

News story: WW2 fusilier's grave rededicated 74 years after his death

The World War 2 resting place of Edward Graham, a Soldier of 1st Battalion, Royal Irish Fusiliers, has finally been identified. A new headstone has been installed and a rededication service has taken place today (4 October 2017) in a moving ceremony at Catania War Cemetery, Sicily, attended by the twin sons Fusilier Graham never had the chance to meet.

The service was arranged by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC) and led by the Regimental Chaplain of the Royal Irish Regiment.

In 1935, Edward joined the Territorial Army as a Private in the Durham Light Infantry and attended the annual camp for the following 3 years. He signed on for a further 2 years, but at the outbreak of the war, he joined full time on 1 September 1939. He was then promptly transferred to the Royal Irish Fusiliers and posted to Ballykinler in Northern Ireland. It was while he was stationed here that he met and married Eveline McBride.

On 22 November 1942, the regiment embarked for service overseas, going initially to North Africa and then on to land in Sicily 1943. During the advance through Sicily, near the small town of Maletto, Edward was posted missing on 13 August 1943, presumed killed in action. The final resting place of Fusilier Graham was unknown until recently.

Tragically, unknown to Edward, 22 days before his death, his wife gave birth to twin sons, Edward and Sydney. It was these sons who have been instrumental in finding the final resting place of their father.

How was Fusilier Graham identified?



Sons Edward Graham and Sydney Graham, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The identity of the graves was discovered when one of Edward's sons, Edward Graham, began researching into the final resting place of his father. Further research was completed by the MOD's JCCC to corroborate the evidence and the identification of the "Unknown Soldier" grave was found to belong to Fusilier Edward Graham.



Sons Edward Graham and Sydney Graham, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Edward's son, Edward Graham, was able to attend the service and travelled from his home town of Prudhoe in Northumberland with his twin brother, Sydney. Edward said:

It was a very emotional service and the culmination of years of hard work and research. We are very grateful to everyone involved who made today so special.

Nicola Nash, from the Joint Casualty & Compassionate Centre (JCCC), said:

We feel privileged to bring some closure to Edward and Sydney after 74 years.

[News story: UK team returns following major success at the Invictus Games](#)

The 90-strong team of wounded, injured and sick (WIS) Service personnel and

veterans returned from Toronto yesterday with an impressive 87 medals and over 170 personal bests. The haul of medals included 26 golds, 34 silvers and 27 bronzes.

The eight-day sporting event ran from the 23 to 30 September and saw 550 individuals from 17 nations compete across 12 sports including archery, wheelchair rugby and sitting volleyball.

Highlights for the UK Team included: sitting volleyball team captain Sgt Netra Rana, Royal Gurkha Rifles, leading his team to a silver; former musician with the Royal Marine Band Service, Poppy Pawsey, winning an unexpected bronze in the Womens 100m swimming freestyle race; and two golds in golf.

For the majority of competitors, their success at the Games was achieving an individual goal specific to their recovery such as setting a new personal best, or performing in front of a large audience under pressure.

The Invictus Games, founded by HRH Prince, demonstrate the power of sport to inspire recovery. Getting involved in sport provides significant physical and mental health benefits including increasing self-confidence. At the closing ceremony on the 30 September, Prince Harry said:

To the thousands who filled the stands this week, and the millions who watched at home, let me issue you a challenge. Don't just move on from these games with happy memories. Instead, make an Invictus goal for yourselves. Let the examples of service and resilience that you have seen, inspire you to take action to improve something – big or small – in your life, for your family, or in your community.

The fourth Games will take place in [Sydney](#) next year with 500 competitors from 18 nations competing from the 20 to 27 October 2018. WIS members of the British Armed Forces and veterans who have been inspired to get involved in sport are invited to [register their interest](#) in the 2018 Games. Registration of interest will remain open until 1 December 2017.

The UK Team Captain, Bernie Broad, former Army Major in the Grenadier Guards, said:

Invictus lit a spark in my belly and at the end of the Games it has become a raging fire. It has kick-started a new phase in my recovery journey and one that will continue for a long time. I have a renewed purpose and it's brought back my determination and confidence.

What it has done for me it will do for many others. So apply for Sydney and potentially watch your life change in ways you couldn't imagine.

The Ministry of Defence worked in partnership with Help for Heroes and The Royal British Legion to deliver the UK Delegation for Toronto 2017.

The Ministry of Defence is a partner in the [Defence Recovery Capability](#), a programme which helps wounded, injured and sick Service personnel either return to duty from injury or provides a mechanism to help them back into civilian life.

[News story: Defence Secretary announces Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board](#)

Co-chaired by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and First Secretary of State Damian Green, and reporting to the Prime Minister, the board underlines the Government's enduring commitment to the Armed Forces community.

Meeting biannually, the Board will drive forward the existing Armed Forces Covenant commitments community across all Government departments responsible for delivery, with a specific focus on the priority areas of healthcare, including mental health. Housing, education, and employment opportunities are also other areas which will be covered.

In addition, the Defence Secretary and the First Secretary of State will meet separately with leading Service charities and the single Service Family Federations to discuss the Covenant on an annual basis. This will ensure the views of the wider Armed Forces Community are represented in government decisions.

Government initiatives delivered to date through the Armed Forces Covenant include:

- The Forces Help to Buy scheme (MOD), which has allowed thousands of Armed Forces personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to get on the housing ladder.
- The Armed Forces Covenant Fund, which provides £10M per annum to support mutually beneficial projects and programmes being delivered by organisations across the UK in partnership with the Armed Forces Community.
- The Job Centre Plus Armed Forces Champions (DWP) helps current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services
- The Transition, Intervention, and Liaison (TIL) veterans' mental health service (NHS) acts as a front door to a range of mental health services across the health and care system for veterans.

- The Service Pupil Premium (DfE), which is paid to schools to engage with service children to mitigate any adverse impact of family mobility and parental deployment.

The Board will also seek to maximise the potential of the Armed Forces Community through mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, as well as with local communities throughout the UK.

News story: Cadet Forces increase social mobility and help disadvantaged kids reach potential, report finds

Updated: pictures

The independent report, compiled by the University of Northampton, undertook research across the entire cadet programme and found that joining the cadets offers a range of benefits to individuals involved and the wider community.

Speaking at the launch of the report at the Albion Academy in Manchester, itself a school which has a Cadet Force, Sir Michael also announced the approval of 31 new cadet units in state schools across the country under the Cadet Expansion Programme. The new units also include the first school cadet unit to be approved under the programme in Wales.



Sir Michael meets with cadets at the Albion Academy.

The benefits outlined in the report include increasing social mobility, contributing directly to the Prime Minister's vision for a 'shared society' and helping kids from disadvantaged backgrounds.

More specifically the report found that:

- The social impact of Cadet Forces is vastly greater than the annual cost of the cadet programme to the defence budget.
- Cadet Forces help children receiving Free School Meals achieve their potential.
- Children excluded from school who join the Cadets are more likely to have improved attendance and behaviour on their return to school.
- Cadet Forces help make communities more inclusive by helping people to overcome disadvantages in the way school does not.
- Serving soldiers who used to be in the Cadets are four times more likely to be a senior non-commissioned officer or an officer.



The Defence Secretary observes cadets during a lesson at Albion Academy.

Meanu Bajwa-Patel, Senior Researcher, The Institute for Social Innovation and Impact, University of Northampton said:

The evidence so far has been overwhelmingly positive and demonstrates that the Cadet Forces can make a huge difference to social inclusion, social mobility and the mental wellbeing of young people. More research on the Cadet Expansion Programme and Cadet Forces across the devolved nations is planned, allowing us over the next three years to evaluate the social impact further.

The report also found that Cadet Forces help to develop an individual's communication, confidence and leadership skills, as well as increasing their awareness of the Armed Forces and improves respect for veterans.

The new cadet units, established under the MOD and Department for Education's Cadet Expansion Programme is backed by £50 million funding from LIBOR fines, which pays for set up costs, the cadets' uniforms, equipment and training.

The full report is available here

<https://www.northampton.ac.uk/research/research-institutes/institute-for-social-innovation-and-impact/social-impact-resulting-from-expenditure-on-cadets>

News story: Defence Secretary to announce new £1bn support model for Royal Navy

The Common Support Model (CSM) will provide a framework for comprehensive support across the Royal Navy's fleet of warships for decades to come in one new overarching arrangement.

The model will maintain the likes of both brand new Queen Elizabeth aircraft carriers, as well as all existing warships and will be able to incorporate future ships such as the Type 26 and Type 31e.

The new arrangement will bring together separate support agreements for individual ship types under a single, more efficient and more manageable model. Worth around £1 billion, it is set to improve the performance of service providers by having them adopt a common approach across all classes of complex warships.

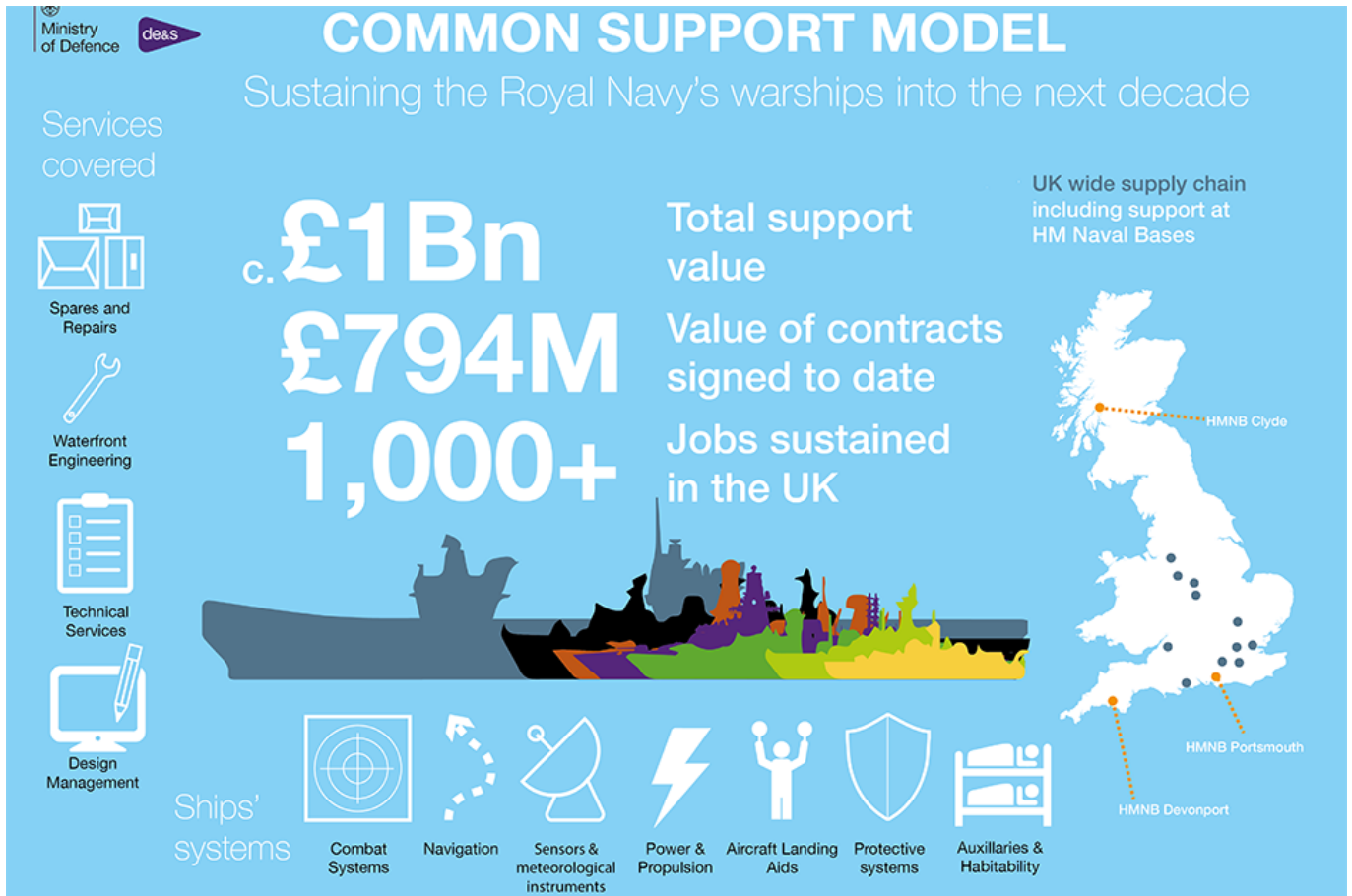
The move aims to boost the performance and speed of all support, no matter what the ship, as well as making savings in equipment costs with the model providing a one-stop-shop for services required.

The model will establish a support system across the surface fleet, from the largest ships ever built for the Royal Navy, the nation's new aircraft carriers, to the new Type 26 frigates being built on the Clyde and through to the likes of Minehunters and Royal Marine Amphibious Ships. It covers everything from combat management systems, fleet-wide communications and aircraft landing aids, through to spares, repairs and maintenance.

The suite of contracts will support over a thousand jobs in the UK, including at BAE Systems and Babcock in Portsmouth, Bristol, Devonport and on the Clyde, as well as Thales in Crawley and AGI Ltd in Poole.

The model will draw on the strong partnerships across UK Defence and world-leading skills to supply Royal Navy Engineering Technicians with the services and tools they need to keep the entire surface fleet effective at home and abroad, often far from home and in very challenging environments, and enhance the Royal Navy's mission to protect the UK's interests around the world.

10 of the 16 agreements, worth £794 million, included in the model have already been signed, with the others set to follow in the coming months.



Common Support Model infographic. Crown copyright.

Sir Simon Bollom, Chief of Materiel (Ships) for Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

Our surface fleet is made up of some the most advanced and capable fighting ships in the world. HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy's newest and most advanced Aircraft Carrier, will join the fleet soon and the Common Support Model will provide a framework that will deliver effective support to the Royal Navy's warship fleet at home and around the globe.

The innovative, ambitious and far-reaching Common Support Model, which will drive efficiencies and greater availability, has been made possible by the enduring and strong relationships which exist between the Ministry of Defence, the Royal Navy, and our industry partners.

Notes to Editors:

The first ten contracts to be signed under the Common Support Model are:

- Four contracts worth £320 million for Marine Systems Support Partner (MSSP) with Babcock, which will pay for spares, repairs and technical services for the Royal Navy's Type 45 Destroyers and the new Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers.

- A £200 million contract for the Joint Support Solution 2 with BAE Systems to support combat management systems, tactical networks and shared infrastructures aboard 38 Royal Navy platforms including Type 23 Frigates, Type 45 Destroyers, QEC Carriers, Landing Platform/Dock (LPD) and Landing Platform Helicopter (LPH) ships and Mine Counter Measure Vessels, among others.
- Two contracts worth £150 million for amendments to the Maritime Support Delivery Framework (MSDF) with BAE Systems and Babcock to ensure the continuing support of the Royal Navy's entire surface Fleet, including the two new QEC Carriers.
- A £100 million contract for internal and external communications systems support with Thales for fleet-wide communications support, including long-term support for the QEC Carriers and Type 45 Destroyers.
- A £12 million contract with AGI Ltd to support Visual Landing Aids for aircraft on board ships including the QEC Carriers, Type 45 Destroyers, and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's Tide Class Tankers.
- A £12 million contract for ships' protective systems with Babcock for the current Royal Navy surface Fleet including QEC carriers, and submarines.