

News story: Defence Secretary reaffirms commitment to Daesh's total defeat in meeting with Iraqi counterpart

There will be no respite in UK operations against Daesh until we can guarantee their absolute defeat, the Defence Secretary reassured his Iraqi counterpart, Erfan al-Hiyali, in a meeting in London today.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We will not rest until we hammer the final nail in the terrorists' coffin.

While Daesh's territory is diminishing, the threat they pose to our security at home and abroad through their evil and barbaric beliefs remains stark. That is why RAF jets continue to strike them in Iraq and Syria to eliminate the threat they pose to our way of life.

The importance of continued RAF activity was echoed by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, who said:

With Daesh losing control of its last remaining pockets of territory, they are once more looking purely like the terrorist organisation they are. Yet the threat they pose within the region and more widely across the world remains.

As we have discovered in previous conflicts, if we let up, then we run the risk that Daesh will return. It is vital that we stay the course, alongside our allies, until the job is done.

In the past three weeks, RAF Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers have destroyed armoured vehicles, terrorist bases, weapon stores and disrupted supply routes.

On Wednesday 14 February Typhoons destroyed a mechanical excavator, used by the terrorists to construct fortified positions near the Euphrates river in eastern Syria. Operations continued in eastern Syria on Friday 16 February, Typhoons and Tornado's provided close air support to Syrian Democratic Forces engaged in ground close combat with Daesh fighters, destroying five terrorist positons.

An RAF Reaper patrolled over the Euphrates on Tuesday 20 February, striking armed terrorists, including a pair on a motorcycle moving at high speed. On

Wednesday 28 February, Typhoons attacked two Daesh armoured vehicles north-east of Abu Kamal. A second Typhoon flight destroyed a key road in the area, which will prevent the terrorists from moving heavy truck-bombs and equipment along it.

On Saturday 3 March, Typhoons demolished four Daesh buildings close to the border with Iraq. On Sunday 4 March, a Typhoon destroyed a tunnel used by the terrorists as a weapons cache, located in a remote area in northern Iraq.

RAF aircraft have carried out nearly 1,700 strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria since 2014. The UK have deployed Reaper UAVs, Typhoon jets and Tornados, have conducted significant ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) missions and have provided additional air support such as inflight refuelling and transporting.

The UK is working to secure Daesh's lasting defeat by cooperating with legitimate local authorities towards a stable, prosperous and united future for affected communities in both Iraq and Syria and ensuring that Daesh must not be allowed to re-emerge.

News story: New bursary to get veterans into teaching

Pupils across the country are set to benefit from the leadership and world-renowned expertise of our armed forces – as the government unveils a £40,000 bursary for ex-service personnel to retrain as a teacher.

From September, courses at universities nationwide will offer the incentive to veterans who have left full-time employment in the British Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy in the last five years, or anyone leaving before training begins.

The incentive will help ex-servicemen and women – who have spent their career honing the discipline, motivation and unique skills needed to become great teachers – make the transition to the classroom where they can share their expertise with the next generation.

The bursary has been developed as part of the Department for Education's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant – the nation's promise to those who serve or who have served – and will be offered on priority undergraduate courses in biology, chemistry, computing, maths or modern foreign languages.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Academic standards are rising, with 1.9 million more children in

good or outstanding schools and a record 15,500 more teachers than in 2010. We want this trend to continue and to explore every opportunity to attract the best and brightest into teaching.

Our ex-servicemen and women – who have already contributed so much to our country – have a wealth of experience and expertise that can be shared in the classroom, teaching pupils the knowledge they need to succeed alongside vital skills, such as leadership and self-discipline.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our incredible troops have unrivalled life experiences and world-class skills that will motivate and inspire a generation of children in classrooms across the country.

Through leadership, teamwork and problem solving, veterans are ideally suited for a career in teaching once they leave the Armed Forces.

This programme not only offers our valued veterans a new and fulfilling career, it will help our children achieve their aspirations and life goals.

Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee said:

This initiative, under the Armed Forces Covenant, is another great addition to our wider resettlement offer of courses, mentoring, and advice, helping our serving personnel successfully transition into civilian life.

The announcement, made today (6 March) by the Department for Education and Ministry of Defence, adds to a number of government bursaries and other financial incentives to encourage even more talented trainees into key subjects.

The new bursary will replace the existing Troops to Teachers Programme, providing veterans with greater flexibility and enabling them to train with any Initial Teacher Training provider, while still receiving the same level of financial support.

The University of Brighton, which has delivered the Troops to Teachers Programme since 2013, has backed the move and will now draw on the experience of training 106 service-leavers to become fully-qualified teachers – with a further 96 trainees currently studying to deploy their skills in the classroom.

Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Brighton, Chris Pole said:

The University of Brighton is delighted that non-graduate, ex-service personnel will continue to be offered the opportunity to train to teach.

They offer unique expertise and skills that are especially valued by the pupils they teach as well as the profession more broadly.

Among the University of Brighton's trainees is Colin Grimes, a former Aerospace Systems Manager in the Royal Air Force who is now Year 4 teacher at Rothbury First School in Northumberland. He welcomed today's news:

Studying for a degree in education while being supported financially opened up exciting new career choices for me. Without this kind of support many candidates would not have access to career opportunities of this kind.

So it's great news that ex-military personnel will now be offered even more opportunities to train for a valuable and stimulating second career while still being able to support their families.

In addition to the bursary, trainees will also have access to further support through the government's Get Into Teaching service and other financial incentives. Applications for 2018 courses are now open.

Further Information

The bursary will be paid in the final two years of a three-year course. Bursary requirements – applicants must:

- must be an undergraduate i.e. not already have a degree;
- need to have left full time employment in the British Army, Royal Air Force or Royal Navy in the past 5 years;
- must be interested in studying and qualified to study the priority subjects of secondary maths, biology, chemistry, physics, computing or modern foreign languages;
- meet the appropriate initial teacher training (ITT) eligibility criteria. More [here](#).

From 2019 the Troops to Teachers Programme will cease to exist and the University of Brighton will deliver a new undergraduate ITT programme that will be open to service-leavers.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation to those who serve or

who have served, and their families, which says we will do all we can to ensure they are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged in their day-to-day lives. The Armed Forces Covenant relies on the people, communities, and businesses of the UK to actively support it in order to make a difference.

Today's news adds to a growing number of initiatives to attract the brightest and best into the teaching profession, including:

- Increasing bursaries to £26,000 for all trainees with a 2:2 or higher in the highest priority subjects; physics, languages, chemistry, biology, computing, geography and classics.
- Offering a £20,000 bursary for maths trainees followed by two additional early-career payments of £5k each (£7,500 if teaching in local authority areas where teachers are most needed) in their third and fifth year of teaching, if they have taught in a state school in England since completing their teacher training course. More details [here](#).
- Offering scholarship schemes in six subjects for 2018/19; physics, maths, languages, chemistry, computing, and geography. Successful scholars will receive £28,000 tax-free in all subjects except maths, where scholars will receive £22,000 tax-free.
- Offering bursaries for English trainees have been increased to £15,000 for all trainees with a 2:2 or higher, and bursaries in all other subjects are unchanged for 2018 to 2019.

News story: Slovakian Air Force Firefighters train in the UK

Held at the Defence Fire Training and Development Centre in Manston, Kent, the week-long course for one of our key NATO partners included learning incident command techniques and aircraft firefighting tactics.

A mixture of British military fire safety personnel and MOD civilian experts provided the training, which is needed because the UK and its NATO partners often land aircraft in Slovakia.

Staff Sergeant Michal Fusí, of the Slovakian Air Force firefighting service, said:

In Slovakia we don't have the these kind of facilities, so when the opportunity came up to come to the UK we took it. This is a big experience for us and a chance to improve our skills, it is very beneficial for us. We will be able to pass on the skills we have picked up here to our colleagues back home.

The training included classroom and live firefighting exercises which featured a variety of retired RAF aircraft donated to the facility including a Nimrod, Tornado, Harrier Jump Jet, Jaguar, Sea King and Lynx helicopters.



Six Slovakian Air Force firefighters have undergone training in the UK to learn vital skills needed to tackle major aircraft fires.

The training area also featured fire simulators such as a "fire wall" and one that is shaped like a large aircraft with seats inside, which can be used to mimic aircraft such as a C-17 Globemaster.

The Defence Fire Risk Management facility at Manston is used for training firefighters across all three services, with more than 3,000 people passing through its doors every year.

Area Manager Ken Cross, the brigade training manager at Manston, said:

We are delighted to have them here. With many British C-17 aircraft landing in Slovakia as part of NATO, the offer of training was extended. Our facilities replicate realistic fire conditions.

The Slovaks loved every minute of what has been a busy and interesting week. They have learnt quickly and are very energetic. They are very, very good firefighters.

It is hoped that this course, the first time that the Slovaks have done this training in the UK, will lead to further opportunities for fire safety personnel from their country to come to Manston.



Six Slovakian Air Force firefighters have undergone training in the UK to learn vital skills needed to tackle major aircraft fires.

The UK and Slovakia have longstanding ties, as evidenced most recently in February, when Air Vice Marshal Edward Stringer represented the UK at the funeral service of Major-General Ivan Otto Schwarz, the last surviving veteran of the Second World War Czechoslovak Squadron.

And in September 2017, the Chief of Defence Staff Sir Stuart Peach visited Slovakia to reaffirm the strong bilateral defence and security relationship that our two countries share.

News story: Military support for snow relief

Updated: 05 MARCH UPDATE

– Military assistance in Lincolnshire, Devon, Shropshire, Hampshire, Manchester, Wiltshire and Scotland has now completed. One Chinook has been deployed to airlift supplies to areas of Cumbria on 05 March. 328 personnel and 124 4x4 vehicles have been used to assist emergency services with the snow response.

The military has used vehicles and personnel to transport essential NHS staff to hospitals and vulnerable people in the community. The military has supported local police forces to assist people stranded on motorways and have used aircraft to transport supplies to areas cut off by the snow.

On Friday 2 March, the Defence Secretary met with soldiers from 1 Royal Irish, who were carrying out vital work transporting health workers in the Shropshire area, which was hit by heavy snow.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our Armed Forces are doing an incredible job up and down the country, helping the emergency services, local authorities, and the NHS supporting those in need.

From Scotland to Cornwall, more than 100 personnel from across the forces are making a real difference in getting nurses and doctors to vulnerable and elderly patients, and helping rescue those left stranded in freezing conditions.

I pay tribute to their professionalism, dedication and sense of duty. They are proving once again that Britain can always depend on our troops to protect us no matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the problem.

I witnessed for myself the vital role they are playing in helping the British people during the treacherous weather which has caused so much difficulty for so many people.

I am extremely grateful for all that our personnel are doing and will continue to do over the weekend – and I want to thank them for answering calls for help across the country.

Military assistance to date:

- 20 RAF personnel and 10 4x4 RAF vehicles transported health staff to hospitals and communities in Lincolnshire.

- The military assisted Greater Manchester Police to enable them to access and assist motorists on the M62
- Army soldiers and 10 4x4 vehicles transported NHS Scotland staff needed to deliver critical care services to and from Edinburgh Royal Infirmary and the Western General Hospital. Reservists from the Scottish and Northern Irish Yeomanry were utilised alongside a further 20 4x4s from across the three services in Tayside and Fife to support NHS Scotland.
- 20 Army soldiers and 10 4x4s transported health staff to hospitals and support health workers in visiting vulnerable people in the community in Shropshire.
- 20 Royal Marines and 10 4x4 vehicles transported health staff to hospitals and communities in Devon and Cornwall
- The military provided 10 vehicles and personnel to transport NHS workers in the Salisbury and Swindon area
- One Chinook has been deployed to deliver supplies to communities in Cumbria that have been cut off due to snowdrifts.

Military assistance in numbers:

- 328 personnel have helped with the snow response
- 124 4x4 vehicles have been mobilised
- 1 Chinook has been deployed

Armed Forces personnel have also volunteered in their own time to help those in need.

There are always three UK standby battalions held at high readiness to respond to UK contingencies and emergencies, including support to local authorities. We have the right people with the right training to respond to a range of contingencies.

News story: Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visits Joint Forces Command

The Secretary of State travelled to Defence Intelligence at Wyton and the Permanent Joint Headquarters at Northwood, gaining first hand insight into these organisations, their place within JFC, and how they support the defence of the nation.

At the Pathfinder Building in Wyton, the headquarters of the Joint Force Intelligence Group (JFIG), the Defence Secretary met with Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence, Paul Rimmer, Commander Cyber and Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Air Vice Marshal Ian Vallely, and Commander JFIG, Brigadier Ben Kyte.

Secretary of State saw how all aspects of Defence Intelligence are

coordinated to provide the understanding he and others in government need to make decisions. Operators briefed him on, amongst other things, Cyber, Geospatial Intelligence, and what is known as Time Dominant Analysis; the continual process for providing rapid analytical response to events through the fusion of classified and open source information.

Commander JFC then accompanied the Defence Secretary to Northwood Headquarters, where he toured the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ). Over a working lunch with the Chief of Staff (COS) Policy and Finance, Paul Wyatt, and COS Operations, Air Vice Marshal Gary Waterfall, he heard about the history of PJHQ and how it fits into today's operating environment, in support of MOD Head Office and other government departments.

This discussion covered the high number of operations being conducted by UK forces, with coalition partners, around the globe, and the significant range of contingency plans that are maintained by PJHQ.

The Defence Secretary also met PJHQ staff in the Operations Control Room, hearing from planners about how they ensure that the UK Armed Forces are readied for operations, and from operators on how events are managed on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis.

Topics included Op Ruman, the UK's rapid response following the hurricanes in the Caribbean towards the end of last year, and Op Trenton, the UK's contribution to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), both superb examples of what the 3 UK armed forces can do when operating jointly.

Commander JFC and the Defence Secretary also discussed the role of JFC and its strategy, the guiding principle of which is to secure advantage for the joint force through innovation, integration and information. With his focus on modernising defence, the Secretary of State was particularly interested in the steps JFC is taking to make innovation happen in JFC, the role that the command plays in integrating the capabilities available to defence, and the digital acceleration that the command is in the process of delivering, through Miltech.

The Defence Secretary said of his visit:

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting Joint Forces Command earlier this week. Organisations like the Joint Force Intelligence Group and the Permanent Joint Headquarters are a big part of the reason why the UK's armed forces make such a significant contribution to the defence of the nation, and our allies, in difficult and demanding circumstances around the globe.

Commander JFC also commented:

It was a great pleasure to host the Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson, at Wyton and Northwood, where he had the opportunity to meet some of the superb people who work tirelessly to provide

intelligence for defence and command UK armed forces on operations.

His visit also allowed us to showcase the work Joint Forces Command is doing to secure advantage, through innovation, integration and information, and thereby contribute to modernising defence.