

## [News story: An unknown British World War 1 sailor's grave identified and rededicated a century after his death](#)

A dignified service of rededication was held for Petty Officer (PO) Charles McDonald yesterday, Thursday 10 May 2018, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Oostende New British Cemetery in Belgium, exactly 100 years after his death. PO McDonald, originally from Leith in Edinburgh, was formerly buried as an unknown British sailor.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by the Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton, Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, Royal Navy.



David Slade kneels beside the newly marked headstone for PO McDonald, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

In May 1918, Charles McDonald was on loan to HMS Vindictive when it took part in the second Ostend raid, which was the second failed attempt to block the channels leading to the port. A successful blockade of these bases would force German submarines to operate out of more distant ports, such as Wilhelmshaven, on the German coast. This would expose them for longer to Allied countermeasures and reduce the time they could spend raiding.

In anticipation of a raid, the Germans had removed the navigation buoys and without them the Vindictive had difficulty finding the narrow channel into the harbour in heavy fog. When she did discover the entrance, a mechanical fault prevented her from turning fully broadside to block access; a German shell fired from a gun battery on shore hit the bridge, killing the commander and wounding or killing most of the bridge crew.

P0 McDonald was climbing the stokehold ladder at the time, a shipmate confirmed that the ladder was shot away by the blast and Charles was never seen again. He was buried as an unknown British stoker, who died on 10 May 1918 whilst serving on HMS Vindictive.



A bugler plays during the rededication service for P0 McDonald, Crown Copyright, All rights Reserved

More recently, a historian with a firm interest in HMS Vindictive submitted clear and convincing evidence to the JCCC proving that the individual buried in Oostende new communal cemetery was Charles McDonald.

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It is very poignant to be here today on the 100th anniversary of Charles's death to be able to give him back his name and rededicate his grave to him.



Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton is joined by Navy representatives by PO McDonald's new headstone, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton said:

PO Charles McDonald was clearly a sailor's sailor having joined the Royal Navy in 1898 at the tender age of 18 years. He came from Leith, the port of Edinburgh and although we know little about him it is likely that the sea would in some way have been in his blood. The raid on Oostende on 9 and 10 May 1918 was a bold and brave assault which would have inevitably been costly in terms of lives. It is a privilege to lead a service today to commemorate PO McDonald as a fellow matelot and Scot. May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory and may we never forget the sacrifice of the few for the many.

David Avery of the CWGC said:

On the centenary of his death, we are privileged to be able to re-dedicate the grave of Petty Officer McDonald in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's plot in Oostende new communal cemetery. The CWGC are pleased that we are now able to pay tribute to this courageous sailor who had served his country for 20 years by marking his resting place with a headstone bearing his name.

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## [News story: Lieutenant General Mark Carleton-Smith appointed new Chief of the General Staff](#)

*Updated: new pic*

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has today confirmed that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the appointment of the new Chief of the General Staff.

Lieutenant General Mark Carleton-Smith CBE is to be promoted General and will succeed General Sir Nicholas Patrick Carter KCB CBE DSO ADC Gen in June 2018. General Carter is taking up the post of Chief of the Defence Staff, succeeding Air Chief Marshall Sir Stuart Peach who is leaving to become Chairman of the Military Committee at NATO.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I'm delighted to offer my congratulations to Lieutenant General Carleton-Smith on his appointment of Chief of the General Staff.

Lt Gen Carleton-Smith has played a leading role in many of our recent operations at home and abroad, including our campaign to defeat Daesh in Iraq and Syria, our support to British Overseas Territories affected by Hurricane Irma and the military's support to areas badly affected by the snow earlier this year.

I have no doubt that Lt Gen Carleton-Smith will be an outstanding leader of the Army at this crucial period, as we look to strengthen and further modernise the Army to deal with intensifying threats.

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## [News story: Royal Navy gets first unmanned minesweeping system](#)

Following a period of successful trials the demonstrator system could go on to be used by the Royal Navy in the future to defeat the threat of modern digital mines.

The system has been designed and manufactured by Atlas Elektronik UK in Dorset, under a £13 million contract with the Ministry of Defence which has sustained around 20 jobs and created 15 new jobs with the company.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

This autonomous minesweeper takes us a step closer to taking our crews out of danger and allowing us to safely clear sea lanes of explosives, whether that's supporting trade in global waters and around the British coastline, or protecting our ships and shores. Easily transported by road, sea and air, the high-tech design means a small team could put the system to use within hours of it arriving in theatre. We are investing millions in innovative technology now, to support our military of the future.

The system's innovative and modernised technology has the ability to defeat today's digital sea mines which can detect and target military ships passing overhead. The sweeper system, which features a "sense and avoid" capability, could also work together with other similar autonomous systems for the common goal of making our waters safer.

The project also aims to demonstrate the viability of an unmanned system that can safely and successfully clear mines and which is designed to be operated from a land or ship-based control station and can be deployed from a suitable ship or port.

Over the last four months, the system has been put through its paces by Atlas Elektronik and Defence Equipment and Support team members and the Royal Navy's Maritime Autonomous Systems Trials Team (MASTT).

The system was tested against a number of performance requirements, for example, how well it cleared mines, whether the autonomous system could successfully avoid obstacles and the overall system performance.

Brigadier Jim Morris Royal Marines – Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff in Maritime Capability, and Senior Responsible Officer for the Mine Counter Measures and Hydrographic Capability (MHC) programme said:

The Mine Countermeasures and Hydrographic Capability Combined Influence Minesweeping system is the Royal Navy's first fully autonomous capability demonstrator and paves the way for the introduction of this technology across the full range of maritime capabilities.

Combined Influence Minesweeping is a critical component of the Mine Countermeasures capability. This autonomous system will restore the Royal Navy's sweep capability, enabling it to tackle modern digital mines that may not otherwise be discovered in challenging minehunting conditions.

This autonomous sweep system represents a fundamental step in the Navy's transition to autonomous offboard systems to counter the threat posed to international shipping by the sea mine; we look forward to commencing demonstration of the associated minehunting system in 2019.

The handover of the system to the Royal Navy is a significant milestone for the Mine Countermeasures and Hydrographic Capability (MHC) programme, which aims to de-risk maritime autonomous systems and introduce these new technologies into the Royal Navy.

Director Ships Support Neal Lawson, of the MOD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support, said:

The autonomous minesweeper offers a commander the ability to defeat mines that cannot be countered by current hunting techniques and significantly reduces the risk to crew members in pressured and time-constrained operations.

The system can offer greater flexibility and upgradability, allowing the Royal Navy to respond better to the sea-mine threat in the long-term and operate more effectively around the world and I'm therefore delighted to be back here at Bingleaves, where I started my MOD career 29 years ago, to mark the handover of this critical programme.

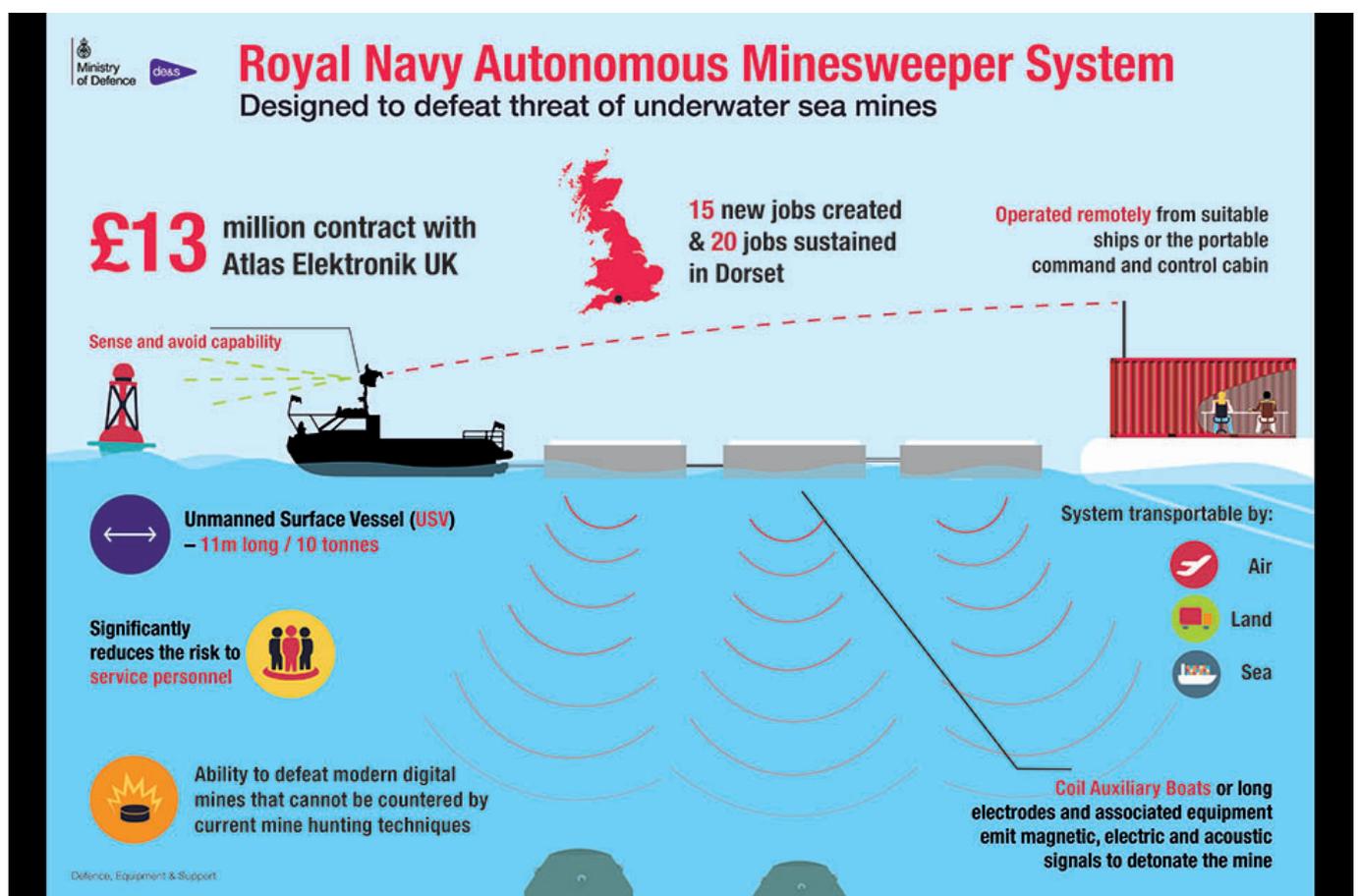


An autonomous minesweeper system that can safely clear sea lanes of mines has been handed over to the Royal Navy, Defence Minister Guto Bebb has announced. Crown copyright.

The system will now undergo a series of more detailed trials with the Royal Navy.

The Royal Navy has a proud history of minesweeping, dating from World War One when even the likes of fishing trawlers were converted for use, dragging a chain from the vessel to clear German mines. Today, with far more sophisticated equipment, the service is still called upon to clear the waters of ordnance and maintains a world-leading role in minehunting, training alongside allies in the Mediterranean and the Gulf.

The MOD has committed 1.2% of the £36bn defence budget, supported by a dedicated £800m Innovation Fund, to cutting-edge science and technology.



An autonomous minesweeper system that can safely clear sea lanes of mines has been handed over to the Royal Navy, Defence Minister Guto Bebb has announced. Crown copyright.

[Fatality notice: MOD confirms the](#)

# death of Corporal Steven Wainwright



Corporal Steven Wainwright with his family.

Corporal Steven Wainwright died on Tuesday 1 May after being involved in a road traffic collision on the Akrotiri Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus. The incident is under investigation.

Cpl Wainwright enlisted into the RAF in 2006. Following successful completion of basic training at RAF Halton he went on to complete trade training at RAF Cosford (formally the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE)), graduating in October 2006. He then undertook his first posting to RAF Kinloss, working as part of the Nimrod Line Squadron until July 2008. Upon completion of his Trade Ability Tests, he was promoted to Senior Aircraftman in December 2006. Following his first tour, he returned to DCAE Cosford for further training to qualify as a Technician, where he was subsequently assigned to RAF Marham to support Tornado operations. He remained there until December 2012 when he was posted to No. 6 Squadron, RAF Leuchars until June 2014. He then moved with the Squadron as part of a rebasing programme to RAF Lossiemouth where he has served ever since. He was successful on his trade promotion board for the rank of Cpl in October 2017.

Group Captain Andrew Dickens OBE, Commanding Officer 903 Expeditionary Air Wing said:

Our deepest condolences go to Cpl Steven Wainwright's family and

friends at what is a terrible, tragic time. He was a popular member of No. 6 Squadron, who are currently deployed as part of 903 Expeditionary Air Wing based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. As a highly skilled aircraft technician, Cpl Wainwright was making a key contribution to Operation Shader in ensuring Typhoon aircraft could complete the challenging mission against Daesh. Cpl Wainwright was a dedicated professional who had served his country with distinction. All our thoughts are now with Cpl Wainwright's family, friends and colleagues as they come to terms with his tragic death.

Wing Commander William Cooper, Officer Commanding No. 6 Squadron said:

Cpl Wainwright was an unfailingly professional technician who had an incredible passion for his family, his work and life in the Royal Air Force. He was a man who motivated and lifted everybody he interacted with at RAF Lossiemouth, especially on No. 6 Squadron. A fighter squadron is a very tight unit and Cpl Wainwright embodied all the qualities to make that possible. He was a mentor to those both more senior and more junior and by sheer force of personality produced results in people others could not.

No task was too daunting or too challenging, he took adversity in his stride and, as a result, No. 6 Squadron is a far happier place and more effective fighting unit. Every job, every aircraft see-off, every mentoring role was conducted with the same cheery personality and calm professionalism. Unwavering dedication to operations was typical of Cpl Wainwright, be that at home on Quick Reaction Alert or overseas on Operation Shader. His shoes cannot be filled and he will be greatly missed by everybody on No. 6 Squadron, the thoughts of all of us on are with Cpl Wainwright's family at this incredibly difficult time.

Squadron Leader Chris Harris, Senior Engineering Officer No. 6 Squadron said:

Always with a smile to share, even at the end of the hardest night shift, Steve was renowned for picking up morale with his infectiously positive approach to life. This unwaveringly positive determination transferred into his outstanding professional dedication, where he took justifiable pride in being one of the best engineers on the Squadron. Steve Wainwright was one of the first people I met on the Squadron, his characteristic good humour evident in our very first discussion where he introduced himself with his typical comedic style. Respected and admired across every trade on No. 6 Squadron and beyond, Steve will be sorely missed by all and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Warrant Officer David Clegg, No. 6 Squadron Detachment Warrant Officer said:

Full of charisma and highly respected by everyone, Stevie was an exceptionally friendly individual with a great sense of humour. As an aircraft engineer, he was one of the best and it was an absolute pleasure to work alongside him. His affectionate nature and loveable character shone through in everything he achieved and he will be sadly missed by all. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Group Captain, Jim Walls, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth said:

Cpl Wainwright was a member of our family here at RAF Lossiemouth, we all feel his loss deeply. He was a highly skilled individual who was a key part of our team. I always enjoyed the gift of his upbeat attitude. I particularly respected him for his values and approaches as a family man. We are all thinking of his loved ones at this tragic time.

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## **Press release: Dstl analysts support Europe's largest military exercise**

A team of analytic specialists from Dstl are providing vital analysis to support military commanders in Europe's largest military exercise, Exercise Joint Warrior. Lead by the UK's Ministry of Defence (MOD), Exercise Joint Warrior is a multi-national military training exercise which takes place in the UK, predominately in the north-west of Scotland and on Salisbury Plain.

Dstl's guidance is crucial for military leaders to understand the risks and benefits of the decisions they make when planning tactical activities and maneuvers during conflict.

Thousands of military personnel take part in the exercise from across the UK services, as well as those from NATO and other allied countries. It involves 38 naval vessels, 68 aircraft and a large number ground units. Operations include airborne assaults, amphibious landing and training in counter-insurgency, counter-piracy and interstate warfare.

Among the team of analysts from Dstl is Richard Hoyes, he said:

Seeing your hard work and analysis influence a commander's decisions is great; though, clearly there is a serious edge to all of the work involved; it is also good fun. At the start of the exercise I was in an airfield with hundreds of paratroopers who were prepping to deploy as per a real conflict. There were a lot of

helicopters and fast jets; it all makes for a very meaningful and realistic experience.

The team is among more than 30 members of Dstl staff who are trained and ready to deploy anywhere in the world in support of military operations and exercises; all at a moment's notice.

Richard added:

On this joint operation, the Army, RAF and Navy work together as a team. You can gain great insight into a breadth of capabilities due to the fascinating mix of cultures with the likes of Danish, Lithuanian and Latvians among the nationalities working alongside UK personnel. This is the second exercise of this type that I have done and I have already developed working relations with other nations. It shows how seamlessly these nations can integrate together and fight side by side.

Dstl also has a 24-hour, 365-day 'reachback' capability, which provides rapid access to the breadth and depth of Dstl's capabilities in support of military operations, not just with analysis but could include anything from computer modelling and highly detailed scientific advice to a review of previous research studies for similar issues.

For more information contact the Dstl press office on 01980 956845 or at [press@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:press@dstl.gov.uk)