

News story: International Development Secretary visits Catterick Garrison

Priti Patel visited members of 32 Engineer Regiment today, as they prepare to deploy in support of the UN Peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.

The deployment of 162 British personnel from Catterick Garrison in Yorkshire will increase the number of UK military in South Sudan to approximately 400.

These troops are primarily split between Malakal and Bentiu in the north of South Sudan, where they are providing engineering and medical support at UN camps and helping to develop logistical routes to improve the delivery of humanitarian aid, a vital task in a country where movement by road is virtually impossible due to a lack of infrastructure.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

The brave members of our Armed Forces are a credit to our country and ahead of their deployment to the UN peacekeeping mission to save lives in South Sudan, I'm delighted to have met men and women from 32 Engineer Regiment.

The situation on the ground in South Sudan is catastrophic and a man-made disaster. Conflict and instability has led to grotesque levels of violence and persecution, and Britain is leading the way in providing life-saving and emergency food, water and medicine to those in need.

The engineering and medical expertise of our deployed British soldiers will make a real difference, bringing skills that the UN desperately needs to protect innocent people in this terrible conflict.

Britain can stand tall in the world, with the dedication of our Armed Forces helping to save lives, rebuild South Sudan and bringing stability and peace to the people who live there.



Priti Patel learns more about the UK's support to the UN Peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. Picture: Matt Lower/DFID

In South Sudan, 6 million people face the daily reality of going without enough food and water and nearly 4 million people have been forced from their homes because of ruthless violence and widespread sexual assault.

The International Development Secretary visited South Sudan in April to urge parties to the conflict stop the spiral of violence, end the atrocious human rights abuses and allow urgently needed aid to reach those in need. This followed intense fighting between Government and opposition forces and restrictions on access for humanitarian organisations trying to deliver lifesaving supplies.

The UK is the second largest bilateral provider of lifesaving humanitarian assistance in South Sudan and is the leading provider of health and education services. This year the UK will provide 500,000 people with food, safe drinking water for more than 300,000 people, and with other donors is providing nutritional supplements to over 100,000 children and pregnant women.

Notes to Editors

- The UK was one of the first major donors to respond to the UN's appeal to South Sudan – pledging less than 24 hours after the appeal was launched – and we are leading the way by making sure millions of people in South Sudan get urgently needed food, water and medicine, as well as longer term support to provide much-needed education.

- We are providing £100 million of humanitarian assistance to South Sudan this year. This will provide food for over 500,000 people, safe drinking water for over 300,000 people, emergency health services for over 100,000 people and support for 650,000 people to build their livelihoods.
 - The UK has also matched £10 million of the public donations to the DEC's East Africa appeal which has raised £60 million since its launch.
 - Over half a million new refugees arrived in Uganda in 2016, 88% of them from South Sudan – more than crossed the Mediterranean into Europe. Around 2,200 arrive each day. There are now nearly 1 million South Sudanese Refugees in Uganda.
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News story: Joint Communique on International Ministerial (5-Eyes) Conference on Veterans' Issues

On 19 and 20 July 2017, Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood welcomed delegations from the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to the International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' Issues at the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Mr Ellwood, The Honourable David Shulkin, US Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, The Honourable Kent Hehr, Canadian Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, The Honourable Dan Tehan, Australian Minister for Veterans' Affairs and Defence Personnel, Ms Bernadine Mackenzie, the New Zealand Head of Veterans' Affairs, and delegates from all nations came together under a shared commitment to their defence and veteran communities to discuss veterans' mental health and transition from military to civilian life.

Delegates were honoured to be hosted at the Royal Hospital Chelsea and to be shown the grounds by the Chelsea Pensioners. Over the course of the two-day conference, the five countries identified many overlapping themes and mutual challenges, including for some nations addressing and treating post-traumatic disorder, rates of suicide and homelessness among veterans, barriers to mental health care, alternative therapies, veteran-centric approaches to the provision of services, and early intervention.

Delegates had an opportunity to hear from leading expert, Professor Sir Simon Wessely on veterans mental health challenges and were taken by the extent of the research and the key facts and findings. Delegates also visited the veterans charity organization 'Stoll' and had an opportunity to speak with United Kingdom veterans about their experiences transitioning to civilian life.

Delegates recognised that to face these challenges and progress reforms it was essential that evidence based research and data informed policy decisions and implementation. Ministers heard from clinical experts how myths about veterans' mental health were damaging efforts to encourage veterans to seek help as early as possible. They agreed that efforts must continue on improving the provision of information to the veterans community and to transform the delivery of support and services to the defence and veteran communities in all five nations.

Delegates agreed to establish a network between the five nations to share and undertake research and emerging data, confirming their continuing commitment to collaborate on strategies that recognise, support, and care for the defence and veteran communities across the five countries. The initial research that will be undertaken will look at risk assessments and prevention strategies for veterans at risk of suicide.

Ministers thanked the United Kingdom for hosting the meeting and agreed to meet again in Australia in October 2018 to continue the work began at this meeting and to share the outcomes of research undertaken.

[News story: Defence Secretary reveals name of first Type 26 as manufacture begins](#)

In front of the assembled BAE Systems workforce, Sir Michael Fallon officially began the manufacture of HMS Glasgow the first in a new generation of cutting edge frigates, delivering on the commitment to start production this summer on a programme that will sustain 1700 jobs in Scotland for two decades. Together the three ships being built under the first contract will safeguard 4000 jobs in Scotland and across the wider UK supply chain until 2035.

The Defence Secretary met some of the 260 apprentices that will be supported by the work on the Frigate on the Clyde by the autumn.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Today marks a historic milestone for the Royal Navy, Scottish shipbuilding and UK Defence more widely. HMS Glasgow and the other seven frigates in this new class will protect our powerful new aircraft carriers and nuclear deterrent, helping keep Britain safe across the world.

The Type 26 is a cutting-edge warship that will maintain our naval

power with a truly global reach. Designed for a service life of at least 25 years, the Type 26 frigates will form a backbone of the future Royal Navy surface fleet well into the future.

The Type 26 is an advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare frigate that will provide essential protection to our nuclear deterrent and aircraft carriers, building on the pedigree of the Royal Navy's current Type 23 frigates.

Its flexible design will allow its weapon systems to be adapted throughout its lifespan to counter future threats. The Type 26 benefits from the latest advances in digital technologies, including 3D and virtual reality, which ensures that the ship's design is refined earlier in the process.

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

The Clyde was the birthplace of some of the greatest fighting ships the world has ever known, and so cutting steel there today for the future HMS Glasgow is symbolic of a Royal Navy on the rise once again.

As an island nation, we are utterly dependent on the sea for our security and prosperity, and the City-class names have been chosen for the Type 26 to provide an enduring link between the Royal Navy and our great centres of commerce and industry.

The name Glasgow brings with it a string of battle honours, stretching from the Arctic Circle to the South Atlantic. As one of the world's most capable anti-submarine frigates, the Type 26 will carry the Royal Navy's tradition of victory far into the future.

As a world-class ship, the Type 26 has strong export opportunities. BAE Systems and the MOD are exploring these, with interest from international customers including Australia.

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer for Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation said:

This is a very proud moment for all of those who have worked so hard to get the manufacture of the Type 26 underway.

With the first steel cut today in Scotland and further work spread out across the UK supply chain the Type 26 programme is truly a national endeavour harnessing all our skills

and knowledge to produce the best possible ships for the Royal Navy.

Earlier this month the Defence Secretary announced the signing of a [contract worth around £3.7 billion](#) to start building the Royal Navy's Type 26 frigates, securing the long term future of the Scottish shipbuilding industry. The contract is specifically structured to motivate both sides to deliver a successful outcome where both parties share in the pain and gain in the delivery of the programme. This will deliver better value for money for the UK taxpayer.

Statement to Parliament: Conflict, Stability and Security Fund 2016 to 2017 and settlement for 2017 to 2018: written ministerial statement

I wish to update the House on how the Government has been supporting our national security interests through conflict prevention, peace building, stabilisation, peacekeeping and conflict resolution using the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF).

Details of the programmes funded by the CSSF and its impact so far are in the first [Annual Report](#), a copy of which has been placed in the library of the House. The publication of this first report reflects the Government's commitment to transparency in the delivery of Official Development Assistance. We will be updating GOV.UK pages with more information on the CSSF and individual programmes.

The CSSF replaced the Conflict Pool in April 2015, as part of a new, more strategic approach to enhancing the delivery of our national security interests directed by the National Security Council (NSC).

As announced in the [2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review \(SDSR\)](#), CSSF funding has continued to increase and will be £1.162 billion in 2017 to 2018. The CSSF is now one of the world's largest mechanisms for addressing conflict and instability. Its programmes deliver against more than 40 cross government strategies set by the National Security Council (NSC). These help to secure the UK, promote peace and stability overseas and contribute directly to SDSR objectives.

Parliamentary accountability for taxpayers' money spent via the CSSF is provided primarily through the Joint Committee for the National Security Strategy (JCNSS). The JCNSS concluded its first inquiry into the CSSF in

February. We have responded to the inquiry report and are taking forward many of their recommendations. Further announcements on governance will be made in due course.

Meeting both our legal and policy gender commitments is central to the delivery of the CSSF. Last year the CSSF spent £214.5 million on programmes which addressed gender equality. For example the CSSF in the Democratic Republic of Congo supported the provision of free legal assistance to 269 victims of international war crimes, of which 179 were women, mostly victims of sexual violence.

In addition to supporting peace building activity, CSSF funding is strengthening the multilateral system, supporting the UN and other international organisations to develop more effective multilateral responses to instability. The CSSF funds our contributions (known as assessed costs) to the UN peacekeeping budget. We are the sixth biggest contributor, spending over £300 million in 2016 to 2017. In addition, we have been using CSSF funds to help reform the UN and UN peacekeeping, coordinating outreach to Member States to secure pledges of personnel for peace operations and to assist with the transition from pledges to deployments. In 2016 to 2017 the CSSF provided a further £15 million to fund the doubling of the UK's troop contribution to peacekeeping through 2 new deployments: 70 UK military personnel to support UNSOS in Somalia, which provides essential logistical support for the African Union Mission (AMISOM) that is combating the terrorist organisation Al Shabaab; and 370 UK military personnel to provide engineering and medical support to the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

To address some of the JCNSS recommendations for the CSSF a rapid review is being undertaken of Cross-Whitehall Fund governance and structures.

Conflict, Stability and Security Fund resources, financial year 2017 to 2018

CSSF	2017/18 (millions)
Peacekeeping & Multilateral	391.7
Regional/Country Strategies	606.3
Security & Defence	150
Delivery Support, including the Stabilisation Unit & National School of Government	14.5
Total	1162.5

Read the [CSSF Annual Report](#).

[News story: MOD launches Defence](#)

People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Tobias Ellwood, Minister for Defence People and Veterans, has today launched an innovative strategy to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces, their families, veterans, and Defence civilians.

While rates of mental disorder are slightly lower in the Armed Forces (3.2%) than in the general population (3.5%), the challenge of improving the mental health of the MOD's entire workforce is an important one. The Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2022, launched by Mr Ellwood at an international conference with counterparts from the United States, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, builds on five years of research and aims to build a coordinated approach to prevent, detect, and treat mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as introduce measures to promote the importance of mental health.

The new Strategy will include plans to:

- Encompass all Defence People – serving Armed Forces members (Regulars and Reserves), military families, veterans, and MOD civil servants;
- Introduce standardised mental health and wellbeing education and training for all those working in Defence;
- Invest in research on resilience training to ensure that individuals are as mentally fit as they can be to prevent depression and anxiety and monitoring of groups who are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, such as combat troops and medical personnel in support of them;
- Improve access to clinical assessment (such as through digital delivery) and prioritisation for treatment;
- Develop partnerships with key service charities in order to continue anti-stigma campaigning initiatives and share best practice;
- Improve communication to the workforce about what help is on offer.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

A fitter force is a more effective force and keeping our people healthy helps keep this country safe. This new strategy recognises the importance of mental health, alongside physical injuries and

will improve the prevention, detection, and treatment of mental health issues which is vital to the wellbeing of our military.

I'm also delighted to host Ministers from some of our key partner nations, to consult and share best practice on veterans' issues.

Yesterday, ahead of the International Ministerial Conference on Veterans' issues held at Royal Chelsea Hospital, the Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Mr Ellwood attended a reception at No.10 Downing Street. This was held to bring the community that supports veterans together and was attended by several Chelsea Pensioners. It also provided an opportunity to provide an update on plans for the Invictus Games, which this year will take place in Toronto in September.

Tomorrow, Ministers will discuss how best to improve the transition into civilian life for veterans, including hearing how Governments may be able to use new technology to bring about new opportunities to make the transition smoother; the importance of partnering with the health and charity sector, and the Armed Forces Covenant.

Mr Ellwood and his international counterparts agreed that the sharing of ideas has an important part to play in building a greater common understanding of veterans' issues and that there must be an ongoing commitment to ensure support services continue to meet the needs of our serving personnel, their families and veterans.