

# Highlands and Islands play 'key role' in UK defence

Press release

Key defence sites in western Scotland were visited by UK Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin, to meet personnel and tour the facilities.



- Minister visits test, evaluation and training sites in Applecross and the Hebrides
- Sites play important role in major joint military exercises
- More than 250 people employed, supporting the local economy

The Minister visited the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC) based in Applecross on the north-west coast. The facility is used for noise ranging of surface ships and submarines and for testing underwater weapons, such as torpedoes. Run by QinetiQ, Minister Quin met the personnel who operate it on behalf of the MOD and the Royal Navy.

He then travelled to the MOD Hebrides range, also run by QinetiQ, where NATO exercises are conducted, ground-based air defence weapons are tested and complex weapons trials are run.

The Minister received a thorough overview of both facilities, including their use in major joint exercises, and gained a better understanding of their contribution to the local economy, with more than 250 people employed in engineering, logistics and other technical and administrative roles.

## **Defence Procurement Minister, Jeremy Quin said:**

It has been excellent to see first-hand the operational importance of these facilities in the north-west Highlands and the Western Isles, and to engage with those playing a key role in UK defence.

I have also seen the impact the sites have on the local economy in the areas they are based, not only providing high quality that will drive innovation in Defence, but also the positive impact of a

Defence presence supporting small businesses in rural communities.

**QinetiQ Chief Executive Officer, Steve Wadey said:**

It was a pleasure to host the Minister at the sites and give him the chance to meet some of our brilliant employees. As a major local employer in the area, we take our responsibilities seriously to ensure that we support the community and have a positive impact. In recent years, we have already committed £120m into both sites to modernise them and help sustain and attract work from our UK and international customers.

We remain committed to these sites, which are key to helping secure the vital interests of the UK, whether that be helping to host major NATO live-fire exercises or providing high value technical services to the Royal Navy on how to avoid detection by reducing noise on their platforms.

Earlier this week, Minister Quin also visited Defence Munitions Beith, in Ayrshire, a facility which produces, tests and stores weapons for the UK's Armed Forces. He was able to meet staff and see some of the complex weapons which are tested at BUTEC and MOD Hebrides.

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