

CONVOCATION JUNE 2013

Presentation speech for General the Lord Dannatt for the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws of the University *honoris causa*

Vice-Chancellor, 'I wish', wrote the poet of *The Iliad*, 'that strife would vanish away from among gods and mortals'; and so might we all concur. But until that happy moment, we have need of the honourable profession of arms; and few in recent times have professed that calling more devotedly in their country's service, or more honourably, than General the Lord Dannatt.

A soldier for more than forty years, Richard Dannatt began his education at Felsted School in Essex, an establishment once favoured by another successful English general, Oliver Cromwell, who sent four of his sons to be tutored there. Commissioned into the Green Howards in 1971, Lord Dannatt began his military career as a platoon commander in Northern Ireland, then entering the full turbulence of its 'Troubles'. He went on to complete seven tours of duty in that most unsettled part of the British Isles. But his bravery as a commander of men was evident from the very beginning; on only his second tour in Northern Ireland he was awarded the Military Cross. No one was surprised when his autobiography was entitled, *Leading from the Front*. By the time that book was published in 2010, leading from the front was a principle

Richard Dannatt had exemplified with distinction for the best part of four decades.

In that time, he has done more than most to help keep the peace in a troubled world. He commanded the British Forces in Kosovo in the late 1990s, and later returned to the Balkans with the NATO Forces in Bosnia. He went on to command NATO's Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, where he led the planning for the NATO deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan; and ultimately to serve as Chief of the General Staff.

As CGS, General Dannatt was no Whitehall soldier. As some politicians learned to their cost, he was a doughty fighter for the welfare of the men and women under his command - a concern that finds practical expression in a variety of good causes, not least in his role as co-founder of the Forces' charity, Help for Heroes, one of the most successful and effective charities established in recent years.

Since 2009, General Dannatt has also served as Constable of Her Majesty's Tower of London, built by William the Conqueror to ensure that citizens of the capital did not get up to too much mischief. We all sleep securer in our beds in the knowledge that this noble fortress is under such wise and experienced command.

Vice-Chancellor, public support and respect for the British Armed Forces has probably never been stronger. As a nation, we take pride in their

devotion to duty, their professionalism, and their courage. We honour our soldiers. And today, as a University, we honour one of their finest. It is my honour to present Francis Richard Dannatt, General the Lord Dannatt, for the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa*.

Professor John Clarke, MA, DPhil

6 June 2013