

News story: Defence Equipment and Support Chief Executive to depart

The Ministry of Defence has today [28 September] announced that Tony Douglas, CEO of Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), will stand down from the role at the end of this year.

After more than two years in post, he will return to the private sector having led DE&S through the delivery of significant project milestones, including the launch of Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier and the negotiations for the procurement of Type 26 and 31e frigates.

Since joining in September 2015, he has also driven a far reaching, major programme of organisational transformation which is making a real difference to the delivery of equipment and support to the UK Armed Forces.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I am personally very grateful for the help and support Tony has provided to me personally and been very impressed by the significant progress he has achieved in his time with the MOD, we will be sorry to lose him.

He is responding to an unexpected opportunity in the private sector which he has decided to pursue and I would not want to stand in his way from taking on that fresh challenge.

I am confident that the momentum he has generated will be maintained by his executive team and, in due course, his successor ensuring that DE&S continues to deliver using the foundations he has put into place.

Tony Douglas said:

It has been a very difficult decision for me to make. I will leave DE&S at the end of 2017 but I will do so having thoroughly enjoyed our time together. We have made very real progress on project delivery and transformation and we should be individually and collectively proud of what we have done.

In part, my decision to leave DE&S has been made easier by the knowledge that it will remain in capable hands. I have decided to leave because I have been offered a compelling opportunity to lead a large and complex organisation in the private sector and in an industry, unconnected with defence, which I know well.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

I have very much enjoyed working with Tony Douglas; we have made considerable progress together on the delivery of individual projects and on organisational change. The foundation he has laid allows that good work to continue and I wish him every success in his new role.

DE&S Chairman, Paul Skinner said:

Tony has been an inspiring leader of DE&S, he has brought real innovation to its commercial approach and the way we do business. We are determined to build further on his impressive achievements.

Tony Douglas joined the MOD in September 2015 after being Chief Executive Officer at Abu Dhabi Airports.

The process to find his successor will begin immediately and an internal interim leadership will be put into place to manage the time that will take.

[News story: Defence Secretary names new warship HMS Belfast in Northern Ireland](#)

The second to be named in the City Class of eight brand new, cutting-edge, anti-submarine warfare frigates, HMS Belfast will provide advanced protection for the likes of the UK's nuclear deterrent and Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers. The Defence Secretary revealed the name at Belfast shipyard Harland and Wolff, which built the Royal Navy's last HMS Belfast, in 1938.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I'm hugely proud that the second name announced of our eight cutting-edge new Type 26 frigates will be HMS Belfast. She and her sister ships will form the backbone of our Navy well into the 2060s, keeping us safe by protecting the country's nuclear deterrent and new aircraft carriers.

It's apt to name this ship at the famous site which built the very first HMS Belfast. Thanks to our ambitious new National

Shipbuilding Strategy, this shipyard once again has the chance to be involved in building a British warship thanks to the competition to build a new class of light frigates for our growing Royal Navy.

The Defence Secretary launched the [ambitious National Shipbuilding Strategy earlier in the month](#), and as part of that laid out plans for a first batch of another new class of frigates – the Type 31e.



A concept image of the new Type 26 frigate, one of which will be called HMS Belfast.

A competitive procurement process for those ships could see them shared between yards and assembled at a central hub. The warships will be built in the UK, with a price cap of no more than £250m, and will be designed to meet the needs of both the Royal Navy and the export market.

The Defence Secretary has personally committed to visiting all of the UK's major shipyards in the run-up to industry bringing forward its solutions for the Type 31e class, as he looks to grow the Royal Navy fleet for the first time since World War Two.

Just before the start of the Second World War, the original HMS Belfast was commissioned, having being built at Harland and Wolff shipyard. She went on to support the Battle of North Cape, the Normandy landings and the Korean War.

The original ship now belongs to Imperial War Museums and is permanently docked in London. Before the new HMS Belfast commissions, the original HMS

Belfast will be renamed 'HMS Belfast 1938', the year the ship was launched.



The original HMS Belfast, belonging to the Imperial War Museum, based on the Thames. the ship will now be renamed as HMS Belfast (1938).

Diane Lees, Director General, Imperial War Museums:

IWM is delighted that the name HMS Belfast will return again to the Royal Navy's front line as a major warship. We welcome the opportunity this will bring for our internationally significant museum to have a close affiliation with the new Belfast, enabling a powerful link between the Royal Navy's past and present. Before the new HMS Belfast commissions, IWM's ship's identity will evolve to HMS Belfast (1938), the year the ship was launched, in order to prevent any possibility of confusion.

The new HMS Belfast is set to enter service in the mid-2020s and, along with her fellow Type 26 frigates, will have a truly global reach, protecting the UK's strategic interests as well as the likes of the UK's nuclear submarines, and delivering high-end warfighting capability wherever it is needed.

Its flexible design will also enable these capabilities to be adapted to counter future threats, whilst the ships will also benefit from the latest advances in digital technology.

Part of the MOD's £178bn equipment plan, the three ships being built under the first contract will safeguard 4,000 jobs in Scotland and across the UK

supply chain until 2035. The Defence Secretary cut steel on HMS Glasgow, the first Type 26, in July, whilst the other is yet to be named.



The Defence Secretary visited Harland & Wolff, near Belfast, one of the UK shipyards that could bid for the new Type 31e frigates.

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

The City class theme has been chosen for the Type 26 frigates in order to reaffirm the bond between the Nation and its Navy. We want to honour some of the great centres of industry and commerce in all parts of the United Kingdom, and few cities have such a rich maritime heritage as Belfast.

The previous HMS Belfast (1938) is one of the most famous ships of the twentieth century, serving at the Battle of North Cape, in the Arctic campaign and at the Normandy landings, and later with the United Nations forces sent to Korea. It is wonderful that she survives today as a museum, but the Royal Navy believes that such a distinguished fighting name deserves to take its place once more in our operational fleet. A world leader in anti-submarine warfare, the new HMS Belfast will work with our allies in NATO and around the world to preserve the freedom and security that her predecessor fought so hard to secure.

The possible block building solution for the Type 31e reflects the way that

the UK's huge new aircraft carriers were built, and also the UK's new polar research ship, the RRS Sir David Attenborough. That ship's central assembly hub is Merseyside shipyard Cammell Laird, which the Defence Secretary paid a visit to on Tuesday. The company already provides the in-service support for a number of the Navy's Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships.

Before heading to Harland and Wolff today, the Defence Secretary also visited Thales' air defence facility in Belfast. The site produces the 'Starstreak' short-range missile for the British Army and is also producing a new lightweight, multirole missile for the Army's Wildcat helicopters.

Whilst the second to be named, HMS Belfast is Ship 3 in the Type 26 programme. Ship 1 is called HMS Glasgow and Ship 2 is yet to be named.

[News story: RAF Valley's future secure for next 25 years as restoration work is completed](#)

The station is primarily used for advanced fast jet training for pilots and, whilst the previous infrastructure was strong enough for the Hawk aircraft, it has been restored to support pilots training in the likes of Tornados and Typhoons.

A £20 million contract was awarded to refurbish the ageing runway and its link taxiways. The work undertaken will also provide a new section of airside perimeter road, new visual aids, aeronautical lighting and signage for the air station.

The restoration work will extend the life of the runway by a further 25 years, demonstrating the UK's commitment to Defence in Wales.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This famous runway has been an integral part of the careers of generations of fast-jet pilots who have seen action across the world and are currently leading RAF strikes against Daesh.

I'm delighted that this investment will see the runway play that vital role for at least another 25 years, training new pilots in the skills they need to help keep us safe when flying the next generation of aircraft.

The fighter pilots who graduate go on to fly Typhoon and F35 Lightning II

aircraft which secure the skies of the UK and overseas.

The station is also home to helicopter flying training where aircrew learn the skills required for mountains and maritime flying with the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. The Mountain Rescue Service which saves lives across the UK is also based at RAF Valley.



The Defence Secretary met with personnel from RAF Valley this afternoon in North Wales.

All new UK fighter pilots pass through RAF Valley before they reach their frontline Squadron. In the last 3 months, 4 graduates have gone on to fly the world's most sophisticated fighter, the F-35 Lightning II, out in the United States.

The UK currently has 11 F-35B jets being flown in the US and 120 UK personnel being trained there. By the end of the year the UK will have 14 of the jets, with initial flight trials from the brand new Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carrier's deck planned for next year.

As the US' only Tier 1 partner, UK industry will provide around 15% of every F-35 jet which is built, and later today, the Defence Secretary will also visit the Defence Electronics & Components Agency (DECA), based at MOD Sealand, in North East Wales.

The facility was chosen as the global repair hub providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for F-35 avionic and aircraft components. Over the lifetime of the programme, components for hundreds of European-based F-35 aircraft will be serviced and maintained at the site.

The work will generate hundreds of millions of pounds of revenue for the UK defence industry, with the potential to unlock more than £2bn of future F-35 support revenue over the lifetime of the programme, sustaining thousands of high tech jobs and skills.

A newly-refurbished hangar at RAF Valley will also house three brand-new Jupiter helicopters which will be used to train pilots from all three Services, delivered as part of the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS).

These state-of-the-art Airbus helicopters, which closely recreate the cockpits and controls of front-line aircraft, are due to begin flying from RAF Valley later this year. The refurbishment of the hangar is part of an infrastructure improvement programme being delivered through the UKMFTS at both RAF Valley and RAF Shawbury worth a total of around £80 million.

Station Commander Royal Air Force Valley, Group Captain Nick Tucker-Lowe, said:

The visit of the Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today has highlighted RAF Valley's vital contribution to UK defence as the home of fighter pilot training.

Our team of military personnel, Civil Servants and industry partners take great pride in their role of training the next generation of fighter pilots for the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy. With our refurbished main runway, we are well prepared for the future.

UK Government Minister for Wales Guto Bebb said:

This investment in the runway is a huge boost to RAF Valley. It further demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to defence in Wales and the North Wales economy.

It is great to see Wales playing such an important role in the advancement of our defence services and with an extra 25 years now on the lifespan of this site, the future of RAF Valley and the local economy remains strong.

[News story: New ship to support the](#)

aircraft carriers arrives in UK

The second of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's new Tide-class support ships, RFA Tiderace, has arrived in Cornwall to begin a programme of customisation that will support 300 UK jobs.

Like her sister ship RFA Tidespring, which arrived in April this year, the 39,000-tonne RFA Tiderace can carry up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,400 cubic metres of fresh water in support of Royal Navy operations all over the world.

She has been designed to support the new Queen Elizabeth Class Aircraft Carriers, the first of which, HMS Queen Elizabeth, arrived in Portsmouth last month.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

This year of the Royal Navy goes from strength to strength as we welcome yet another new ship into the UK's growing fleet. It's great to see RFA Tiderace join her sister ship RFA Tidespring in the UK today, and I would like to thank the Falmouth team for their important work.



The second MARS tanker, RFA Tiderace, arrived in Falmouth this morning.

The customisation work in Falmouth, which will install armour, self-defence weaponry and communications systems, will help to support 300 local jobs. The UK work content in the Tide Class programme as a whole, which is being delivered well within budget by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), is worth around £150 million, sustaining further jobs at 27 UK-based companies.

RFA Tiderace is expected to undergo around four months of customisation before beginning a round of final sea trials before entering service next year. Meanwhile, RFA Tidespring is expected to finish final sea trials in the coming weeks and enter service before the end of this year.

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

Like her sister ship, RFA Tiderace will perform a crucial role in supporting the Royal Navy's global mission in defence of the UK and her interests.

I am proud to welcome Tiderace and her crew to Falmouth as part of the continued successful delivery of the Tide Class programme and look forward to welcoming the final two ships in the class over the coming months.

The Tide Class has a flight deck able to accommodate the large Chinook helicopter and offer significant improvements over previous RFA tankers such as double hulls and greater environmental protection measures.

Tiderace's arrival comes at a time when the Royal Navy fleet is growing, as encouraged by the [National Shipbuilding Strategy announced earlier this month](#). Setting out to expand the fleet by the 2030s and generate regional prosperity for shipyards across the UK, the Strategy is ambitious in its approach.

Press release: UK AT HEART OF INTERNATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE EXERCISE

US-led Exercise Formidable Shield has today begun in waters off the West Coast of Scotland.

A Royal Navy Type 45 Destroyer and two Type 23 Frigates will, alongside ships and crews from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States, join one of the most sophisticated and complex air and missile exercises ever undertaken in the UK.

Lasting a month, allies will work together to detect, track and shoot down both anti-ship and ballistic missile targets. 13 ships will fire on 12 live missile targets over four days, improving how allies work together in an air and missile defence environment.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

North Korean tests have shown the danger of rogue states developing longer range missiles. By hosting this cutting-edge exercise in anti-missile defence with allied navies Britain is at the forefront of developing a more effective response to this growing threat.

Rear Admiral Paul Bennett, Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Capability) said:

Formidable Shield is a terrific example of the leading role that the UK plays in development of maritime air and missile defence – protecting our people and working with our allies.

Ahead of the exercise, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and QinetiQ recently invested £60 million into the Hebrides Range to modernise the equipment and facilities. A further £16.8 million will be invested in two new BAE Systems tracking radars, to be installed on St Kilda, and upgrade two existing radars at MOD Hebrides.

The new radars are part of the £95m Air Range Modernisation programme agreed in December 2016 with the UK MOD.