

News story: Welsh Secretary marks tenth annual Armed Forces Day in Llandudno

Hundreds of events are being held today across the country to mark the tenth annual Armed Forces Day.

Men and women from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force, both Regulars and Reserves, are being recognised alongside the wider defence family including cadets and veterans.

The National Event is taking place in Llandudno, North Wales, attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne The Princess Royal, representing the Queen and the Royal Family. Prime Minister Theresa May, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns and Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson are also attending the event, alongside the thousands of attendees who will gather to watch parades, displays and a record number of flypasts

The event comes a month on from the Secretary of State for Wales' visit to Afghanistan to see the 260 soldiers of the Welsh Guards based in the Afghan capital Kabul.

Mr Cairns sat down with soldiers to learn more about their role in providing security and mentoring help to Afghan officials as the country's Government continues its work of reconstruction. He also met senior British army commanders for an update on the troops' peace-keeping mission.

All three regular regiments are currently deployed on operations: 1st Battalion The Royal Welsh and 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards are deployed to reinforce NATO's eastern frontiers in Estonia and Poland whilst 1st Battalion The Welsh Guards serve in Afghanistan. Each is actively contributing to the security of the United Kingdom and global peace and stability.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Armed Forces Day is a unique moment in the year when we can all pause to mark the sacrifice and commitment of our serving men and women, past and present.

While Armed Forces Day of course recognises the major conflicts of the 20th century, it also brings us right up to date with the reminder that Welsh men and women are serving across the world today. And there was no prouder moment for me than when exactly one month ago, I had the honour of visiting the Welsh Guards in Afghanistan.

The sight of Llandudno promenade as the setting for a military

march featuring old soldiers and young cadets will stick long in the memories of the thousands of people here today. I am proud to be a part of it, standing side by side with members of our Armed Forces who represent the very best of what this country stands for.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Today we mark the tenth Armed Forces Day and it remains a valuable opportunity to honour our troops who work so hard to keep us safe. Our servicemen and women are on hand every hour of every day to protect us from the threats we face and today I encourage people across the UK to come together and salute them for their tireless commitment.

I commend Llandudno for an outstanding event and thank organisers across the country for their efforts to mark Armed Forces Day.

The Armed Forces have had a busy year at home, including helping those struggling in heavy snowfall providing emergency assistance in the aftermath of the Salisbury attack.

They are currently working in more than 25 countries and are ready to respond whenever they're required. This year we saw over 2,000 personnel deployed to the Caribbean in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, on operations in Iraq and Syria as part of the fight against Daesh, and continue to reassure NATO allies in Europe.