

Press release: Women in Defence awards showcase Dstl scientists

270 guests including 30 finalists from across the Defence world attended the third annual Women in Defence UK awards. Hosting the event was BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour presenter Dame Jenni Murray with the Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP announcing the winners.

Dstl's Professor Petra Oyston scooped the top award in the Innovation category for her work in developing synthetic biology techniques for the next generation of materials for protection, such as use in body armour for military personnel. Petra's work included using genetically modified E. coli to provide a toughening mechanism in ceramic material and producing high strength adhesives from barnacle genes.

On receiving her award, Petra said:

I feel very surprised, there was some very stiff competition, and some absolutely brilliant women here tonight. It just speaks volumes about the high quality work we do at Dstl, and I thank the fabulous team that I've had surrounding me delivering brilliant innovative solutions for Defence.

During his opening speech, Gavin Williamson, said:

This year's nominees hail from right across Defence. Some command teams and others lead cyber. Some specialise in intelligence and others from industry. These are women who have been deployed across the world from Belize to Bosnia, from Kosovo to Kenya, who have fought terror and made Salisbury safe. Not all will take home awards, but each and every one are winners – strengthening our nation and representing the very best of British.

Other Dstl finalists included Penny Brookes, nominated in the Most Collaborative category for her work building an international research team that is delivering cutting-edge forensic techniques to benefit defence and security. Carolyn Stothard was nominated in the Unsung Heroine category – a dedicated line-manager, mentor and mediator who supports many with mental health difficulties and neurodevelopmental conditions.

Dstl's Chief Executive, Gary Aitkenhead said:

It's been an absolutely tremendous evening. I am a father of three daughters, I was thinking about them growing and achieving what some of the women here tonight have achieved and to see three Dstl

finalists doing fantastic things and for one of them to get a top award is absolutely thrilling – it's been a brilliant evening, well done to all of them.

Press release: FCO Minister to visit Singapore, Hong Kong and Vietnam

FCO Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field has arrived in Singapore today (7 November), to take part in a SIIA-Chatham House Dialogue on the UK's future relations with ASEAN. He will also attend a roundtable with business leaders and meet Foreign Minister Balakrishnan.

The Minister will then travel to Hong Kong where he will meet ministers to discuss a range of issues including trade and security, and meet with members of the British business community. In Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, Mr Field will attend the 'Inspire Me' festival, celebrating 45 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Vietnam, and showcasing British business, education, science and culture. The Minister will also attend a Remembrance service in Vietnam.

On Sunday 11 November, Minister Field will join staff from the British Consulate-General Hong Kong to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong for Armistice Day, which this year also marks the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Speaking on arrival in Singapore Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

The UK has a strong and enduring relationship with South East Asia, with many shared interests, such as advancing our prosperity, security and mutual values. I am looking forward to my meetings with ministers, business leaders and young people to strengthen our partnership even further.

As my visit coincides with Armistice Day, it will be an honour to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong as we remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the anniversary of the end of the First World War.

Further information

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Further information

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[News story: Could you be a CNC Authorised Firearms Officer?](#)



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Do you want a role that is at the heart of counter terrorism policing – where, as an Authorised Firearms Officer (AFO), you will be responsible for protecting vital national infrastructure? If so, you should consider applying to join the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

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- Dounreay in Scotland
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- Sellafield in Cumbria
- Sizewell in Suffolk

As well as the AFO role, after two years as a probationary constable, you will have the opportunity to apply for a number of specialist roles, such as a dog handler or firearms instructor. To be eligible to apply, you must meet the below criteria:

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- Be able to pass a thorough medical and fitness screening process

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[News story: UK Hydrographic Office receives Highly Commended STEM Inspiration Award](#)

In recognition of their outstanding commitment to encouraging young people into science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers, the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has been awarded Highly Commended at the STEM Inspiration Awards.

Held at the House of Lords on 1 November, and attended by guests across industry, education and government, the STEM Inspiration Awards, organised by STEM Learning, celebrated the work of individuals and organisations in inspiring young people into STEM careers. Finalists in the large employer category included Nissan, Just Eat, Legrand Electrical Ltd and Amey.

Speaking at the event, Professor Sir Mark Walport, Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation commented:

The UK Hydrographic Office have developed bespoke resources that bring their work to life, they are using these to engage thousands of young people and their parents, as well as supporting teachers. The judges were inspired by their longstanding and substantial commitments to STEM inspiration.

Amy Northern, STEM Ambassador and Data Engineering Team Manager at the UKHO commented:

We are delighted that we've been awarded Highly Commended at the STEM Inspiration Awards, which is down to the dedication of our STEM Ambassadors and the support of the wider business. We're really looking forward to continuing our STEM journey and working

with more people in the local community.

The UKHO has 28 STEM Ambassadors who take part in outreach work across the local community, working with more than 2,000 people aged 5-19 over the last 18 months. This has included local activities in partnership with Digital Taunton, Code Club in the South West, Sorpotimist International and the Raspberry Pi Foundation, including free weekly code clubs.

The organisation is committed to encouraging more young people into STEM careers, with plans to work with a further 13,500 young people and 41,000 members of the public within their STEM Programme.