

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace visits Armed Forces of Ukraine as training programme starts across the UK

News story

The first cohort of Ukrainian soldiers taking part in a major new UK-led military programme, which will train up to 10,000 Ukrainians over the coming months, have arrived in the UK.



Ukrainian soldier

The programme is part of the UK's enduring commitment to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia's unprovoked invasion, which so far amounts to more than £2.3 billion in military aid and includes more than 5,000 NLAW anti-tank weapons and M270 multiple launch rocket systems.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, who visited the training this week, said:

This ambitious new training programme is the next phase in the UK's support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine in their fight against Russian aggression.

Using the world-class expertise of the British Army we will help Ukraine to rebuild its forces and scale-up its resistance as they defend their country's sovereignty and their right to choose their own future.

Around 1,050 UK service personnel are deploying to run the programme, which will take place at MOD sites across the North West, South West and South East of the UK. Each course will last several weeks and will be conducted by elements from 11 Security Force Assistance Brigade.

The training will give volunteer recruits with little to no military experience the skills to be effective in frontline combat. Based on the UK's basic soldier training, the course covers weapons handling, battlefield first aid, fieldcraft, patrol tactics and the Law of Armed Conflict.

The Government has rapidly procured AK variant assault rifles for the training programme, meaning Ukrainian soldiers can train on the weapons they will be using on the front line. This effort was supported by the Welsh Guards, who tested more than 2,400 such rifles in 17 days to ensure they were ready for the Ukrainians to commence their training.

The UK has also gifted clothing and equipment to support Ukrainian soldiers in their training and deployment back to Ukraine. Each soldier will be issued with:

- Personal protective equipment including helmets, body armour, eye protectors, ear protectors, pelvic protection, and individual first aid kits
- Field uniforms and boots
- Cold and wet weather clothing
- Bergens, day sacks and webbing
- Additional equipment required for field conditions including ponchos, sleeping bags, and entrenching tools

The UK has a long history of supporting Ukrainian service personnel through Operation ORBITAL, which trained 22,000 Ukrainians between 2015 and 2022. The new programme will build on this success and demonstrate the UK's continued leadership in responding to Ukraine's military requirements as the war evolves.

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