

Warden's Address – Games Room Official Opening

It is a great privilege to welcome everyone here today for the official opening of our new Games Room facilities.

Church House (Germany) is a military training establishment that exists to serve the moral, pastoral, and spiritual needs of soldiers and their dependants in Germany under the United Kingdom Support Command and the professional oversight of the Royal Army Chaplains' Department. We act as a unique residential venue for training opportunities, and wherever possible, offer a large amount of teaching on a variety of topics relevant to military life and work. In so doing, we aim to create a spiritual balance between study, physical activity and social recreation in the context of hospitality and care. The consequences of this for cohesion and teambuilding are profound and provide a direct added-value to military operational effectiveness.

As a result of our now comprehensive evaluation system, a large number of priorities have been identified over the last year in relation to our facilities. The high and ever-increasing use of Church House (approx. 10,000 'training days' per annum) and the very rapid changes in Information Technology, have led to considerable investment over this period to meet these demands.

The House has completely replaced its IT capability for lecture rooms, installed a free Internet Suite and is soon to open a new Resources Centre that is designed to act as a well-equipped focus for moral and ethical thinking by commanders, chaplains and dependants. This will be followed later in the year by a complete refurbishment of our indoor gym complex and further improvements to outdoor sports facilities; the latter, courtesy of the BFG Welfare Fund.

The Games Room project satisfies a number of requirements; not only is it a comfortable place to relax, but it meets the very high expectations of soldiers today, many of whom are very grateful for an opportunity to socialise somewhere other than the bar.

This has been made possible by donations received from Garrison Churches both in BFG and in the UK (that make up our Non Public Funds), though I am also extremely grateful for the financial support of the Royal Army Temperance Fund who have provided a new pool table. I should also like to point out that there has also been a good deal of 'self-help' from a number of our highly dedicated Staff, in particular Vasko Behrend and Gerhard Bruns, who have provided a large amount of labour and have been responsible for a complete redecoration of the room.

Finally, I am also extremely grateful for the personal encouragement and direction that we have received from the Deputy Chief of Staff UKSC, Colonel Peter McGuigan OBE. I am delighted that he could join us today and would now invite him formally to open this new games room. . . .

*Revd William Lister
Warden
Church House (Germany)*