

News story: Royal Navy sailor killed during World War 1 is honoured as he is laid to rest

Able Seaman (AB) James Cameron Robertson, Anson Battalion, Royal Naval Division has finally been laid to rest after he was killed during World War 1. AB Robertson was buried at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Orchard Dump Cemetery in France earlier today, Wednesday 11 July 2018.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by the Reverend Andrew Hillier RN. The Royal Navy provided the bearer party and firing party for the ceremony.



Two buglers from the Royal Navy played during the service, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Nicola Nash, JCCC said:

Being able to give a name to this brave sailor has been incredibly rewarding. Attending the service today to see the culmination of months of hard work was truly an emotional experience. We will remember them.

AB Robertson joined the Royal Navy in October 1914. After completing his training, he was drafted into the Hood Battalion in July 1915. He went on to serve in Gallipoli and Northern France, being wounded several times during the war. In January 1917, he joined the Anson Battalion and it was during fierce fighting, when the village of Gavrelle was captured, that AB Robertson lost his life on 28 April 1917. AB Robertson was aged 28.



Captain Keri Harris, Naval Attaché to France raises a salute in honour of AB Robertson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

For a century AB Robertson's final resting place was unknown to his family. However, when construction work began on the outskirts of the village of Gavrelle the remains of a British sailor were uncovered. Alongside were a small number of artefacts, Anson Battalion shoulder titles that were still attached to the uniform and shoulder titles for both the Hood Battalion and RND, which were found in one of his pockets.



Royal Naval Division shoulder title that was discovered in one of AB Robertson's pockets, Copyright Commonwealth War Graves Commission, All rights reserved

Further research undertaken by the JCCC showed that the location of the soldier was exactly where the Anson Battalion had been stationed during the capture of Gavrelle on 28 April 1917. The dedicated team narrowed down the list of possible candidates to 2 men. Their descendants were traced and DNA testing came back positive for James Cameron Robertson. 81-year-old nephew Frank Treasurer was the match and he attended today's service.



Nephew Frank Treasurer standing with his wife and members of the Royal Navy beside the grave of AB Robertson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Frank Treasurer, nephew said:

Today was a sad and poignant day, however it was also a celebration of James and his comrades' courage and bravery. We were very glad to be here today to witness him finally being laid to rest.



Nephew Frank Treasurer places a poppy at the headstone of his uncle, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

James Robertson was born on 21 April 1890 in Charles Street, Aberdeen. He was the eldest of 6 siblings and was listed in the 1911 census as being a shop assistant.

WO1 Darren Wearing, who was leading the Royal Navy today said:

It was an absolute honour and a privilege to have been part of today's proceedings. I'm proud that I have been able to lay a fellow sailor to rest along with all his other shipmates. I'm extremely proud of all my staff and Naval Ratings that took part today, they ensured that James had the best send-off possible in the high standards and traditions of the senior service.

Steve Arnold, CWGC:

I was honoured to be able to recover Able Seaman Robertson from the battlefield where he lay for 100 years and privileged to be here today to see him laid to rest alongside his comrades. We will care for his grave here at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Orchard Dump Cemetery forever.



12-person gun salute provided by the Royal Navy in honour of AB Robertson, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

A new headstone bearing AB Robertson's name has been provided by the CWGC.



News story: Commander JFC Twitter Q and A

From 5pm to 6pm, on 26 July 2018, Gen Chris will be answering questions about 'innovation' in UK defence, and the valuable work that Joint Forces Command is doing in this area.

If you have a question about the work carried out in this area, or if you want to know more about why it is important for UK defence to innovate, you can ask Gen Chris a question.

All you need to do is send your question as a tweet to the [@ComdJFC_UK twitter account](#). You need to make sure that your tweet includes #AskJFC. This is to help us identify your question when it is sent, and make sure that we do not miss it.

While we will aim to answer all questions during the event, we are concentrating this event on the theme of innovation, so will limit our responses to this area.

News story: Defence Secretary meets Australian defence minister following £20bn British warship deal

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson met with Australian Defence Industry Minister Christopher Pyne today, following the country's decision to buy a British warship design as part of a potentially record-breaking £20 billion deal.

The meeting between the two ministers, and Defence Minister for procurement Guto Bebb, came just a fortnight after British firm BAE Systems was chosen as the preferred bidder for Australia's 'SEA 5000' Future Frigate competition, securing the biggest international ship deal of the decade.

The agreement will see nine cutting-edge British Type 26 Global Combat Ships built in Adelaide, supporting 4,000 Australian jobs and boosting the two nations' military capabilities.

Discussing future cooperation between the two nations at the Australia–United Kingdom Ministerial Equipment and Industry Dialogue today, ahead of the annual AUKMIN talks later this month, Mr Williamson and Mr Pyne agreed to deepen their countries' equipment relationship and explore future industry collaboration.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

In the face of intensifying threats, it is more important than ever for great allies like Britain and Australia to stand together.

The £20bn Global Combat Ship deal struck between BAE Systems and the Australian Government marks the start of an exciting new era in our nations' defence and industrial partnership, creating jobs for generations and keeping us safe.

It is also a major vote of confidence in British design, British engineering, and British innovation at a vital moment in our history. It also highlights the importance of our Armed Forces having a presence all over the world.

From my meeting with Minister Pyne today, it is clear that both our nations have a shared desire to work more closely together to strengthen and equip our militaries to defeat the threats of a darker and more dangerous world.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb added:

Ensuring our forces have the cutting-edge equipment they need is extremely important and today's meeting with our Australian counterparts is part of our mission to do just that.

Innovation is at the heart of equipment capability and working with allies to develop world-leading military technology will be of huge benefit to both our nations.

During the dialogue, the ministers discussed the importance of working together to leverage the strengths of each other's industries while maximising access to cutting edge defence capabilities from both countries.

They also spoke about improving and driving down costs across the supply chain for naval ships, discussed defence industry up-skilling initiatives and agreed to establish a Memorandum of Understanding to support industry and equipment collaboration.

Mr Pyne expressed interest in gaining a greater insight into the United Kingdom's approach to growing a skilled workforce to support its shipbuilding programme.

The pair also reaffirmed their commitment to enhance capability, interoperability and innovation through deepening the countries' industrial base ties.

The talks follow the deployment of a third Royal Navy ship, HMS Argyll, to the Asia-Pacific region, following on from HMS Sutherland and HMS Albion, and marking the first time three British warships have been sent to the area. Australia offered to host the next Ministerial Equipment and Industrial Dialogue in January 2019.

[News story: British prosperity relies on defence according to independent review](#)

The review was commissioned by the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson after he launched the Modernising Defence Programme (MDP) to strengthen the Armed Forces in the face of intensifying threats, alongside the Prime Minister and the Chancellor.

The independent review of defence's contribution to national economic and social value by Philip Dunne looks right across the Armed Forces and industry to provide an in-depth picture to inform proposals for reform into the MDP.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Philip Dunne's review shows how vital defence is, not only protecting us from global dangers and safeguarding our national prosperity, but also to our economy by creating thousands of specialist and highly-skilled jobs and creating billions in exports.

He paints a clear picture of how defence and defence industry reaches every corner of the UK and is central to employment in so many cities and towns.

He lays down some key challenges to consider as our Modernising Defence Programme continues to ensure defence is the best it can be in a post-Brexit Britain.

The report also includes a number of recommendations for review, including: further research into the impact of significant procurements on national prosperity; building on the strong relationships with industry suppliers; and considering how the UK's world-leading institutions could be given greater

entrepreneurial freedoms.

Philip Dunne said:

I am pleased to have been able to undertake this review and am grateful for the help of all those in and outside the Department who have contributed.

This is the first time for some years that an independent report has sought to look at the whole impact of Defence on the UK economy, its devolved nations and regions in England.

Defence has made a number of important steps in meeting its prosperity objective. It makes a major contribution to our economic well-being, with 500,000 people working directly and indirectly in Defence and over 25,500 apprentices developing skills. In several local communities Defence is one of the leading providers of high skilled jobs.

But there is more that can be done as Defence has to adapt to rapidly evolving technological threats, so too should it seize the opportunities to adapt and improve its own processes to help meet the challenges of the high-tech defence future.

I look forward to seeing how the MOD responds to this report and have confirmed to the Defence Secretary that I am willing to revisit in some months' time how the Department has considered and where it has decided to implement these ideas.

Defence makes a huge contribution across all regions of the UK whether as a major employer, a large investor or as a hub for local communities. Defence is the third largest landowner in the country with 220,000 hectares often benefiting remote and rural communities.

The report reveals that around 500,000 people support defence across the UK. It outlines that the UK's defence industry is one of the world's strongest with an annual turnover of £22 billion supporting 260,000 jobs, many of which are highly skilled and well-paid. Most importantly, he acknowledges that defence is a major contributor to the nation's skills and one of the largest employer of apprentices with over 25,500 currently enrolled.

Dunne also acknowledges that, in addition to the MOD budget of almost £37 billion, defence's direct contribution to GDP features over £7 billion of exports generated each year on average. Just recently a shipbuilding contract worth up to £20 billion was signed between BAE Systems and the Australian government for British-designed Type 26 frigates – the biggest Naval defence contract for a decade.

Defence's relationship as a customer and industrial partner with many high growth sectors in the economy generates more activity, particularly in the aerospace, space, cyber, and increasingly the knowledge economy and creative

sectors.

Defence is also driving investment in British industry through the National Shipbuilding Strategy, which was launched last year to transform the UK maritime industry and boost the prosperity of regions, shipyards and maritime supply chains across the country. The MOD is also set to launch a Combat Air Strategy to ensure Britain maintains a world-leading combat air capability.

The MOD will now consider the findings of Philip Dunne's report as work continues on the MDP.

News story: MOD launches first ever Defence Domestic Abuse Strategy

The strategy builds on existing work by the military in this area, such as providing specialist training to welfare staff, and will include the launch of a campaign to raise awareness across the Armed Forces and enhancing support for civilian staff.

A national audit of current available support will also be undertaken, to ensure that help will be on hand for those suffering abuse, wherever they are.

The No Defence for Abuse Strategy aims to partner with specialist organisations to help them understand the unique needs of the service community. It will also work to create a culture of safety and support for those experiencing domestic abuse and their children, taking steps to break down the invisible wall that can deter victims from asking for help.

While there is no evidence to suggest that domestic abuse is any more prolific within the service community than in the general population, UK figures show that at least one in four women and one in six men will be affected by domestic abuse in their lifetime.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Domestic abuse has no place within our communities, and this strategy highlights our commitment to creating an environment where abusive behaviour is simply not tolerated.

We have already made progress by ensuring our welfare staff receive specialist training, and by producing a domestic abuse policy. But there is more that can be done.

Through this strategy, we will work to ensure that the right support is available to those who need it.

The delivery of the new five-year strategy will be focused on three key areas:

- Prevention – raising awareness of domestic abuse and what it entails, encouraging a culture of openness and taking steps to better identify those most at risk
- Intervention – enabling appropriate responses through specialist training, ensuring that MOD policies do not serve as barriers to those seeking help, and providing consistent support
- Partnering – working with external organisations and expert bodies to provide services suitably tailored to the Armed Forces, and learning from best practice

As well as raising awareness and providing support to those affected, the No Defence For Abuse Strategy will work to provide rehabilitation options for perpetrators, and engage with specialist agencies to prevent future abuse. As an employer, the Ministry of Defence will continue to support the Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse, and contribute to Government-wide work in developing the first Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill.

For more information and guidance on domestic abuse and the support available to the armed forces community:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/domestic-abuse-guidance-and-support-for-the-armed-forces-community>

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse and need help or support you can find support through your welfare service, via the Police or from specialist organisations, via the National Domestic Violence Helpline, who exist to support anyone experiencing domestic abuse.

If you need help in an emergency, if you fear for your safety or that of someone else you should always call 999 or the relevant emergency number if overseas.

National Domestic Violence Helpline

www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk – 0808 2000 247

The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's

Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

For advice in Northern Ireland: 0800 917 1414, Scotland: 0800 027 1234 or Wales: 0808 80 10 800