

Press release: Dstl trio named as finalist for the 2018 Women in Defence UK awards.

After making the shortlist announced in September, Penny Brookes, Carolyn Stothard and Petra Oyston progressed to the final three for their respective categories. The awards recognise exceptional women, men and teams in UK defence and this year, organisers have received over 300 nominations from across the defence community, including the Armed Forces, the MOD civil service and the defence industry.

Penny is a finalist in the Most Collaborative Award category, highlighting individuals who can demonstrate that creating a collaborative working arrangement within their organisation or working with another one creating a positive effect.

Her nominator said:

Penny has built an international research team that is delivering cutting-edge forensic techniques to benefit defence and security. She is quick to give credit to others; members of her team frequently receive awards and are asked to be plenary speakers at conferences. Penny's role as the conductor of this diverse orchestra is often missed, and she deserves wider recognition.

Reflecting on her nomination, Penny said:

I'm really proud to be nominated for this award. Although this falls within the category for individual awards, this award is for all of my colleagues (women and men) who research and develop forensic techniques. We are a diverse project team of over forty staff across five divisions of Dstl engaging across government, with UK academia, commercial partners and international partners within Australia, New Zealand and the US.

Petra has made the final three in the Innovation Award category, for excellence in innovation that has multiplied the effect of the UK defence mission.

Commenting on her award and work Petra, said:

Dstl is a science and technology organisation, and innovation is at the heart of what we do. I work with so many motivated, talented people, doing rewarding innovative research that makes a real

difference to our Armed Forces, and so being nominated for this award is just so amazing and really reflects the team effort. I have been leading an effort evaluating synthetic biology and the opportunities this technology creates for defence capability. Using the power of biology we have overcome some of the challenges that have held back progress in improved and affordable armour materials in recent years.

Carolyn is included as a finalist in the Unsung Heroines category, celebrating those women, who, on an enduring basis, have improved the 'lot' of people in defence, essential to an organisation's output but never seeking recognition for what they do. Described as "caring, understanding and sensitive", Carolyn is a dedicated line-manager, mentor and mediator and has supported many with mental health difficulties and neurodevelopmental conditions. She improves people's lives while developing a productive and inclusive working environment.

Carolyn said:

I am both surprised and genuinely delighted to be nominated for this award. I am proud to be able to raise the profile of women in Dstl, and the many and varied roles they undertake. I am simply a representative of all the many unsung heroines within the organisation. I consider myself to be extremely lucky to work for Dstl, which delivers such interesting, and important work – and moreover having the opportunity to work with some exceptional individuals.

Congratulations also go to Debra Carr, who made the shortlist for the Most Collaborative award and Michelle Nelson, who was shortlisted in the Outstanding Contribution award category.

The awards dinner takes place on Tuesday 6th November, when the winners of each category will be announced in the presence of the Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP.