

Speech: Prime Minister's 2018 Christmas Message to the Armed Forces

To all our servicemen and women around the world, I want to wish you and your families the very best this Christmas.

Many of you will spend this season miles apart from your loved ones, and as you forgo the comforts of home, it is particularly important that we remember your commitment, and say thank you.

And this year, as we looked back to the sacrifices made by generations in the past, you continued to demonstrate why you are the finest in the world.

From playing a vital role in cleaning up after a sickening nerve agent attack on the streets of Salisbury, protecting our waters and our skies from Russian intrusion and strengthening our allies in Eastern Europe, striking at terrorism as part of the Global Coalition against Daesh, and along with our US and French allies – sending a message to the Assad regime that we will not stand by while chemical weapons are used, as they were in April on families, including young children.

Time and again, you have stood up to aggression and those who flout the rules based international order. You should be incredibly proud of all that you do – just as the whole country is proud of you.

This year we also marked significant milestones. At memorial sites in the UK and around Europe, we honoured our fallen and paid tribute to their memory as we commemorated a centenary since the end of the First World War.

We celebrated 100 years of the RAF – including a magnificent flypast over Buckingham Palace. And looking to the future, our F-35 Lightning stealth fighter jets landed on the aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time.

Now as we approach the New Year, there will be new challenges ahead. But I know you will continue to meet them in the same way that you have always done.

With courage, determination, resilience, ingenuity.

Qualities that are as vital now as they have ever been.

So on behalf of the whole country – let me say thank you to you, and to your families whose love and support is so important.

And let me wish all of you a peaceful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.