

News story: Europe's largest military exercise gets under way in UK

More than 11,600 military personnel from 17 nations will take part in Exercise Joint Warrior for two weeks this spring in one of the largest exercises of its kind in Europe, operating out of Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Clyde, Scotland.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Joint Warrior prepares our troops in the best way to meet the intensifying threats our country faces by providing a major opportunity to exercise with our allies.

Our Armed Forces are the face of global Britain, and training side by side with troops from 16 other nations means we are stronger and more capable when it comes to keeping our countries safe and protecting our way of life.

The bi-annual exercise is running from the 21st April to 4th May, and incorporates all three UK services as well as forces from 16 other nations including Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US.

Linked to the NATO exercise programme and open to Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Partner Nations, Joint Warrior also hosts non-NATO partners such as Australia, Finland and Sweden. This year the training scenarios involve multiple sovereign nations disputing resources and territories; counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling activity; information warfare; and evacuation operations.

The exercise will provide NATO allies and partner nations the opportunity to train together across air, land, sea and cyber domains, practicing "high-end" war-fighting between near-peer adversaries.

Captain Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff, Captain Paul Pitcher RN, said:

This exercise gives the UK participants a chance to train with our allies and partners, honing our skills and developing our tactics. It is hugely important in making sure that we can fuse all elements of our capabilities, enhancing our ability to conduct joint operations now and in the future.

It will culminate on Salisbury Plain Training Area on the 3rd May in which JEF forces, including troops from the UK Parachute Regiment, the Danish

Jutland Dragoon Regiment, the Lithuanian “Iron Wolf” Brigade and the Latvian Mechanised Infantry Brigade, will conduct urban combat operations with air support provided by Apaches, Chinooks, Wildcats and Tornados.

Press release: Royal Navy Ship HMS Albion to visit Indonesia 22-25 April 2018

The British Royal Navy ship HMS Albion will be docked at Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta for a three day visit, aimed to increase defence engagement with the Indonesian Armed Forces. During the visit, members of the ship crew will conduct bilateral talks with the Indonesian Navy, UK defence industry and visit a local orphanage.

British Ambassador Moazzam Malik, said:

We have a growing defence relationship with Indonesia that supports our joint security interests and promotes prosperity. The deployment of HMS Albion in Indonesia provides an opportunity to support our partners in delivering maritime security in the region. Like Indonesia, the UK has a strong maritime history. We share a naval trading heritage. We will both remain maritime nations. It is in both of our interests to enjoy secure, accessible and sustainable maritime domains.

Captain Tim Neild, HMS Albion’s Commanding Officer, said:

HMS Albion is a very capable warship, manned by a crew of highly trained and hugely professional sailors and Royal Marines and we are greatly looking forward to visiting Jakarta to help strengthen the bonds between the UK and Indonesia. The presence of the Royal Navy’s flagship in Asia-Pacific demonstrates that the UK is ready to work with our friends and allies to promote peace, security and prosperity throughout this vital region.

Notes to Editors

1. HMS Albion is a Landing Platform Dock – a type of amphibious operations vessel with a small force of embarked Royal Marines.
2. HMS Albion will be visiting Jakarta at the same time as the French Navy ship FS LHD Dixmude and Frigate Surcouf
3. Media are invited to attend the welcome ceremony and tour of HMS Albion

at Tanjung Priok port on Sunday, 22 April at 1100hrs (JICT 2, Dermaga 203 Kaluku)

4. Crew of HMS Albion will also be visiting Nuruz Zahroh orphanage for social activities on Sunday, 22 April at 1330hrs. Logistics for media will be provided.
5. For further information please contact Embassy's press officer Raras Tulandaru at raras.tulandaru@fco.gov.uk

News story: Defence Secretary launches £132m Scots sub-hunting aircraft home

The site will be the future home to the country's nine-strong, new P-8A Poseidon MPA fleet. The aircraft's key role will be to protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers, whilst it can also deploy missiles capable of destroying enemy submarines beneath the sea.

The aircraft will work alongside eight cutting-edge new Type 26 warfare frigates – which also have their roots firmly in Scotland, where they are being built at BAE Systems' yard in Govan. Later today the Defence Secretary will visit the shipyard to view the first completed unit of the new anti-submarine warship, HMS Glasgow, in the shipbuilding hall where it is being connected to the second unit and will be joined by others as the ship takes shape.

The MOD is investing £3 billion over the next decade in its Maritime Patrol Aircraft capability, and last year confirmed £3.7bn to start building the first three of eight Royal Navy Type 26 frigates on the Clyde as it continues to boost its capabilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

These submarine hunters will play a vital role in keeping the UK safe from the increasing threats and aggression we face in the skies, on the sea and below the waves.

This massive investment demonstrates the huge contribution Scotland makes to protecting Britain and how defence generates prosperity and opportunity.

Moray is benefitting from 200 local construction jobs during this building phase, with the number of personnel employed at RAF Lossiemouth growing by 470 to 2,200 people when this is complete.

The news comes at a time when the Defence Secretary has warned that Russian

submarine activity has increased 'ten-fold' in the North Atlantic sea.

Together the aircraft and ships will protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers. In addition to boosting the UK's surveillance capabilities, they are both designed to conduct anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and to conduct intelligence gathering.

The new Lossiemouth facility will be completed in 2020, to coincide with initial operating capability of the Poseidon aircraft being available in the UK. Built by Elgin-based Robertson Northern, it will comprise a tactical operations centre, an operational conversion unit, squadron accommodation, training and simulation facilities and a three-bay aircraft hangar.

At the peak of construction, the project will support 200 local jobs. When the fleet is fully operational, some 470 additional personnel will be based at RAF Lossiemouth, taking the total number of people employed there to 2,200. Further roles are also expected when the training and support services are established at the new facility.

In addition to that, the Type 26 frigate programme will sustain 1,700 BAE Systems jobs in Scotland, safeguarding a total of 4,000 jobs across the wider UK supply chain until 2035. The next generation highly capable and versatile multi-mission warship designed to support anti-submarine warfare, air defence and general purpose operations anywhere on the world.

[Press release: Uk and India commit to closer military ties](#)

Both nations benefit from vibrant digital economies and will design, create and manufacture technologies that will help protect citizens and businesses against malicious cyber attacks.

The agreement will enable collaboration on internet governance, promoting international cyber stability, tackling online crime and developing cyber security sectors.

Minister for Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

Defence and security are at the centre of our friendship with India. By working together to combat terrorism, tackle cyber threats, and build regional security, we are keeping both our countries safe.

Discussions have also been held on how the Royal Navy can work more closely

with their Indian counterparts to ensure the safety and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region – tackling piracy and drug trafficking, as well as protecting freedom of navigation rights. The UK already plays an active role in maritime security in this region through counter terrorism, counter piracy and maritime security operations because a free and open Indo-Pacific area is in the interests of the UK, India and the international community.

In addition, work is underway on building a long-term approach to the UK and India's defence industry-to-industry relations, allowing our Armed Forces to share technologies and learn skills from each other.

These new military links are among several ways the UK and India are working closer together across several departments, announced during an inward visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The armies of the UK and India already enjoy a close bond and work together on Exercise Ajeya Warrior every two years, sharing battle tactics and pool together ideas.

News story: Seven british Army soldiers killed during World War 1 are honoured as they are laid to rest

Captain Henry John Innes Walker, a New Zealand national serving with the british army, has finally been laid to rest alongside 6 unknown soldiers after they were killed during World War 1. Known to his family as Jack, Capt Walker enlisted into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment as did 1 of the unknown soldiers. The 5 remaining were buried as unknown soldiers of unknown regiments, all at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission New Irish Farm Cemetery in Ieper, Belgium.



The Royal Regiment Fusiliers take Captain Walker to his final resting place, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, part of Defence Business Services, was held on Wednesday 18 April 2018 and was conducted by the Reverend Stuart Richards CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It's a great honour to be here today to lay to rest these 7 brave men who paid the ultimate price in the service of King and country. Although saddened that the 6 will remain unknown, I am delighted that we managed to return Captain Walker's name to him and especially thrilled that his great nephews have travelled so far to be with us today.

After war was declared in 1914, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment left for the front and Capt Walker saw active service on the Belgian frontier as part of the 10th Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division. Capt Walker was aged 25 when he was killed on 25 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres, which resulted in his regiment losing nearly 500 men. It is likely that all 7 died during the Second Battle of Ypres (April-May 1915).



Padre Stuart Richards delivers the service for Captain Walker and the six unknown soldiers, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Reverend Stuart Richards CF said:

It is a privilege to be part of this on-going act of national remembrance, to preserve and dedicate anew these memorials for future generations. Captain Walker travelled from the other side of the world to serve his country, and was never to see his home again. Today, a century on, his family have made that same long journey in his honour, and to remember those he led and died with.

During a planned archaeological dig on the western side of the village of St Julien in April 2016, human remains and artefacts dating from World War 1 were discovered. Capt Walker and the 6 unknown soldiers were found amongst a total of 38 casualties from various nationalities.



Royal Warwickshire cap amongst poppy wreath, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Capt Walker was found with a coin holder, binocular components and leather casing bearing the initials 'HJIW', plus a Royal Warwickshire Regiment cap badge and shoulder title.

Family members who paid their respects to Capt Walker included his great nephews, Allan and Alistair Innes-Walker, who travelled from New Zealand and Australia respectively. Also present was Greg Andrews, New Zealand Ambassador to Belgium and France, and Colonel James Phillips, the Defence Attaché from the British Embassy in The Hague. Current members of the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers paid their own tribute by providing the bearer party.

Allan Innes-Walker, great nephew of Capt Walker said:

According to his men, Jack's last words were 'Come on lads' as he raised his revolver and led his company towards German lines and heavy fire. His discovery and burial are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for my children to connect to a family member and a devastating history – an unexpected and inspiring legacy.



Great nephew Alistair Innes-Walker receives the Union Flag from Captain Alex Edmund, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Alistair Innes-Walker, great nephew of Capt Walker said:

My son is named after Great Uncle Jack. At school we sat beneath his memorial stained glass window – an ever-present reminder of a sad but proud history. To have the chance to pay our respects and meet those involved from the MOD Casualty Centre will mean so much to Jack's now very extended family.



Great Great Nephew Jack Innes-Walker lays a wreath, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Michael Innes-Walker, the nephew of Capt Walker was unable to make the journey. Michael said:

From my earliest years my father told me stories of Uncle Jack – the schoolboy scholar and sportsman. He always wanted to be a soldier and joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, got posted to India and became a close friend of ‘Monty’ (later General Montgomery) before transferring to France. My family never knew what happened to him other than he was killed in action, and now we will be honouring him as he so justly deserves.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

Captain Walker was far from his New Zealand home, when he was killed in action in April 1915. He was a remarkable man, sent to serve with the British Army on behalf of his country, an outstanding athlete and a decorated officer. Today we have been able to lay him and his comrades to rest at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s New Irish Farm Cemetery, alongside the men they fought and died with. We remember his sacrifice and that of all those who served and will care for their graves and their memory with dedication, forever.

Colonel James Phillips, British Defence Attaché said:

It is a real honour representing the British Embassy at the burial of Captain Walker and six unknown soldiers. These were men who fought in such horrific conditions that it was impossible to identify them. They will never be forgotten – today has shown that. The end of the first World War may have been 100 years ago this year, but our memory of these men will live on. Their fight was instrumental for our freedom. It is important that these soldiers have been given a final resting place, with the full honours they deserve. They have made the ultimate sacrifice for us.



Headstone for Captain Henry 'Jack' Walker, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

One new headstone bearing Capt Walker's name and six inscribed with 'Known unto God' have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.