

News story: Queen welcomes Royal Navy's largest ever ship into the fleet

The Queen spoke at a ceremony in Portsmouth's naval base this morning, attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson, Chancellor Philip Hammond and military chiefs.

In her role as the ship's Lady Sponsor Her Majesty addressed guests before the Ship's Commanding Officer, Captain Jerry Kyd, read the commissioning warrant. The iconic White Ensign was then raised, symbolising the commissioning of the nation's future flagship into the Royal Navy's fleet.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Today marks the start of a hugely significant chapter for the Royal Navy, and indeed the nation, as the future flagship is commissioned into Her Majesty's fleet. It is an honour to witness the crowning moment of an extraordinarily busy year for the Royal Navy that has seen us name the second carrier, HMS Prince of Wales, cut steel on the first Type 26 frigates and launch the National Shipbuilding Strategy.

Our new aircraft carrier is the epitome of British design and dexterity, at the core of our efforts to build an Armed Forces fit for the future. For the next half a century both carriers will advance our interests around the globe, providing the most visible symbol of our intent and commitment to protect the UK from intensifying threats, wherever they may come from.

Having successfully completed her second stage of sea trials off the south coast of England, the carrier is back alongside at her home port of Portsmouth. Over 10,000 people across the UK have contributed to the delivery of the ship under the Aircraft Carrier Alliance.

Completing final build activity and preparing for helicopter trials in the New Year, HMS Queen Elizabeth will head to the United States for initial flight trials off the coast in autumn 2018. There are currently 150 Royal Navy and RAF personnel training in the US on our 13 F-35 jets.

The UK has worked closely on both the F-35 and carrier programmes with the US, our pre-eminent partner within NATO, enabling us to fly aircraft from each other's ships. Both of the UK's new carriers will be able to operate alongside NATO and coalition allies.

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, said:

In hoisting the White Ensign from HMS Queen Elizabeth today, Britain has confirmed her place among the world's great maritime powers in the most majestic and muscular terms.

The Queen Elizabeth-class carriers will sit at the heart of a modernised and emboldened Royal Navy, capable of projecting power and influence at sea, in the air, over the land and in cyberspace, and offering our nation military and political choice in an uncertain world.

But our greatest strength of all is the young sailors and marines upon whose shoulders our continued security and prosperity rests. They are starting their careers as a new chapter opens for the Royal Navy – and like all those who have gone before them, they are ready to serve their Queen and Country.



Her Royal Highness Princess Anne also attended the commissioning ceremony. Crown Copyright.

Both new aircraft carriers will be able to perform a wide range of tasks, from humanitarian and disaster relief to fighting terrorism and high-end warfighting. In what has been termed, 'the Year of the Royal Navy' the second carrier, HMS Prince of Wales, was named in Rosyth and is structurally complete.

This year the Royal Navy has also had steel cut on the first of the Type 26 frigates and Dreadnought submarines, the launch of the National Shipbuilding Strategy, provisioning for a new class of frigate, the Type 31e, float out of

the fourth Astute submarine, HMS Audacious, the naming of two Offshore Patrol Vessels and the arrival of our first two MARS Tankers in the UK.

Last month the Defence Secretary visited HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time while at sea, meeting the crew and thanking them for their work towards UK defence.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, said:

Congratulations from the Royal Air Force to the Royal Navy on achieving another important milestone in the UK's Carrier Strike capability. I know the RAF and RN F-35 crews are looking forward to starting to fly from HMS Queen Elizabeth next year.

[News story: New bullet-proof material unveiled as Defence Minister visits MOD's research hub](#)

On her visit to the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), she spoke with scientists who are creating a lighter, more flexible body armour for soldiers which uses a unique synthetically adjusted ceramic material that still stops bullets.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

We've spent millions on innovation this year, developing technologies like a new way to uncover insurgents' fingerprints to mini-drones that investigate chemical hazards. The goal is always to help our Armed Forces defend the UK, and this next generation of armour will make our troops even more alert and effective on the battlefield.

Research has indicated soldiers wearing ceramic armour could see a 35 per cent weight reduction, which could make them faster and more comfortable in a warzone, whilst maintaining a high level of protection.

The synthetic biology for the armour project has been running for four years and Dstl are now ready to put samples through hardness testing. They also confirmed that a scale-up process is underway to produce samples that can be used for live-fire testing.

£6 million has been invested in synthetic biology to date for novel materials

research, reaching out to academia and industry via a series of competitions. In some cases these competitions have been run jointly with the Research Councils, in others they have been run independently using MOD organisations, such as the Defence Accelerator.

The MOD has committed 1.2% of the rising £36bn defence budget, supported by a dedicated £800m Innovation Fund, to cutting-edge science and technology. 2017 has seen a number of exciting projects developed as part of the drive, to name just a few:

- A pocket-sized drone and a mini-detector known as Snake Eyes are amongst the new high-tech gadgets set to investigate future chemical or bio-hazards.
- A world-first in the US saw British soldiers controlling 4x4s with Xbox-style controllers and a UK driverless truck leading American trucks in an unmanned convoy, providing a glimpse into the future of getting much-needed supplies to the front line.
- Cutting-edge fingerprint technology aimed at targeting criminals.
- A Laser Directed Energy Weapon that is capable of acquiring, tracking and engaging aerial and surface targets at various ranges and in different weather conditions.
- A new lightning-fast protection system, Icarus, which will be able to detect and defeat threats to armoured vehicles within 100 milliseconds.

The Defence Accelerator funds the development of suppliers' innovative ideas and provides support through to potential application. The Accelerator also funds innovations for defence and security which support economic growth and prosperity in the UK.

The Accelerator is approaching its first anniversary and has enjoyed great success, including:

- Launching 8 themed competitions
 - Running 18 competition events
 - Assessing over 630 proposals
 - Funding 147 proposals with an investment of £17.3m
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Press release: Business contribution to Britain's biggest warships recognised

HMS Queen Elizabeth, the nation's future flagship and the first of Britain's two new 65,000 tonne aircraft carriers, will be formally commissioned into the Royal Navy by Her Majesty the Queen next week (07/12).

But the construction of the 280 metre-long ship would never have been possible without the essential work undertaken by small and medium sized enterprises (SME) from around Britain.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

On behalf of Defence, the government and the whole of the United Kingdom, I would like to thank the hundreds of businesses around the country for the millions of hours they've spent equipping our ships in what has been an immense nationwide enterprise.

Their Herculean efforts showcase our great British talent and saw HMS Queen Elizabeth complete her 2017 sea trials with flying colours as she prepares to project our interests right across the world.

Over 700 British SME's have supported the build of the aircraft carriers in what has been a truly national endeavour. The programme has brought together the best of British industry, with construction involving more than 10,000 people including more than 800 apprentices.



Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin has recognised the vital contribution that businesses from across the UK have made to the construction of the Royal Navy's largest ever ships.

Chief of Materiel Ships at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Sir Simon Bollom said:

I am incredibly proud of how DE&S and our colleagues across Defence have worked in collaboration with businesses across the UK to deliver a programme of such global significance.

The success of the Queen Elizabeth class is a testament to the thousands of people who have worked on the programme and the vital skills they bring. I look forward to continuing our important relationship with industry to bring the second ship, HMS Prince of Wales, into service.

In 2015/2016 the Ministry of Defence invested over £18bn with UK industry, supporting more than 120,000 full-time jobs, and benefiting local economies.

Last year saw the MOD's direct spend with SME's increase by over 10% across the country as it continues to make it easier for them to win defence business.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin has launched initiatives such as a new Supplier Portal, which brings together a range of useful information for new and prospective suppliers in one place for the first time, a dedicated

Twitter account to flag opportunities to SMEs and simplified contracts for lower-value, less complex procurements.

Soon after the commissioning ceremony on Thursday 7th December, work will continue apace to ready Britain's most advanced military vessel ever for the vital role it will play in projecting Britain's influence around the world.

Next year the new F-35B Lightning II stealth jets, the most advanced warplane in the world, will start flight trials from the ship, and HMS Queen Elizabeth is on track to be fully deployable anywhere in the world by 2021.

Both of the UK's aircraft carriers are being delivered by the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, a unique partnering relationship between industry and the UK Ministry of Defence.

[News story: UK bolsters defence ties in the Western Balkans](#)

The trip marks the first time Mark Lancaster has been to Kosovo since he served there in 1999-2000 and it's the first visit to Serbia by a British defence minister in more than 10 years.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

The Western Balkans is a key region for the stability and security of Europe, and the UK continues to play a leading role in supporting the Kosovo Security Force and the Serbian Armed Forces.

Our connections are historic; it is a hundred years since we fought side by side with Serbia during the First World War, and we will continue to build on our rich history with both countries in the years to come.

Mr Lancaster's visit to Kosovo comes at a time when the UK has boosted its presence in the country, having recently deployed 30 troops to NATO's Force based there to work with allies to promote safety, security and stability in the region. This is in addition to long-standing defence training assistance and capacity-building of the Kosovo Security Force.

The Defence Minister went on to visit Belgrade, to meet with his counterparts. It marked the hundredth anniversary since British and Commonwealth troops successfully fought alongside Serbian counterparts to secure the Salonika Front during the First World War. The UK has a proud history of training side-by-side with Serbian forces, with the 2nd Battalion the Royal Irish Regiment recently working on Exercise Platinum Wolf in

Cepotina.

While in Kosovo Mark Lancaster met with President Hashim Thaci, Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, Minister for the Kosovo Security Force Mr Rrustem Berisha, and Lieutenant General Rrahman Rama. He also laid a wreath at the UK memorial in Pristina and saw a demonstration by the Kosovo Security Force. In Serbia the Minister met Defence Minister Aleksandar Vulin, laid a wreath at the Belgrade War Cemetery and addressed military personnel at the Peacekeeping Centre.

The visit comes ahead of the major Western Balkans Summit in London in next year.

[Press release: Defence Science and Technology Laboratory appoints new Chief Executive](#)

Gary has spent his career in the development and supply of mission-critical wireless communications solutions to public safety, industrial and transportation sectors.

He has previously held senior global positions at Sepura and at Motorola Solutions, where he had commercial responsibility for sales, services, operations and product management.

As Dstl's Chief Executive, Gary will lead an organisation of over 3,800 scientists and engineers providing specialist, and in many cases world-leading expertise, across a wide-range of disciplines.

Ahead of his arrival, Gary said:

I am excited to begin a new challenge at Dstl, in an organisation that provides such essential skills, knowledge and capabilities in support of the defence, security and prosperity of the UK.

[Sir David Pepper](#), Chairman of Dstl said:

I am delighted to welcome Gary to Dstl. He brings a wealth of experience in research and development and in organisational transformation that will be invaluable as Dstl moves into the next phase of its development. I am looking forward to working with him as he takes on his leadership role.

Gary will formally take up post on 1 January 2018. He replaces [David Marsh](#), who has been Acting Chief Executive since the previous Chief Executive Jonathan Lyle left the organisation in September this year.

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