

[News story: Minister hails world-class Wales' role in defence industry](#)

Defence invests £945 million in Welsh industry, supporting more than 6,000 jobs. The Minister visited leading firms befitting from defence work such as Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA), Kent Periscopes, Qioptiq and Raytheon, which are all supporting essential equipment to the UK's Armed Forces.

The crucial relationship between the MOD and Welsh industry was clearly laid out in the recent publication of an [independent review published by former Defence Minister Philip Dunne](#), and has now been showcased to the former Wales Office Minister on his return to the nation in his new role.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Wales is crucial to our world-leading defence industry, our Armed Forces and their future capabilities. The hundreds of millions of pounds we are investing in Welsh firms means the nation can continue making a massive contribution to our safety in the face of intensifying threats across the globe.

The 6,000 workers in Wales' defence sector can be extremely proud that their entrepreneurship, innovation and skills are ensuring our brave servicemen and women are equipped with the latest equipment and systems so they can protect us at home and around the world.

The Minister's tour of Welsh firms began at DECA Sealand, which will be at the forefront of maintaining the UK's new supersonic F-35 Lightning Force fighter jets.

The Sealand site will become a global repair hub for the aircraft, providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionics, electronic and electrical components, fuel, mechanical and hydraulic systems. The fighter jet work will sustain thousands of jobs and pump hundreds of millions of pounds into the local economy.

Whilst at the site, the Minister announced that the F-35B Lightning has carried out its first trials armed with UK-built weapons out in the US.

The minister also visited Raytheon, where he had the chance to see the cutting-edge capabilities for the British aerospace and defence sectors. The company's technology is used in some of the most advanced aircraft surveillance and intelligence systems in existence.

This includes the Sentinel, which is one of the UK's most advanced manned surveillance aircraft, and the closely guarded Shadow special mission aircraft. The Defence Minister's visit coincided with the company celebrating

10 years of Sentinel and more than 30,000 operational hours.



Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew added:

The Sentinel has proved its enormous worth time and time again, from tracking terrorists in Syria and Iraq, to helping provide overseas aid and even mapping flooding here in the UK.

The fact it has now been on operations for over 30,000 hours not only demonstrates how the RAF are working around the clock to put it to use on behalf of the country, but is a testament to its home here in North Wales.

The workers here in Broughton should be extremely proud of the fantastic work they are doing to ensure this 'eye-in-the-sky' continues to collect the crucial intelligence our Armed Forces need to keep us safe.

The Sentinel programme has supported more than 200 suppliers across the country, while Raytheon has supported 450 jobs through the supply chain.

On the second day of his tour, the Minister was also given an insight into the important work being done by Kent Periscopes. The company provides the British Army with crucial periscopes for armoured personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles and tanks.

The minister's final stop involved a visit to Qioptiq, a company that specialises in optics and photonics and provides crucial night vision equipment to UK Armed Forces. Qioptiq's cutting-edge work supports more than 500 jobs in north Wales.

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Notes to Editors

- The Ministry of Defence spent £945 million with Welsh businesses in 2016/17, equivalent to £300 per person per year. This supports over 6,000 industry jobs Wales provides over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces
- Wales is renowned for its vast training areas for the Army and RAF
- Since the 2015 SDSR we have announced new contracts with industry in Wales supporting operations at RAF Valley, maintaining F35 components at the Defence Electronics and Components Agency, developing a new battlefield communication system in Oakdale, building AJAX vehicles in Merthyr Tydfil and more. Alongside the many SMEs in Wales that equip and support our Armed Forces, these are a testament to the skills of the workforce in Wales.

[Press release: Dstl scientists take to the high seas on HMS Queen Elizabeth](#)

Dstl has been involved in the development of HMS Queen Elizabeth for the past 20 years, starting with the original study to replace the Invincible light carrier fleet. Dstl helped to define the size and shape of the ship and a specialist team investigated ship-air integration, which supported the design of the flight deck and ski-jump used to launch the F-35B Lightning II fighter jets.

Currently on-board is Dstl operational analyst Tom, who will be joined later in September by Hannah, both of whom will provide vital analysis to the battle group and commanders during the voyage. It will be HMS Queen Elizabeth's maiden voyage across the Atlantic as she prepares to embark her first F-35B Lightning II fighter jets. She is one of two new aircraft carriers built for the Royal Navy with the second, HMS Prince of Wales, nearing the end of construction in Rosyth.

The aim of the flight trials is to use specially equipped test aircraft and

sensors around the ship to work out the operating parameters of the aircraft and the carrier itself in a range of conditions. The carrier has already conducted similar trials for helicopters.

During the exercise, Dstl scientists will focus on operational analysis, gathering data that will be used inform future operational activity.

Tom said:

This is a fantastic opportunity, not only to be part of Dstl's continued involvement with the carrier, but to join more than 1,000 military personnel on-board. It's a huge craft and quite daunting – and also the first time I've deployed to sea, let alone on the Queen Elizabeth – but I'm very much looking forward to the tasks ahead and hopefully witness the F-35 jets on-board and in action off the flight deck for the first time.

In addition to providing analytic support to the carrier strike group and commanders, analysis will include looking at the way manpower use can be improved, from how efficiently the vessel can be cleaned to the sortie rates the fighter aircraft can carry out.

Tom added:

Analysis at this level has never been done before, so we will be learning on task; helping to adapt and shape the way the ship will run come its first operational deployment in 2021.

[News story: Refurbished homes for sailors at HMNB Clyde](#)

The Ministry of Defence's (MOD) Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) led the £1.5 million refurbishment at Bannachra Drive in Helensburgh, which will help improve the lives of Royal Navy families already living in the area, and of some of the hundreds of families expected to move to the vicinity when the base becomes the Submarine Centre of Specialisation.

From 2020 HM Naval Base Clyde will host all of the Royal Navy's hunter killer submarines and will be the future home of the Dreadnought class of nuclear deterrent submarines. The MOD is investing hundreds of millions of pounds in developing HMNB Clyde, with the construction phases of the work expected to support a further 1,000 contractor jobs.

The development of the site will see the number employed rise from the current figure of 6,800 to an eventual population of 8,500, with up to 1,400 Royal Navy submariners moving to the area from Plymouth. In the future all submariners will expect to serve their entire career at HM Naval Base Clyde, ensuring greater harmony and stability for them and their families. The refurbishment of these 34 family homes also contributes to the joint Royal Navy and Argyll and Bute Council strategy to align the development of the naval base with local needs such as planning and transport.

The extensive upgrade work at Bannachra, which was carried out by Amey and contractor Bells Ltd, included the fitting of new roofs, windows and doors, as well as new boilers, external wall insulation and rendering of the buildings. Work was also undertaken to replace fencing and gates and rain water goods, with chimneys on the properties also removed and garage roofs replaced.

Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell was there to witness the completion of the refurbishment work on August 28, joined by Air Commodore Wendy Rothery, DIO's Head of Accommodation, and Captain Craig Mearns, HMNB Clyde's Captain of the Base.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

The work of the HM Naval Base Clyde team demonstrates clearly how Scotland benefits from the UK's armed forces, and how our military contributes to the safety and prosperity of Scotland. HM Naval Base Clyde makes a huge contribution to the local area, providing skilled jobs, supporting the local economy and contributing to regeneration. This project, which will improve service families' accommodation, is a great example of that strong partnership with the local community in action.

Commenting on the work, Air Commodore Rothery said:

The refurbishment of these houses is a prime example of how DIO provides vital support to the Armed Forces. This upgrade work will make a real difference to the quality of life of our Royal Navy personnel and their families. We are grateful to all the residents for their patience with the inevitable disruption caused by the work, and we hope they are very happy with the results.

In February 2017 the Naval Base, UK government and local authority Argyll and Bute signed a unique agreement committing the parties to work together to ensure that investment in the military site benefited the growth and regeneration of the wider community. The Strategic Defence Delivery Framework agreement, as it is known, is aimed at delivering new housing and improved infrastructure, ensuring that both the Service community and people living in Argyll and Bute benefit directly from hosting the base.

Captain Craig Mearns, HMNB Clyde's Captain of the Base, said:

The Naval Base Command is delighted to see completion of this Service Family Accommodation refurbishment project.

The expansion of activity at Clyde and growth of our Service population over the next few years means that we need to make best use of all available accommodation. It is important that what we have to offer is of a high standard, not only because that is what our people deserve, but also because we aim to encourage an increasing number of Service families to relocate to this area. The offer of good housing, coupled with the excellent amenities and quality of life on offer here, are significant attractions for those considering such a move.

[News story: British-armed F-35B Lightning jet takes to the skies](#)

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew revealed that a British F-35 Lightning jet reached the landmark milestone whilst he was on a visit to the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA) in Wales.

The Welsh site is set to become a global repair hub for the cutting-edge aircraft, providing crucial maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionics, electronic and electrical components, fuel, mechanical and hydraulic systems.

The jet, which was flown by a British pilot from RAF 17 Squadron, took to the skies from Edwards Air Force base in southern California for the momentous flight carrying ASRAAM air-to-air missiles.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

The F-35 Lightning fleet has moved another step closer to defending the skies and supporting our illustrious aircraft carriers with this landmark flight. Exceptional engineering from the UK is not only helping to build what is the world's most advanced fighter jet, but is also ensuring that it is equipped with the very best firepower.

This flight by a British pilot, in a British F-35 jet with British-built weapons is a symbol of the major part we are playing in what is the world's biggest ever defence programme, delivering billions for our economy and a game-changing capability for our Armed

Forces.



British-armed F-35B Lightning jet takes to the skies. Copyright Lockheed Martin US.

The trials were the first-time UK weapons have flown on a British F-35, and represent a key part of the work-up towards Initial Operating Capability in December.

The ASRAAM missiles, built by MBDA in Bolton, are just some of the essential parts the UK is supplying the F-35 programme. ASRAAM stands for 'Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile'. The missiles will enable pilots to engage and defend themselves against other aircraft ranging in size from large multi-engine aircraft to small drones.

British companies are building 15% by value of all 3,000 F-35s planned for production. It is projected that around £35 billion will be contributed to the UK economy through the programme, with around 25,000 British jobs also being supported.

The F-35B Lightning multi-role fighter jet is the first to combine radar evading stealth technology with supersonic speeds and short take-off and vertical landing capability.

The fighter jets will be jointly manned by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and can operate from land and sea, forming a vital part of Carrier Strike when operating from the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

617 Squadron, based at RAF Marham, will carry out their own weaponry flights in the next few months.



British-armed F-35B Lightning jet takes to the skies. Copyright Lockheed Martin US.

[News story: UK Military Train 500 Somalians](#)

British personnel have been delivering training to the Somalian National Army (SNA) since January 2017, focussing on medical training, leadership development, intelligence, equipment care, logistics and human rights.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

The training we have provided will help build a more stable and prosperous Somalia.

The Somalian National Army have been motivated, keen to learn and professional and we remain committed to their country's development.

The long-term aim of the programme is for Commanding Officers in the SNA to take what they have learned and become self-sufficient in training their own troops.

This training forms just part of the UK's work in the country, the UK is also the third-largest donor to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In 2017, it was announced that Somalia would be the beneficiary of £21million in additional backing from the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund.

The UK is also supporting the development of a joint funding mechanism for policing, which we have developed jointly with the EU.