospitality in Pacific cultural context and sharing of God's love together.

Back home in Port Moresby, we had a peaceful festive season. The PNGDF wound up its operations for the year 2025 with the CDFs End of Year church parade two weeks prior to the End of Year final parade.

The Church Parade was held on the 01st December 2025, at the Rev. Sioni Kami Memorial United church in Gordons approximately ten minutes' drive out of Murray Barracks. All the HQPNGDF Personnel, Bi-literal Partners, and Diplomats from other nations, All Units COs with their Chaplains and troops from the Southern Units, and families attended the church parade. Capt. Henry Otio Chaplain of HMSPNGS Basilisks preached the Word of God focused on a theme *"Our strength is in the Lord"* (Isaiah 40: 31) while

the Force Chaplain Maj. David N'Dramen and I shared the prayers. All the Units were invited to present an item of songs each and the Seventh Day Adventist Choir from Murray Barracks also blessed the event with all the inspirational songs.

The Church Parade concluded with the remarks from CDF RADM Philip Polewara DMS, CBE, and everyone was invited to a lunch together outside the church.

All the major activities of PNGDF end after CDFs End of Year Parade on the 12th December 2025 and the Stand down for Christmas and New Year festive began on Monday 15th December 2025.

We have just begun the 2026 PNGDF Operation on the 12th January. The main focus for 2026 Force Activity will be the Pre-Deployment preparation for 2027 PNG National General Election, and the PNG delegates are praying that PDFN – DFF in Black Rock Nadi in Fiji will be very exciting and fulfilling.

May the Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all forever, Amen.

Jason Evari

Major



PNG Chaplain Maj. Jason Evari with Senoir PNG Chaplain David N'Dramen at the Australian Royal Military College Duntroon in 2025. (Photo Supplied)

Updates

Tonga

When the Senior Defence Faith Leaders Group met at Black-rock Camp in November last year I spoke about the importance of Christmas and New Year to Tongan people. As a church leader it was my job to choose 12 people to preach the last message of the year and the new message of the new year. Each person had six to seven minutes to do their devotion. We started the service at 2200hrs (10 pm) and continued on until the new year. At 15 minutes to midnight the church minister, a Reverend, assumes the responsibility before God to pass the word of God from the old year to the new year. During the day there are also some significant food preparations which take place. At 1pm some of the church family made the Alter represent a food sacrifice. Tongan food was prepared including a big roast, some different types of seafood and many, many accompaniments. So many families contributed, preparing the food and coming to church to present it and pray for a blessing. This is a time honoured Tongan tradition of preparing food and bringing it to the local church for a blessing.

Saula Taufa Molia



Above: Moli preaching as the new year approaches (Photo Supplied)

Below: Moli with 11 other lay ministers preparing to preach into the new year (Photo Supplied)



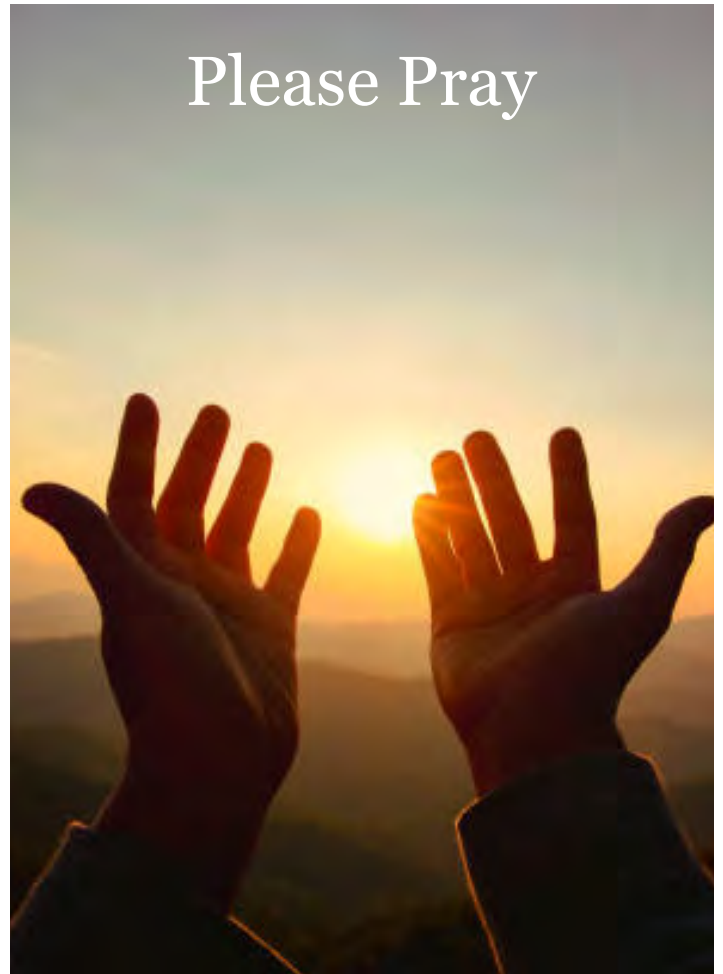


A Call to Prayer / Upcoming Events

Please Pray

- Pray for the three-year prayer and fasting campaign by the Methodist Church in Fiji and the Ministry of Policing, supported by the Republic of Fiji Military Forces to combat illicit drug use and the spread of HIV and AIDS in the population
- Pray for the new chaplains joining the PNGDF this year, the military wives convention in July and the highland evangelism program
- Pray for the NZDF chaplains to bring the love of God to the people of the NZDF during these troubling times in practical and meaningful ways. Pray that chaplains would be the hands, feet and voice of Jesus to all people
- Pray for the PDFN chaplains to work together to “grow the capacity of network”, particularly in the area of training, skilling and education
- Pray for the celebration of Naval Day, a national holiday in Chile, on 21 May
- Thank God for the recent Sunday services in New Caledonia with the RFMF trainees
- Give thanks for a successful Defence Faith Forum at Backrock Camp, Nadi Fiji, hosted by the RFMF.

Please Pray



Up Coming Events

Next PDFN Newsletter release: July 2026
(articles and photos wanted)

UPCOMING
EVENTS

Your Feedback Matters

There are opportunities to make the next newsletter even better. We welcome your feedback.

Please send any comments to:

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Feedback