

News story: Defence Secretary praises contribution female military personnel make to keeping Britain safe

On a visit to RAF Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with women on the front line of the RAF's transport operations, including a Voyager air to air refuelling and troop transport pilot, logisticians and engineers. Mr Williamson also recognised the hard work that has gone into making the armed forces more diverse.

Over 10% of the military is now made up of women, with the RAF leading the way with 14% female representation. Increasing numbers of women are also joining the armed forces, with over 12% of new recruits this year being female, up from 11.2% last year. The MOD is committed to reaching its target of 15% of the military being female by 2020. 42% of MOD civil servants are also female.

Defence Secretary meets with female RAF personnel on International Women's Day

Speaking at the event, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Women play a crucial role across our Armed Forces and it is important we reflect on the amazing contribution they make every single day keeping the British people safe.

It is vital that we have the very best people our society has to offer and that they also represent the society that they defend. Today has been a great opportunity to meet some of those inspiring women who make our Armed Forces the best in the world.

Women are an essential and valued part of Defence and play a key role in keeping Britain safe. Over the last year, female members of the armed forces have contributed to defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, delivered essential humanitarian aid to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and most recently helped with the military's support to snow relief in the UK. In December 2017, six Army officers also become the first all-female group to cross Antarctica.

(Left to right) Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Sergeant Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson and Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor pictured in front of an A400M transport aircraft at RAF Brize Norton.

The military is currently in the process of opening its ground close combat roles to women, a historic move first announced in June 2016. The Royal Tank Regiment has already opened its close combat roles to women and last year the RAF became the first service to open all of its trades and branches to women,

with the RAF Regiment starting to take female applications in September 2017.

By the end of this year, all infantry regiments in the Army and the Royal Marines will have opened their close combat roles to women. While visiting Brize Norton, the Defence Secretary met with a number of women who are working across a number of trades in the RAF, including Voyager Pilot Flight Lieutenant Kerry Bennett, Squadron Leader Eleanor Taylor, an engineer and Logistic Mover Sargent Sim Rezazadeh-Wilson.

Speech: Foreign Secretary remarks on the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

Good afternoon,

It's a pleasure to welcome my friend, His Excellency Adel Al-Jubeir, and I'm delighted that His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has chosen to come to Britain during his first official visit overseas.

This is a moment of huge significance in Saudi Arabia when ambitious reforms designed to achieve economic and social renewal are taking place.

In the nine months since His Royal Highness became Crown Prince, we have witnessed changes that would have been hard to imagine just a few years ago, and as a longstanding partner of Saudi Arabia, Britain will do everything in our power to support those reforms and help advance the ambitions contained in the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Adel and I have just come from Downing Street and an afternoon of excellent meetings that we had with the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness and I believe this occasion marks the beginning of a new era in our friendship because the very breadth and ambition of Vision 2030 allows our relationship to move forwards to include cooperation in education, health, culture, sport and technology, with it creating new opportunities for British companies and delivering jobs and growth here in Britain.

And I'm delighted that we've reached an agreement that should lead to new Saudi investment in and through Britain, and procurement in companies worth up to £65bn, virtually \$100bn, over the next 10 years. Providing a vote of confidence in London as the leading financial centre in the world.

Today, our talks have focused on how the UK can use its world-beating expertise to support Saudi Arabia's reforms and how we can work together to end the tragic conflict in Yemen.

It is vital that we bring this appalling conflict which has inflicted so much humanitarian suffering to an end. Britain supports Saudi Arabia's right to defend its national security against missile attacks from Yemen, many of which have targeted the Kingdom's cities, including Riyadh.

Any solution to the conflict must ensure that Saudi Arabia no longer faces this cross-border security threat. Today we have agreed to strengthen the UN inspection of shipping in order to ensure that all Yemeni ports remain open to the humanitarian and commercial supplies that Yemen's people so desperately need.

We also call on the Houthis to do what they must and allow unimpeded humanitarian access in the areas that they control.

We will redouble, we in the UK will redouble, our efforts to support the UN political process and we hope to convene our counterparts from the US and the United Arab Emirates before Easter in order – that's to say, Adel and I will do that, in order to make more progress towards a political solution which we believe to be absolutely vital.

I'm delighted that Saudi Arabia will also develop a plan for the reconstruction of Yemen after any settlement of the conflict.

Saudi Arabia is changing and so is Britain's partnership with the Kingdom in order to benefit the security and the prosperity of both our Kingdoms for many years to come.

Thank you.

News story: CNC secure prestigious Counter Terror Policing Award at national event

The Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) were the proud winners of the Counter Terror Policing Award at the annual Security and Counter Terror Exhibition at Olympia on Tuesday (6/3).

The annual exhibition incorporates the Counter Terror Awards, where public and private sector organisations from across the UK and internationally are recognised in 10 categories for their contributions to reducing the threat from global terrorism.

The CNC were nominated in the Counter Terror Policing Award, which recognises the efforts of the police sector in combatting domestic terrorism through prevention strategies and operational excellence. The nominees in the

category were:

- The CNC, for the planning, exercising and testing that led to two very successful live deployments under Operation Temperer in 2017
- National CT Policing, for the 'Action Counters Terrorism' campaign designed to encourage the public to play a part in helping tackle the terrorist threat
- City of London Police, as the first force to launch Project Servator
- Bedfordshire Police, for their introduction of an app entitled 'Cross the Line' which is designed to deter young people from committing hate crime

In the face of strong competition from the other nominees, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary were announced the winner by the guest of honour, Sir Michael Fallon, who recognised in his speech the ongoing threat from terrorism in the UK and the challenges that have been faced in responding to and defeating planned attacks.

Supt Graham Bell, Head of Operational Support and Development, and Eugene Johnson, the Resilience and Business Continuity Manager, accepted the award on the behalf of the CNC.

Chief Constable Mike Griffiths said: "It was an honour for the CNC to receive this national award and is recognition of the hard work, dedication and commitment of all our officers and staff. They went above and beyond to deploy over 800 officers across two deployments to 23 different Home Office force areas in a matter of hours. At the same time, military personnel were received onto the civil nuclear sites we police to support remaining officers in maintaining the safety and security of the sites.

"Our Authorised Firearms Officers provided armed support to these forces and reassurance to the public after the tragic Manchester Arena attack in May and the Parsons Green incident in September.

"This huge deployment of our officers wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and planning which went into the Operation Temperer plan and the close working relationship we have with our stakeholders and I am very proud that the work of my officers and staff has been recognised with this national award."

Supt Bell said: "It was a privilege for Eugene and I to collect the award, which reflects the enormous amount of hard work that went on in the planning stages, and the commitment of everybody who was involved – either through deploying to forces or working with the military when they came to our sites.

"This national recognition, against strong competition, came as a very welcome surprise and is a huge recognition of the CNC. We have now set the bar very high, which is why we keep our plans under constant review, as we never know when we may have to instigate them again but I have every confidence that if called to again we will deliver."

[News story: UK steps up cyber defence](#)

Minister for the Armed Forces Mark Lancaster at the opening of a new Defence Cyber School at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham. Crown copyright.

Part of a joint investment by the MOD and the National Cyber Security Programme, the School will address specialist skills and wider education in line with National Cyber Security Strategy objectives.

Armed Forces' Minister Mark Lancaster, who opened the school, said:

Cyber threats to the UK are constantly evolving and we take them very seriously. That's why the Defence Cyber School is so important. It's a state-of-the-art centre of excellence that will train more personnel across Defence and wider government in dealing with emerging threats.

With threats from hostile states changing at pace, the UK faces a deliberate attempt to destabilise secured peace and prosperity.

The 2016 National Cyber Security Strategy provided £1.9 billion of transformative investment in cyber, which is being used alongside more conventional land, maritime and air capabilities, to meet these threats head-on.

Now, building on current capabilities; which include the Global Operations and Security Control Centre at MOD Corsham; and the MOD Computer Emergency Response Team (MOD-CERT); Rapid Response Teams will be established from April.

Teams of specialist Incident Responders will be available to deploy to locations around the UK and overseas, to tackle malicious cyber activity.

Commander Joint Forces Command, General Sir Chris Deverell, said:

Defence has a number of very highly-trained military personnel on hand to deal with emerging and complex cyber threats. We are reinforcing these capabilities with the creation of Rapid Response Teams. Our threat-hunters give us the ability to identify, isolate and respond to these threats, whenever and wherever they might arise.

The UK has advanced counter-cyber capabilities which can protect national interests from harm caused by adversaries. Furthermore, offensive cyber can

be used to deal with serious threats to the UK.

Press release: Highways England announces executive appointment

David, who joins the company on Tuesday 13 March, brings a wealth of experience.

David has led safety and supply chain development at Carillion as well as sustainability strategies over the past 6 years. He was previously a Director at Sky and at Motorola and also served 20 years in senior strategic and operational leadership roles as a wing commander in the RAF.

He takes over from David Poole who is leaving Highways England on 16 March.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.