

Press release: UK maritime forces complete French naval deployment

Two Royal Navy Merlin Mk3 helicopters were also embarked as UK and French maritime personnel trained together across the Asia Pacific region.

Minister for the Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

From fighting Daesh in the Middle East to jointly operating in Estonia as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, our enduring defence partnership with France is stronger than ever as we work together to tackle global threats.

This deployment has demonstrated the ability of our world class Royal Navy and Royal Marines to operate alongside our French allies and international partners as Britain delivers on its commitment to global maritime security.

The annual French deployment Jeanne d'Arc included port calls at Singapore, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Japan, Guam, Australia and Egypt as well as various multinational amphibious exercises.

Throughout the deployment, UK personnel worked closely with international partners to strengthen defence cooperation in the region. British troops participated in the first ever four-part maritime exercise involving France, Japan, the UK and US, where as part of a week-long practice assault, the two Merlins moved 330 troops from the four nations to and from the island of Tinian.

UK troops also met with the Vietnam People's Navy in Ho Chi Minh City to compare national maritime operating procedures and exchange experiences, and during a port call to Egypt, British forces took part in a cross-decking exercise alongside French and Egyptian Armed Forces.

Through the 2010 Lancaster House Treaties, the UK and France are continuing to strengthen an ever closer bilateral defence and security relationship. As well as fighting side by side as allies in NATO and the Global Coalition, the two nations are working together as partners in defence equipment and capability programmes such as the [UK-France Future Cruise/Anti-Ship Weapon programme](#).

News story: Defence Minister announces £3M to be saved as part of a new deal to supply the Royal Navy

Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), part of the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), has signed an innovative contract which will supply the Royal Navy with more than 10,000 different types of consumable items – covering everything from fittings and fixtures to pistons and pumps.

Having [already announced](#) that the dredging of three million metres of mud at Portsmouth harbour has now given the new Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier a clear route into its new home, the Defence Minister said that the award, given to Babcock International Group, will keep the Royal Navy's current and future warships, including the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, supplied with items essential for day-to-day maintenance and operations.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The route is clear for the Navy's largest and most powerful ship to dock at its home in Portsmouth, but even ships as impressive as our magnificent new aircraft carriers need nuts and bolts to keep them running smoothly. This new contract will provide all the supplies our ships and personnel require to be effective on operations.

This also brings the previous contract under one deal, delivering improved efficiencies and highlighting how we are being smarter about support. These efficiencies are ensuring that our £178 million Defence equipment plan is going towards the state-of-the-art kit our Armed Forces deserve.

The new contract is estimated to be worth around £107 million over the next seven years, during which time it is expected to deliver around a million individual items to all current and future Royal Navy vessels. All items being supplied – including electrical cable, straps, small valves, bearings, gaskets, pipes, pistons, pumps, motors and electrical components – are 'consumable' in that they are impractical or impossible to repair.



Two of the contracts announced support the Sampson Multi-Function Radar, operational on board the RN's Type 45 Destroyers. Crown Copyright

The signature secures seven jobs at Babcock International with additional jobs secured at 11 companies across the wider UK supply chain. The contract is also set to generate savings of around £3 million for the taxpayer by bringing together eight older contracts under a new overarching management arrangement. That comes as part of the MOD's commitment to deliver efficiencies and reinvest those savings back into the cutting edge equipment our service men and women need now and in the future.

Companies within the UK supply chain include Liberty Dynamics and Andersalso, based in the West Midlands, Eriks and Edmundson, based in the South West and SPX Clyde Union in Scotland.

Chief of Materiel (Ships) for DE&S, Sir Simon Bollom, said:

The Royal Navy relies on expert, sustained support through partnerships across UK Defence in order to protect the nation's interests at home and abroad.

This contract is not only excellent news for the Royal Navy and our partners across the Defence industry, but also for the taxpayer due to substantial negotiated savings and incentivised contract performance.

Whilst speaking in Portsmouth, the Defence Minister also announced that BAE Systems have been awarded contracts worth £72m to support cutting-edge radar systems on board the Royal Navy's ships.

Two of the contracts support the Sampson Multi-Function Radar. Operational on board the Type 45 Destroyers, the radar provides surveillance and dedicated tracking in a single system, enabling the ship to defend itself and other ships in its company from attack.

A five-year contract covering technical support was amongst the announcements. That involves on-board maintenance, spares and repairs management at BAE Systems' Cowes site on the Isle of Wight, supporting 255 jobs. The radar will also have its processing hardware updated as part of the announcements.

BAE Systems has also won the Commander T101 radar support extension project for the next four years. Deployable by land, sea and air, Commander Type 101 radars are in service across UK territories at home and abroad.

[Press release: UK Armed Forces star in global show](#)

Returning for a 68th season, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a thrilling display of music, dance, and military entertainment from around the world, rooted firmly in Scottish culture and history. It will take place on the Esplanade of Edinburgh Castle from 4-26 August 2017.

In recognition of this being the Year of the Royal Navy, and Scotland's unique role in building UK warships, the finale will see the Esplanade transformed into an aircraft carrier flight deck, featuring a Lynx Mk III maritime aircraft, and a CGI projection onto the Castle walls of an aircraft taking off from the deck. As the audience arrives they will also walk under a life-sized model of the new F-35B fighter, with Royal Navy personnel providing a warm welcome too.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo represents all that is best in the UK's Armed Forces – talented, professional, and engaging internationally with our global allies.

This Tattoo helps showcase our Armed Forces and has raised over £10m through its Charitable Trust, and it contributes £77m a year to the Scottish economy.

Celebrating the theme 'Splash of Tartan', these Armed Forces musicians will make up a cast of 1,200 artists performing to a live audience of 220,000, and a global TV audience of more than 100 million.

Performers from 48 countries have taken part in the extravaganza with this year's top international acts including the United States Naval Forces Europe Band and the Japan Ground Self-Defence Force Central Band.

Royal Navy involvement

- The Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines (Portsmouth, Scotland, and Commando Training Centre)
- There will be a 24 strong Royal Navy Guard of Honour welcoming the audience every night
- The 90 strong Royal Navy and Royal Marines Tattoo Support Group have taken the lead in making the arrangements for the involvement of the UK Armed Forces this year
- Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset will berth in Leith for the last week of the Tattoo and host a number of capability demonstrations

Army involvement

- The Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- The Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion Scots Guards
- The Pipes and Drums of The Royal Highland Fusiliers, 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland
- A contingent from 154 Regiment Royal Logistics Corps (Army Reserves)
- Pipes and Drum of the combined Scottish Universities Officer Training Corps

RAF involvement

- The Royal Air Force Regiment Band
- Royal Air Force Queen's Colour Squadron
- Flypasts by RAF aircraft (weather dependent)

Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo facts:

- The Tattoo was first conceived in 1949 with the 1st performance in 1950
- 25 performances over August to a live audience of 8,800 each evening – 220,000 across the season
- HRH The Princess Royal, Princess Anne, is the Patron of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo
- It has a VIP capacity of 148 each performance (3,700 including nightly salute takers)
- Now into its 68th season, it has sold out for 18 years consecutively
- Over 50 countries have taken part
- The Show has been seen live by more than 14m people over the years
- Filmed by the BBC in 'High Definition' for 59 and 90 minute programmes
- Peak TV viewing figures of 5.3m in the UK and 100 – 300m globally
- One of 11 Edinburgh Festivals delivering £280m to the City of Edinburgh and £313m to the national economy

[News story: Shoes to seamines – 20,000 items recovered preparing for carriers' new home](#)

More than 20,000 items, ranging from shoes to sea mines, have been found during the dredging of the approach to the Harbour, many dating back several centuries.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) awarded a contract to Boskalis Westminster to make room for the 65,000-tonne HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier and her sister ship Prince of Wales two years ago.



20,000 items have been found in Portsmouth harbour, including 36 anchors.

Since then, specialist dredging vessels have been at work, removing 3,200,000 cubic metres of sediment – the equivalent to 12,800 Olympic swimming pools.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

Upgrading the future home of HMS Queen Elizabeth is another completed step in the carrier's journey to becoming the nation's

flagship, ready to operate around the world and help keep us safe in a world of intensifying threats.

The work to prepare for our naval future has unearthed objects from our naval past which are part of Portsmouth's proud maritime history. More than £100 million has been invested in Portsmouth's naval base to ensure that it is ready for the state of the art Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers.

The wealth of artefacts uncovered, include eight cannons, an aircraft engine, 36 anchors and a human skull which was passed to the local police.

There was an arsenal of old ordnance too, ranging from bullets and cannonballs to a British torpedo. A German sea mine and five large bombs were found, before being made safe by the Royal Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.



Among some of the artefacts unearthed were eight cannons.

Elsewhere the dredging uncovered bottles, plates, ceramics and shoes which probably belonged to sailors. They have been passed to the project's archaeologists at Wessex Archaeology for study.

Portsmouth now awaits the upcoming arrival of the HMS Queen Elizabeth. Find out more about the [nation's new flagship](#).

Philip Wise, Principal Project Manager for DIO, said:

We're delighted with the successful completion of the dredging work. It marks the conclusion of DIO's £100m infrastructure project to ready Portsmouth for the forthcoming arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth, of which the dredge was only part. We look forward to welcoming HMS Queen Elizabeth to her new homeport.

Capt Iain Greenlees, Head of Infrastructure at Her Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth, said:

The dredging was the culmination of twelve years work monitoring the seabed environment around the harbour and unearthed a huge array of items, some of which may be historically significant, and underlines again Portsmouth's long maritime history.

I am grateful for the patience of all harbour users and those who live and work around the waterfront during this challenging project.

Completion of the dredge is the final critical step in a wide range of activities preparing for HMS Queen Elizabeth's arrival later this year and the base is now ready to support the nation's future flagship.

Gerrit Jan van den Bosch, Project Manager for Boskalis Westminster, said:

The Boskalis Westminster team is proud of the challenging dredging project that has been safely completed prior to the arrival of the HMS Queen Elizabeth. With good cooperation and involvement from the Navy, DIO and other parties we look back on a successful project.

Although the main dredging work has now completed there will be an on-going need to remove new material that naturally settles in the channel over time. This will be achieved by maintenance dredging on a yearly basis.

News story: 100 years on, Defence Secretary and members of the Armed Forces attend Passchendaele commemorations

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon joined The Prince of Wales, The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, The King and Queen of Belgians, Prime Minister Theresa May, and other dignitaries at a commemoration at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Tyne Cot Cemetery.

The Tyne Cot cemetery is situated on the former battlefields of the Ypres Salient, within sight of the town of Ypres and holds 12,000 graves with 35,000 names on the memorial wall. The service reflected the story and experiences of those who fought in the Third Battle of Ypres and was watched by descendants and members of the public.

The battle began 100 years ago today on 31 July 1917 and was a major engagement in the First World War, claiming the lives of around 275,000 British and Commonwealth military personnel and around 200,000 German lives.

The Chief of the Defence Staff, Joint Force Commander and heads of the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force also attended the ceremony. A Guard of Honour was provided by the 1st Battalion Irish Guards. Musical support was provided by the Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines Plymouth, the Band of the Welsh Guards and the Central Band of the RAF.



The Band of the Welsh Guards and the Central Band of the RAF at the Tyne Cot Cemetery

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

These services provide us with the time to reflect on the sacrifice not just of the thousands of British and Commonwealth troops who gave their lives, but of the men on all sides who did not return home. This was a battle which touched communities across Europe and it is a privilege to be here in Belgium to stand as friends with the representatives of all the countries who took part in the Battle – friends who continue to be strong allies.

Earlier in the day Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon also met with Belgian Defence Minister Vandeput to discuss security and defence cooperation between the two countries. Their meeting highlighted the enduring ties between the UK and Belgium, particularly the UK's commitment to NATO.

The Defence Secretary later toured the Esterline factory in Kortrijk, which specialises in display screens for use in military aircraft.

In the afternoon, a National Service of Remembrance took place at the Welsh Memorial in Flanders organised by the Welsh Government's First World War Programming Committee. This Service of Remembrance commemorated 100-years since the 38th (Welsh) Division attacked the German held frontline on the Pilckem Ridge at the beginning of the Third Battle of Ypres.