

Collaborative clean-up prepares Falklands chapel for 40th anniversary

4 years ago



A collaboration between Mitie and partner organisations has transformed the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel ahead of the 40th anniversary of the conflict.

Opened in 2000 by Her Majesty the Queen as a memorial to those who fought and died in the South Atlantic in 1982, the chapel stands in the 230-acre grounds of Pangbourne College, Reading, Berkshire.

Designed to partly resemble a ship, the building was always well cared for, but naturally experienced external weathering in the course of its 22 years.

In line with Mitie's commitment to the British Armed Forces and servicemen and women, the organisation offered to undertake a comprehensive overhaul, preparing the chapel for the 40th anniversary service of the Falklands War on Sunday, 12 June.

As a partner of the UK Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Mitie has a long and proud association with the Falkland Islands via a Permanent Joint Operating Bases Infrastructure Service Provider (PJOB ISP) contract.

Overseen by Mitie Central Government and Defence Project Manager, Daniel Kent, the revamp took three weeks to complete and involved replacement lighting, replacement of hoggin surfaces around the chapel and an upgrade of slabbing.

Daniel said: "The works were undertaken throughout February, which coincided with Storm Eunice. That made for an interesting experience with winds strong enough to topple a large tree in the grounds of Pangbourne College. Of course the team pulled together and took extra precautions where necessary. In

the end the job was completed on time and the chapel looks fantastic ahead of the important commemoration.”

The project was a collaboration between several Mitie business units and external partners.

Huge thanks are therefore due to the following businesses and individuals:

- Mitie Technical Services, particularly Operations Manager, Martyn Richardson, who led on the electrical side of the job.
- Rock Power Connections for conducting the ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey of the area around the chapel.
- Parcar Ltd for provision of replacement lighting at cost.
- Concept Building Services, particularly Nick Hunter, who led on the ground works.

Daniel said: “Mitie’s supply chain partners were amazing. We really couldn’t have pulled off the chapel clean-up without them. From Storm Eunice to slight changes in scope, they showed flexibility and a can-do attitude to improving this important memorial. The 40th anniversary was particularly poignant as so many of the veterans are getting older. It was a privilege for Mitie to play a part in readying the chapel for such an important day.”

The Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust, which cares for the building, was delighted with the outcome and extended an invitation to the 40th anniversary memorial service to Mitie CEO, Phil Bentley.

Trustee, Sukey Cameron, said: “I wish to express our gratitude for the contribution that Mitie PLC has made to ensuring that the chapel is well-presented for the 40th commemorations of the 1982 Falklands War this June. The ground works undertaken by Mitie, and your sub-contractors, have led to very significant improvements in the external lighting, the paving at the front of the chapel and the adjacent hoggin.”

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TONY HEREFORD: REMEMBERING THE FALKLANDS

Mitie PPM Coordinator and Small Works Manager, Tony Hereford, was just 18 when he set sail aboard HMS Hermes as a Stoker in the Royal Navy to join the war effort in the Falklands.

One of his most poignant memories is reading the list of fatalities pinned to the aircraft carrier’s notice board every day.

Tony said: “I didn’t know any of them personally, but the names and ages struck a chord. There were people younger than myself. When I first joined the Navy after school, I didn’t expect to see war so soon. As we sailed for the Falklands, we all thought it would be over by the time we arrived. Then HMS Sheffield got hit. I saw it smoking in the distance and realised things were serious.”

Tony is thankful he returned from the Falklands unharmed and went on to enjoy a 10-year career in the Navy that took him to Australia, India and the USA.

Now a valued colleague on the Leeds BSF Schools and Leisure contract, Tony is proud of Mitie's contribution to commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Falklands War.

He said: "Marking the occasion and ensuring the Memorial Chapel and its surroundings have been cleaned and prepared for the service means a great deal to me and other Falklands veterans. Many service personnel didn't return home, or sustained life-changing injuries, and they must be remembered."