

FOCUS

Magazine of

SANDES Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

April - June 2018



Though I have fallen, I will rise

Mich:78



A beautiful sunrise over a field of poppies

Later this year we will be commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the end of World War One and many memories will be aired throughout the land. Hanging on a wall in my home is an old faded picture of a WW1 soldier. He stares at the camera with his arms folded. His heavy moustache and brushed hair look typical for the time. It is an image of my great uncle who when serving with the Gordon Highlanders, was fatally wounded at the first battle of Mons in 1914 right at the start of the war. He was married but died without children and so his part of the family line sadly ended in a casualty clearing station in Calais. He died over one hundred years ago and so not many people even within the family would know who this young soldier was. This black and white photograph with worn corners and tattered edges is all that remains. This current anonymity would be in deep contrast with the personal pain and

anguish felt by many families during the war when they received the dreaded telegram to inform them of loved ones 'killed in action' or 'missing presumed dead'. Wives were left with no husband, mothers without a son and children without a father. As the war raged on this devastation spread to more and more homes. Some continued to hold out hope if the message was 'missing presumed dead' but with so many bodies never being found it was a thin hope. However there were mistakes made and some people did turn up alive and well after being reported dead. There may have been many reasons for this. With so many casualties it was difficult to identify them all. Sometimes letters and personal items were used as evidence of identity but these were often exchanged with comrades just in case they did not survive. Many bodies were never found and so identification tags found on a

battle field or even a soldier's absence could result in him being presumed dead. Maybe some were taken prisoner and their information was not exchanged. Can you imagine the families shock and joy when they heard that someone they thought was dead was actually alive? The pain of all the unnecessary grief and despair would have given way to unrelenting joy. There are many such stories recorded in local newspapers at the time.

One of those was Pte Fred Joslin, who was reportedly killed by machine gun fire. His family were informed and there was a church service in his memory when suddenly he wrote home from a hospital where he was recovering from wounds. He lived until he was 95 years old. Alternatively there were also those who continued to hope for such a miracle without success. We read of Rudyard Kipling's grief over his son Jack. For a long time he and his wife refused to accept the news of Jack's death and left no stone unturned in searching for him and trying to find out what had happened. Every family had their own story to tell.

The truth is, from all those who died in that war, none came back from the dead and despite the deepest desires and best intent no one could bring them back from the dead. Eternal fates were sealed on the battle field. Their heavy sacrifice won freedom and peace in their time but sadly their sons had to take up the fight again within a generation.

At this time of year we have just celebrated Easter when we remember the only person that ever came back from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ. I always wonder how His disciples felt. Jesus told them beforehand what was going to happen but they didn't understand. When the Lord was arrested in Gethsemane they all ran away and deserted Him. Fearing for their lives, they denied any association with Him and hid away. They were in despair as they seen Christ mocked and being executed as a common criminal even though He was innocent. Afterwards His tortured body was buried in a tomb. But Easter changed everything! The revelation

that Jesus was alive again was incredible. This was no mistake. He had really died but now He was alive. The greatest evidence we have for the resurrection today was the transformation in His disciples. From fear, despair, defeat and abandonment, they found courage, hope, victory and a promise that He would always be with them. The Holy Spirit empowered them to preach the Gospel and having seen the resurrected Christ they in turn were prepared to lay down their own lives in full confidence of eternal life. Easter still changes things! It is the basis for all our future hopes and the source of power in our daily lives today. We can still encounter the risen Christ and He can change us too. Only through Him can you receive forgiveness and be reconciled to your heavenly Father. This peace He won is eternal for all generations. Christ is alive so put your trust in Him today. You too can have confidence in the resurrection with an eternal life in God's presence.



Sandes Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

An Evangelical Christian Mission to the Armed Forces requires a

MISSION DIRECTOR

Must be able to provide spiritual leadership to our Mission teams and build/maintain working relations within the military community. Experience of leading, managing people, finances and developing strategic plans.

Should have strong written and oral communication skills.

Position is permanent subject to probation period. Hours include some evenings and weekends meetings with support groups and Churches.

All applicants must be committed to the Christian ethos of the Mission.

Application packs may be obtained from

The Mission Director

Unit 7, 30 Island Street, Belfast BT4 1DH

Telephone 02890 500250

Hearts set on doing His will in Lisburn



Soldiers enjoying Pancake Tuesday in Sandes at Lisburn

I recently read a story about a man learning to ski. He could slalom back and forward across the snow but he had a problem if there was an obstacle in his way like a tree or another skier. He would focus so much on that object that he would inevitably end up skiing directly at it and not be able to avoid it. If he could only learn to focus on his intended path, he could then steer towards clear snow.

I have never skied but I play golf and there is a similar principal at work here. When playing over a water hazard the theory is that you should focus on where you want your ball to finish and not on the water or that is where your ball will end up. Unfortunately I have proved the negative end of this theory a number of times myself when playing golf.

These sporting analogies can provide us with a valuable lesson in life. Whatever we focus on will start to shape our life. If we dwell on our fears they start to grow to the

point of binding and paralysing us. When we are on a diet, if we think about not eating chocolate the more likely we are to crave it. Instead we should be focusing on the positive body image we want to achieve.

In Philippians 4 we are told "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honourable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise..... Then the God of peace will be with you."

One of the things I enjoy about writing these quarterly reports is the name of the magazine, Focus. It always reminds me to focus, not only on God, who called us into

Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. Matt 6:21

Sandes, but also on the reason He called us into this work. To share His love in practical ways and to tell people about the love and grace of God and the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Unexpectedly, we have had a busy start to the year in both Lisburn and in Ballykinlar. It has been a real blessing. At the end of January, when 75% of the 2 Rifles were away either on exercise or leave, we had our busiest day ever in Lisburn. There is no exact science to working out how busy or quiet we are going to be so it is difficult to get our staffing and stock levels right. We praise God that even when we are surprised with busyness and don't have enough staff, He gives us the energy and grace to keep going.

During the recent spell of heavy snow we were told that "Signals platoons were told to stand down until Monday". We thought we would be quiet until 11:30 when the 2 Rifles were also stood down and had nowhere to go. The scoff house didn't open until 12:00 and besides Sandes was a shorter distance to walk in the snow.

For the next hour and a half we were really busy yet we thank God for His strength and enabling.

We have also continued to see an upturn in the amount of people who are using us as a listening ear, as we continue to build bridges of friendship both military and civilian staff in Lisburn. They often share their difficulties and, depending on the problem, we can sometimes point them in the right direction to receive help or just be there for them to offload. We always pray for them and sometimes with them which is always a privilege for us and we hope a blessing to them.

Trevor continues his work alongside the welfare organisations in speaking to those who have been struggling with gambling related problems. This is an issue the welfare teams are becoming more proactive in dealing with. There are quite a few projects being launched to help the soldiers in this area which is great to see and a blessing to be part of.

We have seen a lot of friends leave us, either for postings, leaving the army or



Our faithful worker Illy celebrating her birthday in Sandes with volunteer Amanda



The Cadets' instructors enjoying an evening in Sandes at Ballykinlar in front of the fire

retirement. We do keep in contact with a lot of the people that move on and it is often difficult to say farewell to those we have come to know over the years. We have been with Sandes now for 13 years and been working alongside 2 Rifles for 11 years which actually means that we have been with the regiment longer than most of the soldiers. There are only a few of the original group that moved to Northern Ireland in 2007 still serving in the 2 Rifles today. It is reassuring to know in a world that is constantly changing that God's love and faithfulness never changes.

We have seen an increase in bookings for the Centre in Ballykinlar, mainly with the cadets on weekends. At the time of writing we are in the middle of a spell of having to open for 5 Saturday nights in a row and this may increase as some only book two weeks in advance. These evenings are normally good fun and we often enjoy the buzz they generate in the Centre. The cadets are always well behaved. They respect and appreciate the Centre and the staff and they often enjoy the banter. Although we don't often get the chance to have prolonged chats with them, it is always good to see

many of them taking the camouflage Bibles and the literature that is available for them. We already have two bookings for large groups of cadets coming over to Northern Ireland from England for their summer camps. We had one last summer and it was such a success that the word got out and at least two are coming over this year. They have said that having Sandes as an option for the children in the evenings is a major selling point for them. We are looking for volunteers to help during this period so if you have any free evenings from the last Saturday in July to the end of August and would be willing to wash dishes and clear tables etc. Any help would be gratefully appreciated as we will also be running the Lisburn Centre during this period.

We have been greatly blessed as we have seen changes in people's lives and witnessed real answers to prayer during the last quarter. We are continually thankful to all who pray, phone and send letters of encouragement, often at the time we need them most. You all play your part in keeping Sandes an effective organisation and we could not do it without your support.

Trevor & Jan Pinkerton

Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of one body, and we all belong to each other. Romans 12:4-5

Being a light in someone's dark day



New recruits being introduced to Sandes and immediately feeling at home.

There are many joys in life alongside constant challenges. Trials can sometimes distract us that we lose sight of our blessings. On occasions it is a struggle to keep a clear focus with all that life throws at us. In the midst of everything I am aware that through Christ, God loves me, my sins are forgiven and He has given my life a new and exciting purpose. Each day can bring new challenges and problems but God never changes and so I am confident that His promises and purposes will always hold true. No matter what comes against us as a couple we can still trust God. Through experience we have learnt to focus on the purpose rather than the problem. The first is eternal and the second is transient. What a joy and privilege to be part of His eternal purposes here in Harrogate. We have put our confidence in the Lord and so we stand here with expectation and purpose.

These young boys and girls at the college

have made a decision to join the Army and every day they are being stretched more and more to become the best they can be. Sometimes the challenges they face may seem like a step too far but as they put their confidence and trust in the staff they learn to take that step. At the end of the year they all want to be part of a successful pass off parade and we do all we can to encourage them during their time here. We feel the love of God for each of them knowing they are precious little souls. Our heart is to make them aware of an even higher purpose for their lives and we continue to trust the Lord's leading to that end. Over the years we have tried to be the light in someone's dark day, to bring hope when they are down and to encourage them when they just want to walk away. Everything we say and do must be a testimony of our faith in God and reflect something of His love towards them and to that end even the smallest things are important.

My heart is confident in You, O God; my heart is confident in you. No wonder I can sing your praises. Psalm 57:7

There is an old adage that says the Army marches on its stomach. It's great to see Sandes so popular again with the Junior Soldiers queuing up even before we arrive back in the evening. With being young and undergoing all this physical training they are always ravenous. I don't know where they put it all as it never seems to show. I only have to look at something with a few calories and I feel full up. Many of them like our big breakfasts during the day and perhaps the Everest burgers in the evening. There are those with a more discerning appetite who love our salad wraps and omelettes. We believe the food here is good and it brings people back again and again. It has been an important part of Sandes methodology of 'Good Food, Good Friends and Good News'. Last month we had 50 boxers who came in to be fed. I wasn't expecting that many but we managed. I think they were offered a treat somewhere but asked to come to Sandes instead. Jim had the flu but our son Gary came and helped us and no one was disappointed.

We often find visitors to the camp come to Sandes to eat and we meet some really interesting people. We were recently asked by one of the training staff to do a buffet for fifty people to cater for those attending his little son's christening in the garrison church and it was our pleasure to do so.

In January, after Christmas leave, Mark and Sal our support couple were seconded temporarily to Pirbright as the Mission continues to search for a new Support Couple for there. Martin and Deise needed more hands on deck and as we were the only Centre with an additional couple, Mark and Sal graciously headed off to Pirbright. I understand that they have been a real blessing. So while our team has dwindled for the present, our spirits have not. Everyone has really pulled together and knowing the girls as I do, this is what I would have expected.

We are really delighted that the Centre has been busy again but we want to thank



Special birthdays are not forgotten at home and so the same applies to Sandes.



Our Bible Quiz winner basking in his thirty seconds of fame.

everyone who has supported and helped us through the tough times to be where we are today. During the recent spell of bad weather we were really busy and it felt like I was skating around the Centre talking to people. That could have been literally true if we hadn't put down extra mats to catch the snow off people's feet as they came into Sandes.

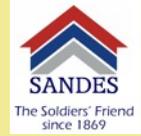
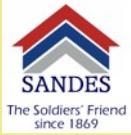
Some of the permanent staff were talking to me recently about the origins of Sandes and they were really blown away to learn that we would be celebrating our 150th anniversary next year. What a wonderful testimony to the vision of our founder Elsie Sandes.

Jim and I have been at reception days the past two Sundays to welcome the new intake. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet the families dropping off their children at the College. When we meet any of the parents we try to reassure them that if their son or daughter comes into the Centre we will look after them as though they were our own. The new recruits are always very nervous when they arrive but we soon have them smiling. We comfort them and assure them that life here is good. They have wonderful opportunities to learn so many new things and grow in confidence much more than

they ever imagined. They just need to stay focused and follow instructions. Some of them took Bibles, dog tags and tracts. Our little Bible quiz is still very popular. Sometimes when the Centre is really busy in the evenings we are not able to get out among the Junior Soldier as they are doing it. We hand the Quiz sheets to the boys and girls and they bring them back when they are finished. They all love to win and have their thirty seconds of fame.

Our dear friend Anna Irons had many contacts who kept in touch with her long after leaving the Army. It was an indication of how much she had impacted their lives. Keeping in touch is also important for us, although today social media means that it is done in a much more informal way than before, using Facebook and other apps. It was still nice to receive a postcard from Cpl 'Dinger' Bell in Oman. He knew I collected colourful postcards for displaying in the Centre. It is great to know that he is missing Sandes and his favourite wrap and tattie scones. He promised to call when passing as he knew the kettle would always be on. I hope that we will always be that real home for Soldiers and a place where they can feel God's love in all we say and do.

Jim & Maryjane McCracken



Prayer Diary

13 -15th April *Sandes Annual Conference*
18th May *Sandes Annual General Meeting & Prayer Meeting*
15th June *Sandes Day of Prayer*

Special Prayer Request

"The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Matthew 9:37-38

There is an urgent need to find a Support Couple and Centre Assistants for Pirbright and we would encourage all our supporters to pray that the Lord would call the right people into the work. There is also a ongoing need for Godly volunteers throughout the work.

Names of our serving Superintendents and Support Workers:

<i>Jim and Maryjane McCracken</i>	<i>Harrogate</i>
<i>Mark and Sal Nieuwoudt</i>	<i>Harrogate</i>
<i>Chris and Marlene Wilkinson</i>	<i>Holywood</i>
<i>Trevor and Jan Pinkerton</i>	<i>Lisburn/ Ballykinlar</i>
<i>Martin and Deise Lewis</i>	<i>Pirbright</i>

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Ephesians 6:18

Please pray for: **April 2018**

- 1 believers to be divinely inspired as they contemplate the risen and living Christ
- 2 a breakthrough in our recruitment, that Godly people would come forward for all available positions.
- 3 God's favour and blessing on all Christian ministries to the military.
- 4 the completion of the Annual Accounts and preparation for AGM.
- 5 for the right couple to come forward as new Support Couple in Pirbright
- 6 a secure spiritual climate on camps and especially in our Centres
- 7 our speaker Paul Young as he prepares for next week's Conference.
- 8 wisdom for the Sandes Committee as they plan a special meeting to discuss the future direction of Sandes.
- 9 those in the Sandes family who need a healing touch from the Lord.
- 10 for the Bibles, literature and dog tags being distributed through the Centres to be effective.
- 11 single purpose through all Christian agencies working within the military.
- 12 new Centre assistants in both Pirbright and Lisburn.
- 13 those travelling to the Sandes Annual Conference today
- 14 inspiration, encouragement and a sense of family unity at the Sandes conference.
- 15 renewed commitment and expectation from everyone at the Sandes Conference today.
- 16 good fellowship and effective teaching as our workers meet for a training day.
- 17 renewed sense of vision and a fresh anointing on Sandes in the year ahead
- 18 the delayed draft of the CVWW charter which is being rewritten would still confirm Army housing without charge for Sandes.
- 19 a time of refreshment at the 'Still Time' prayer meeting in Sandes in Lisburn today.
- 20 God's provision of people with vision for Sandes work including workers, volunteers and supporters.
- 21 work of Sandes to bear fruit with lives being changed and people being saved.
- 22 deputation this evening at a meeting in Islandmagee.
- 23 God's continued leading and protection on the mission work of Sandes.
- 24 the children who had attended the Good News Club during the past season.
- 25 the Lord's financial provision for the work in the year ahead.
- 26 wisdom on new opportunities and new relationships for the work of Sandes.
- 27 courage and confidence for Christians serving in the Armed Forces.
- 28 God's favour on Sandes from all Commanding Officers and others in authority.
- 29 work in Pirbright would start to feel a change in the spiritual climate on camp and a new anointing on the work.
- 30 marriages and family life of soldiers which come under great strain.

Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. Luke 18:1

Please pray for: May 2018

- 1 Deputation for Sandes at Rathmore St Evangelical Church tonight.
- 2 the build up of a sufficient team in Pirbright with a new Support Couple and new Centre Assistants.
- 3 the safety of our soldiers who are deployed in various places throughout the world.
- 4 sustainable footfall with more outreach opportunities in all of the Sandes Centres
- 5 a reasonably priced production source to be found to create new Sandes dog tags.
- 6 breakthroughs as we see people being saved within the military community.
- 7 the recruitment process underway for new Mission Director in Head Office.
- 8 wisdom on any new initiatives or opportunities presented to Sandes.
- 9 final preparations for the Annual General Meeting later this month.
- 10 those within all the Christian CVWW organisations who need a healing touch.
- 11 Trevor and Jan as they run two centres and wisdom on future of Ballykinlar Centre
- 12 recruits in Pirbright to once more engage in a Saturday night fellowship group.
- 13 Divine inspiration for Padres taking services today in the Garrison Churches.
- 14 a real and significant change in the spiritual climate within the military community.
- 15 Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 16 people to consider supporting Sandes Mission in their legacy planning.
- 17 good opportunities to hold the Bible Quiz in Harrogate.
- 18 those meeting at the Sandes AGM and Prayer Meetings today.
- 19 the families of those working in Sandes would know the Lord's leading, blessing and protection.
- 20 the Holy Spirit to move within the military community awaking people from spiritual apathy.
- 21 the marriages and family life of soldiers which come under great strain.
- 22 growth in the Sandes prayer and financial support base to enable the work to continue and grow.
- 23 sustainable futures and renewed sense of purpose on all the Christian Agencies in the military.
- 24 for our vice presidents, committee and others who work behind the scenes to create this platform for Sandes outreach.
- 25 breakthroughs and opportunities with the 1 Scots and other units in Holywood.
- 26 for the evening opportunities with the cadets etc in Ballykinlar.
- 27 a sense of peace and purpose in the midst of the challenges facing everyone in Sandes.
- 28 people who may be suffering physically or emotionally as a result of military service.
- 29 wisdom in the recruitment for positions in Head Office and the Centres.
- 30 the planning of a Holiday Bible Club in Holywood next month.
- 31 good relationships and partnership with the Padres on camp.

*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man
avails much James 5:16b*

Please pray for: **June 2018**

- 1 more volunteer help for Trevor and Jan as they run both the Centres at Lisburn and Ballykinlar.
- 2 military families living with stresses of deployments and new postings.
- 3 encouragement for Christians in the Armed Forces to live and share their faith
- 4 people called by God for the recruitment process for Head Office and Pirbright staff
- 5 Sandes would know a fresh anointing as we face the new challenges of this age.
- 6 protection and promotion of Christian values within military and the Government.
- 7 wisdom on discussions relating to new opportunities for Sandes.
- 8 thanks for our volunteers and for more Godly volunteers to help us in all Centres.
- 9 Chris and Marlene in Holywood. For Marlene's health and for them to see breakthroughs in the work.
- 10 all Christian agencies working together to bring the hope of the Gospel to our Armed Forces.
- 11 soldiers and their families to come to a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 12 Sandes to remain both financially solvent and spiritually effective.
- 13 new opportunities for our team with the 2 Rifles community in Lisburn
- 14 wisdom for those serving on Sandes committee as they plan the way forward for the Mission.
- 15 the Sandes day of prayer and fasting with a prayer meeting at noon today.
- 16 opportunities with the Welsh Guards and their families in Pirbright.
- 17 Divine inspiration for Padres as they lead Church services today.
- 18 new opportunities to help and care through the friendship ministry in all of Centres.
- 19 complete, committed and settled teams in all the Centres.
- 20 those suffering either physically or emotionally as a result of military service.
- 21 for all our troops serving and training in different locations throughout the world.
- 22 Martin and Deise in Pirbright would find a settled team to help them in the work.
- 23 all the Bibles, literature and Dog Tags being distributed through our Centres
- 24 wisdom and grace for our workers in how to deal with all the various agencies and ranks within the military.
- 25 the 5 day Bible Club being held in Holywood this week.
- 26 the Lord's continuing provision of finances, workers and volunteers for Sandes.
- 27 for all the little seeds of faith planted though Sandes in the past would grow and bear fruit.
- 28 opportunities for Jim and Maryjane in Harrogate with both Junior Soldiers and staff
- 29 wisdom for the Sandes committee on how to lead the Mission forward.
- 30 an awareness of the loving call of God as people come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice Psalm 141 :2

The Lord's assignment in Holywood



Reciting memory verses at the Good News Club in Holywood

Did you hear the one about the pilot, professor, church leader and a hiker? They were all on-board a small plane when the engines died. The pilot said, "There are only three parachutes and since this is my plane I am taking one of them". He put it on and jumped out. The professor said, "I am brilliant and the world needs me, so I am taking a parachute" and he jumped out. Then the church leader told the hiker, "I do not want to be selfish, so you take the last parachute". The hiker replied, "There are still two left, so we can have one each, the professor jumped out with my backpack instead of the parachute.

Though the professor thought he would land safely, his assurance was based on faulty thinking. Time and time again, in our Centres, we come across people who have an assurance of salvation based on faulty thinking. Some people that we talk to believe that church attendance, baptism or just being good will gain the approval of God, yet their thinking is faulty. It is not based on what God's Word says. So what

does God's Word say? It says that all have sinned and that we are His enemies. That through the death and resurrection of His Son, we can be made right with God (Romans 3:23; 5: 8-10). That by faith in what Christ has done; we have peace with God (Romans 5:1) and the assurance of eternal life in heaven. This is the message we try to share with all who come through our doors, that their eternity is at stake and not to trust in faulty thinking but to put their faith in Christ and in Christ alone.

Marlene and I would like to express our thanks to all those who earnestly and fervently pray for us and the work here at Holywood in getting this vital message of the Gospel across to all who use the Centre whether it be for a short visit or over a longer period of time.

Since 1 Scots arrived, they have been away continually on manoeuvres and short tours. We now find the Army is continually reorganising and preparing for a forever-changing world, preparing for the

God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

dangers that seem to be continually in the news. Therefore we continue to praise God for the open door and the opportunities we have with the men and women who have made Sandes their "home from home". To pray for them and to listen as they open their hearts. Pray for all those conversations, the literature, Bibles, tracts and daily reading books that have been personally handed out and for those taken quietly.

Pray especially for the soldiers and their families who have shared with us their concerns and worries such as facing death and dealing with life after the Army as well as the battle scars both emotional and physical. We have been a listening ear and in some ways a practical help through the booklets we have been able to give them that deal with a number of issues they have been struggling with.

Good News Club continues to go well but attendance has dropped, due to the movements of the regiment. The club is mostly made up of Fijian children who are such a pleasure to teach. They sing their little hearts out and are so attentive during the Bible lessons and while learning Bible verses. We are now planning our Easter clubs which will again be a joint venture

with the youth club. We thank Natalie from the youth club for facilitating this. We are also in the process of planning for the Holiday Bible Club which is usually held on the last week of June. As we continue to minister to the boys and girls, pray with us for their salvation. Again we thank Stephanie, Joyce, Roberta and Julie (CEF) for their faithfulness in ministering to the boys and girls of 1 Scots.

I am sure you will remember after leaving the old timber building which housed Sandes for many years we were moved across the road to what was the Corporals mess, only to be moved out to make way for the UDR/Royal Irish welfare to use the building. It is sad to say that the building caught fire recently and was partly destroyed (it will now have to be demolished). Some valuable artefacts and historical paper work was destroyed. However due to the diligence of one of the fire fighters (ex-Irish Guards) he managed to retrieve some valuable paintings, flags and other items of great regimental value. During this time of trauma for the office staff, we were able to reach out with a helping hand and bring some needed comfort to all.

Chris and Marlene Wilkinson



Former Sandes Centre which became HQ of the Royal Irish Regiment destroyed by fire.

Captain Walker the Slaves' Saviour



Captain Jonathan Walker

It was in 1844 during the days of slavery in America, that Captain Jonathan Walker, a kind hearted sea captain sought to assist four slaves to escape from Florida. The endeavour was made in an open boat.

They were overtaken and Captain Walker was imprisoned. When finally tried in the court, the verdict was a foregone conclusion. The captain was found guilty of aiding in the attempted escape of the slaves and sentenced to be placed in the pillory on a public road where it would be the privilege of anyone to pelt him with rotten eggs. From there he was to be returned to his cell, his right hand lashed to the bars and the letters 'SS' where to be branded into the palm with a red hot iron. On top of all this he was sentenced to one year in prison for each of the slaves he tried to help, fined £150 and all the costs of the trial.

Though hard to believe, this cruel sentence was carried out, and he was placed in the pillory and pelted with rotten eggs for an hour. Finally, the iron was heated and into the right palm of this man was branded the symbol 'SS' signifying 'Slave Stealer'. The poor slaves were returned to their 'owners'

and to more years of bondage and servitude.

After his release Captain Walker spent a number of years travelling about the country lecturing against slavery. He passed on peacefully at the age of 79 on 30 April 1878. His grave in Evergreen cemetery at Muskegon, Michigan is marked by a tombstone upon which a branded hand is engraved. People started to say that the 'SS' represented 'Slaves' Saviour'. Such is the story of the man whose love and sympathy for slaves meant him being punished and put to shame because he espoused their cause.

But there is another story that surpasses this one by far and each of us play an important part in this. The fact is that we were all born as slaves to sin and its harsh master, Satan. He is the master of deception and lies so perhaps you are not aware that he tries to keep you captive to his will to serve his purposes. He binds us with manacles of despair and guilt and feeds our sinful nature.

Thank God for our Lord Christ Jesus, whose love, sympathy and grace abounds towards those who are in spiritual bondage and who rescues them and sets them free from the awful clutches of Satan and the consequences of their sin. At what cost was this done? It was indeed the greatest price ever paid. The cross at Calvary with all its unfathomable depths of anguish, pain, agony, suffering which no human mind can fathom, and the precious blood which flowed from His blessed head, His hands, His feet and His side. That was the price that was paid to set you and me at liberty.

Those nailed scarred hands are testimony to the love He has for you and for me. Regardless of where your life is today, you are not beyond the love of God. He wants to set you free from your sinful nature and its wicked master. He has not forgotten you as Isaiah 49:16 reminds us 'I have engraved you on the palms of my hands'.

Help us maintain the legacy of Sandes



A long history - Medals from South Africa and WW1 alongside a portrait of Miss Sandes

Next year, Sandes will be celebrating 150 years serving the Lord within the military community. Over that time we have seen wars come and go. We have seen the overseas garrisons reduce as an Imperial Army was no longer required. The welfare conditions of soldiers have improved beyond all recognition. The world has changed a lot since 1869. Sandes too has had to adapt to meet the needs of soldiers. In it all there remained the essential and consistent message of the Gospel because the spiritual needs never change.

What does the future hold? Sandes is still in a very privileged position within the military and we want to see this little foothold for the Gospel continue for as long as the Lord wills it. As we look to the future we would encourage people to consider Sandes as part of their legacy planning. You could be part of this ongoing legacy ensuring a Christian witness to future generations of our soldiers. Following is a word of encouragement from one of my predecessors in Sandes.

LEGACY! *What does that word mean to you? I guess it depends on how recently or how long ago you were born. This writer put in an appearance in the early 1940's, so*

by now the word legacy suggests that I need to get my affairs in order. On the other hand, if you arrived on earth in the 70's, 80's or even the 90's, legacy has a more hopeful aura about it!

For us "oldies" a legacy could include arthritis, grey hair, wrinkles and so on, all of which are the legacy left to me by my parents! For the younger generation it may mean never having to work again, or at least the means to live life on a higher financial plain, free of debt.

*So far as Sandes is concerned, it can mean a dear friend, prayer partner and supporter has gone Home to Glory, leaving a legacy which is entirely financial, but at the same time leaving a gap which is increasingly difficult to fill. Legacies provide a considerable source of support for the ministry of Sandes, and not one, no matter how large or small, is received without sadness and regret. SO, how will we, as members of the Sandes' family, be remembered? For our prayers, our gifts and just maybe our **LEGACY**? For some of us it is a matter for prayer and God's infinite guidance while we are still in the body!*

Hazel Knox MBE

Steadfast love of the Lord never ceases



Deise and team receiving highest rating for food safety standards from local council inspector

My confession at the start of this report is that God is good, all the time.

We have been blessed at Pirbright with the Lord intervening at His perfect time on our behalf. We have had staff leaving and each time He has replaced them with faithful people. Carla left to pursue her dream and then Durga asked for extra shifts and left her evening role at the laundry to accommodate us. Rachel left us but Kabita came back to us a week later. Kabita then went back to Nepal in December but it proved to be a very quiet month. In January Mark and Sally came to work here until we find a new support couple. Rafael came from Brazil to volunteer for four weeks and Prashant has just started. Perfect timing. We must never forget that God is in control and there is no higher authority to which we can appeal. He already knows our needs.

We were blessed by a young man who came all the way from Brazil after giving

up most of his annual leave to serve here across the world at Sandes Pirbright. He was a delight and bonded with every member of the team. His name is Rafael Calixto. We were very sad to see him leave but his wonderful, faithful servant heart will not be forgotten.

We have been blessed with many people that have supported us in all our endeavours. We will never forget Alan and Hamish. Alan faithfully brought his recruits up for inductions as he saw value in our Mission. On his way to his next posting in Kinross he took gifts that we had collected for a family in need in Glasgow.

We can't forget to thank the Lord for the sacrifice that Jim and Maryjane, Mark and Sally have made to juggle their lives to support us here at Pirbright. It is great having them and frankly we could not have kept going without them. So deepest thanks from myself and Deise for your sacrifices.

*What, then, shall we say in response to these things?
If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31*

We continue to trust that the Lord will bring in new workers into Sandes as Support Workers, Centre Assistants and volunteers.

Although we haven't seen the recruits in the prayer room in the same way as last year, we still have many occasions to sow seeds into peoples lives. We had a visit from a french couple, Clemon and Veronique a few weeks ago. They made an impression on a young recruit called Chelsea and her friends. They sought Veronique out after she went home but Deise was able to step in and pray for them in their difficulties. She has a special wisdom with these young ladies. Afterwards there was group hugs all round and Bibles were given out. The girls came back again for a small cake and there were twenty plus people singing happy birthday to her. Again a great opportunity to talk to them and give out Bibles. They now come in regularly for their 'Deise fix'.

Mark has brought down some of his puppets from Harrogate and has been able to use them to amuse the children and teach them about the Lord. The picture below shows him and Rafael entertaining the children and giving a lesson on why our Lord Jesus came to earth.

Marjorie, who was the instigator of the Saturday fellowship group in Sandes, eventually passed out after a long thirty weeks here in Pirbright. She had an enormous smile on her face and a heart

bubbling over with joy. We shared in that joy because she became like a little sister to us. She found her time here tough but we think the Lord has strengthened her character through it all. We hope she will be able to come to church with us during her phase two training. We appreciate you standing with us in prayer as we plant seeds of faith here in Pirbright.

We are blessed again to have Major General Roddy Porter (retired) as our Regional Committee representative and he is already beginning to make his presence known. He is a wonderful blessing, a marvellous motivator and such a blessed smile. God does have His people in all places and we are comforted by Roddy's interest and oversight.

We will be seeing a number of couples in the next few weeks who are interested in the Support Worker roles here in Pirbright. They are coming to see the Centre and get a feel for the work. This is a special Mission needing special people and so we would ask you all to pray for wisdom and discernment in the recruitment process that we would find the right people.

We are looking forward to a great time of fellowship at the Sandes conference and to meeting everyone from the greater Sandes family. Thank you for your prayerful support.

Martin & Deise Lewis



Mark and Rafael talking using puppets to teach some children on camp.



SANDES

The Soldiers' Friend since 1869



As a Christian Mission we depend on your prayerful and financial support to sustain this work. Please consider making a donation or joining our mailing list. Stand with us as we seek to bring Christian love and witness to those within the military and help us secure this little foothold for the Gospel.

Name:

Address:

.....

Town/ City: Post Code:

I would like to make a donation to support the work of Sandes and enclose a donation to the value of :

£ _____

Q218

** Please treat this and any future donations to Sandes as Gift Aid - Yes / No*

You can also donate as follows:

- Online at www.sandes.org.uk
- Direct Debit
- Standing Order
- Payroll Giving
- Leaving a Legacy

Please contact us if you need more information on the above.

** We can claim Gift Aid on donations if you pay Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax every pound you give we get an extra 25 pence from the Inland Revenue. If your donation is to be Gift Aided please complete the details above. It is important that we keep our records up to date so please advice us if there is any change in your tax status or address.*

I would like to receive copies of Focus at the above address.

I would like to arrange for a speaker from Sandes for my Church group.



The Soldiers' Friend
since 1869

SANDES

Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres



The Soldiers' Friend
since 1869



Patron:

The Duchess of Kent

Vice Presidents:

Field Marshal The Lord Bramall
K.G. G.C.B. O.B.E. M.C.

General Sir Roger Wheeler
G.C.B. C.B.E.

General The Lord Dannatt
G.C.B. C.B.E. M.C. D.L.

Major General R J Porter M.B.E.

Major General A N Carlier C.B. O.B.E. B.Sc.

Brigadier R Thomson D.S.O. M.B.E.

Col R G R Hall Q.G.M.

Air Commodore D N Case
Msc MRAs RAF

Committee:

Chairman:

Mr Wesley Ballantine

Vice Chairman:

Mr William Johnston

Mr Norman Boyd

Mr William Clauson

Dr Richard Murphy

Rev Desi Paul

Mrs Joan Scott

Mr Peter Shields

Mission Director:

Mr Tommy Mearns

Sandes Soldiers' & Airmen's Centres

Unit 7, 30 Island Street
Belfast BT4 1DH

Phone: 028905 00250 Fax: 028902 26233

Email: contact@sandes.org.uk

Web: www.sandes.org.uk

Registered Charity No 250718 NI Reg 7273