

# News story: Armed Forces Muslim Forum Celebrates Eid with the Muslim Community

Defence Minister, Earl Howe, Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee, and Commander Home Command, Lieutenant General Bashall, hosted a dinner centred on the theme of being driven and united by common values and purpose.

Earl Howe gave the keynote speech, in which he highlighted how the Armed Forces and Muslim community often experience stereotyping and misconceptions.

Defence Minister Earl Howe said:

It is wonderful to be celebrating the end of Ramadan together, and in doing so celebrating the important role the Muslim community plays in our Armed Forces.

There is far more that unites us than divides us, and by working together we are building a diverse force which is therefore a stronger force, enhancing our cultural and linguistic skills for our operations at home and abroad.

In his speech, Earl Howe praised the Muslim community for their generosity and resilience in the face of recent events, including the devastating Grenfell Tower and the Finsbury Park attack. The Minister then turned to the "unknown" humanitarian efforts of our Armed forces, where personnel show the same values at home and on operations overseas.

Brigadier Peter Cameron, from the MOD's Operation Directorate, gave a presentation on the UK Armed Forces' recent humanitarian operations before Mr Aamer Naeem, CEO of UK based Muslim charity, Penny Appeal, highlighted their humanitarian activities overseas and endorsed the Armed Forces for the values they share.

Sergeant Ahmed Dhalai described his experience of helping to rescue migrants off the coast of North Africa, where he was able to use his linguistic skills and cultural background to carry out his tasks compassionately, showing the importance of building a diverse force.

Colonel Steve Davies spoke about his role in efforts to foster peace and security in South Sudan, and Major Naveed Muhammad spoke about his duties in the fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone.