

News story: Post Office and MOD agree new partnership on veterans employment

The Ministry of Defence and the Post Office have agreed a new partnership to support veterans entering employment, as the company became the 3000th organisation to sign the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or who have served, and their families, that they should be treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. As part of their pledge, the Post Office will encourage ex-service personnel to apply for vacancies, offer bespoke training and support reservists and cadet volunteers with their commitments.

The signing took place at a Service of Remembrance to mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, attended by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and Group CEO of the Post Office, Paula Vennells.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Post Office has a long and distinguished history with the Armed Forces and it is fitting they are the 3000th signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Those who have served our country so courageously deserve the full support of organisations and businesses across the public and private sector.

Today, the Post Office has demonstrated the value that reservist and ex-service personnel can bring to businesses.

From today, the Post Office will work with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership (CTP) to facilitate employment for former service personnel by advertising their vacancies on the CTP's website. They will also offer a specialist training programme, commit to hiring a certain number of veterans, and offer paid leave for reservists and time off for any deployment commitments.

Alongside this, they will support the Cadet Force by granting adult volunteers five days paid leave for their annual camp and establish a new Post Office Armed Forces Network for those with links to the military.

Paula Vennells, Group CEO of Post Office, said:

It's a real honour to sign the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Post Office at this very special service, recognising the value that our serving personnel, both Regular and Reservists, veterans

and military families contribute in the present to our business and our country.

We know that having a diverse workforce brings huge benefits to a business; and our ex-Armed Forces colleagues and those in the Reserves are a unique and vital asset to the Post Office. We want to thank them for their service and to ensure that we continue to create a business in which everyone can thrive and develop as part of the Post Office team.

The signing took place at St Botolph's-Without-Aldersgate Church in central London – a poignant location as inside the Church is a dedicated memorial and battle flag of the Post Office Rifles, the General Post Office's own battalion, who served with distinction, earning high praise and a prestigious place in British military history. More than 75,000 General Post Office employees left their roles to fight in the War, with 12,000 joining the Post Office Rifles.

The Armed Forces Covenant was established in 2011, is a whole of government responsibility, and includes signatories from across organisations, businesses and charities. Support is provided in a number of areas, including education, starting a new career and access to healthcare.

Minster for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood added:

Our Armed Forces are one of the most professional forces in the world. Our people are brave, disciplined and natural leaders.

Organisations such as the Post Office can thrive by taking advantage of these transferable skills. I encourage more businesses to sign up.

[Press release: Women in Defence awards showcase Dstl scientists](#)

Scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) have been honoured for their outstanding contribution in Defence at a glitzy award ceremony held at the Imperial War Museum, London.

[News story: Defence Minister hails UK-US transatlantic partnership](#)

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew was in Washington today to discuss the enduring UK-US defence present and future relationship and met with some of the biggest players in the US defence industry.

[News story: Defence Minister hails UK-US transatlantic partnership](#)

As part of the visit, the Minister met with the US Navy Under Secretary Thomas Modly and US Army Under Secretary Ryan McCarthy to discuss bilateral capability priorities and future areas of collaboration between the two armed forces.

This came as the Minister addressed the Heritage Foundation think-tank, where he highlighted the threats that both nations face and emphasised the vital role of Nato and the need for long-term planning and the depth of UK-US collaboration.

Addressing the Heritage Foundation, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Over the years, the deep UK-US alliance has endured through two World conflicts, the chill of the Cold War, and the continuing struggle against extremist terror. Today our forces work highly effectively together across the globe – on land and sea, in the air, space and cyberspace. We are stronger together.

Just as our Armed Forces' capabilities are effectively intertwined, so too are our industries. We are now moving even nearer the goal of full interoperability, leveraging the talent, strength and innovation of both our Defence industries to meet the challenges of the future.

In a move to reinforce stronger industrial partnerships, the Minister also met with the headliners in the American defence industry, meeting with likes of Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, Boeing and General Dynamics.

The UK and US are the biggest overseas suppliers to each other's militaries and have worked closely on numerous key projects.

The most prominent of these is the F-35 fighter jet programme, with the

aircraft now embarked for flight trials on HMS Queen Elizabeth as she sailed into New York just last month. Other recent examples of collaboration are the Unmanned Air Systems programme and a Common Missile Compartment for UK-US Ballistic Missile Submarines.

Both nations also play leading roles in Nato, which is vital to the transatlantic partnership and have been calling for other nations to invest more in security and to increase the readiness of their forces. By the end of 2018, eight members will be meeting the commitment of spending 2% of their GDP on defence compared with just three in 2014.

In further display of solidarity, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson recently announced that the Red Arrows are set to carry out their largest ever tour of North America in 2019 as the UK looks to strengthen ties and sign trade deals outside of Europe.

News story: Defence Minister praises First World War heroes at reburial service

Defence Minister Tobias Ellwood has praised the courage and sacrifice of the First World War generation at a moving reburial service in Flanders.