

[News story: The Sun Military Awards are back to salute the Armed Forces](#)

Tonight, the milestone ceremony was attended by celebrities, entertainers and politicians who recognised the excellence of the Armed Forces.

The special ceremony recognised the hard work and bravery of UK servicemen and women. It was hosted by television presenter Lorraine Kelly at the historic Banqueting House in Whitehall, London.

She was joined by celebrities from the worlds of sport, entertainment and politics.

Earlier in the day, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson hosted the nominees at a special reception at 10 Downing Street.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This is our chance to honour all those who keep us safe. They truly are the best of British.

This year's nominees received awards such as Best Reservist – honouring individuals who have gone above and beyond from any branch, at home or abroad. Also featured was the Overcoming Adversity award which recognises an individual who has rose above substantial obstacles in their life and continued their exceptional service despite it.

During tonight's awards, the RAF Reaper Force won the Hero Overseas Unit award for its commitment to defeating Daesh and saving countless lives. Alongside this, members of SPEAR 17 were awarded the Inspiring Others award for becoming the first all British military team in history to complete a full unsupported traverse of Antarctica.

SPEAR 17, said:

We are blown away. It's so nice to have the recognition ourselves and everybody else for all the dedication and hard work we all do. Thank you to everybody.

Prime Minister Theresa May presented the Award for Special Recognition to Operation Ruman where service personnel helped to provide relief to the British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean following the devastation of Hurricane Irma.

Also awarded was Lieutenant Jared Bambridge who displayed exceptional gallantry in June when a terror attack struck in London, by treating 11

casualties and saving multiple lives off duty.

Lieutenant Jared Bambridge said:

I don't consider what I have done to be the exception or anymore than what anyone else would have done with the training that I have, so I am honoured to accept it on behalf of everybody.

In the military we work hard and we do a lot of thankless tasks, so at the end of the day to have such an event as this put on is a real honour for those thanked few who receive awards or just get nominated for the evening.

Corporal Phillip Keogh received the Best Reservist award after he volunteered to go into the aftermath of the terror atrocity at Manchester Arena. He used his skills as a paramedic to deliver life-saving care and his dedication and bravery saved multiple lives.

Corporal Philip Keogh said:

I was obviously questioning my ability whether I would be able to achieve what we thankfully did achieve on that night. And definitely the training you receive both as a reservist and then as a civilian paramedic, that kicked in. I've never been prouder to be from Manchester

The recognition this award is bringing is a little bit uncomfortable for me. I was one of nearly 300 staff deployed that day from the ambulance service. For me this belongs to everybody. And its not just the people in my uniform as a paramedic but there were civilian guys there, police, British Transport Police, and Greater Manchester Police. They all chipped in.

Details of The Sun Military Awards 2017 winners:

Hero at Home – Individual

Lieutenant Jared Bambridge, 1st Battalion the Yorkshire Regiment, Army

Best Reservist

Corporal Phillip Keogh, 355 Medical Evacuation Unit, Army

Hero at Home – Unit

Southern Diving Unit 2, Royal Navy

Overcoming Adversity

Former Senior Aircraftman Luke Wigman and former Captain Ibi Ali, RAF Regiment, RAF, and The Yorkshire Regiment, Army

Hero Overseas – Individual

Leading Seaman Sally Hughes, HMS Dragon, Royal Navy

Hero Overseas – Unit

UK Reaper Squadron, RAF

Inspiring Others

SPEAR 17, Army

Innovation Award

Warrant Officer Paul Moonan, Royal Navy

Judges' Award for Special Recognition

Operation Ruman

Support to the Armed Forces

Veterans with Dogs

[News story: Defence Secretary congratulates NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I congratulate Jens Stoltenberg on the extension of his term as NATO Secretary General, he is a great friend and ally of the UK. NATO is the cornerstone of our defence and the UK a leading member of the alliance, one of just a handful of nations to meet the commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence.

Next year, our current Chief of the Defence Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, will take over as Chairman of the Military Committee – the most senior military officer in the

alliance. I look forward to continue working closely with the Secretary General to ensure that NATO is in the best possible shape to tackle the threats facing us all.

[News story: 2017 post-season air display symposium](#)

On the 8 and 9 of November 2017, the Military Aviation Authority (MAA) in collaboration with the Civilian Aviation Authority (CAA) and the British Air Display Association (BADA) delivered the 2017 Post-Season Air Display Symposium at the Tech School, Shrivenham, to 250 people from the Military and Civilian Air Display Community.

The symposium was mainly workshop based, focusing on lessons identified from the previous season and facilitated by experienced subject matter experts from the display community rather than by the regulators and BADA. These included previous and current RAF Aerobatic Team (Red Arrows) display pilots, event organisers and Flying Display Directors from the UK's largest events. This method of delivery proved to be hugely popular with the attendees and will be the model used for the forthcoming Air Display Symposia.



Front of the Technology School, Shrivenham

The dates for the Pre-Season Air Display Symposium were agreed for 14/15 February 2018 and will be delivered at the Tech School and the Eisenhower Lecture theatre, Centre of Air Safety Training, Shrivenham. The date for the next Flying Display Director course was also announced for the 27/28 March 2018 and will be held at the Eisenhower Lecture theatre.

[News story: Defence Secretary in Doha as multi-billion pound jet contract with Qatar is signed](#)

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and his Qatari counterpart, Khalid bin Mohammed al Attiyah, oversaw the signing of the deal for 24 Typhoons, building on the Statement of Intent signed in September.

In addition, the agreement signed today by the Qatar and British Governments also includes a clear intention to proceed with the purchase of Hawk aircraft.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It is a great pleasure to sign our biggest export deal for the Typhoon in a decade. These formidable jets will boost the Qatari military's mission to tackle the challenges we both share in the Middle East, supporting stability in the region and delivering security at home.

As we proudly fly the flag for our world-leading aerospace sector all over the globe this news is a massive vote of confidence, supporting thousands of British jobs and injecting billions into our economy.

The aircraft will be assembled in the UK by BAE Systems, supporting thousands of jobs, especially at the company's Warton site in Lancashire where it will secure work on the production line into the next decade. The biggest export deal for the Typhoon project in a decade, the purchase is valued at around £6 billion.

The deal also includes an agreement with MBDA for Brimstone and Meteor missiles and the highly-accurate Raytheon's Paveway IV UK-manufactured weapon for the jets. The Defence Secretary also agreed a package of training and co-operation between the Air Forces which will see them working together more

regularly, including Qatari pilots and ground-crew training in the UK.

The UK and Qatar share a close and longstanding defence relationship, with a joint-exercise between the Royal Air Force and the Emir of Qatar's Air Force just last week seeing Typhoon jets fly over the Arabian Peninsula. The two countries share mutual interests of countering violent extremism, and ensuring stability in the region, and this purchase will deepen those ties by helping to prevent terrorism from spreading and protecting our prosperity and security at home.

Qatar is the ninth country to purchase the Typhoon, with this year seeing the first delivered to Oman. The Ministry of Defence is also leading the offer to replace Belgium's F-16s with the jets and continues to discuss the prospect of a second batch of sales to Saudi Arabia, as it continues to bang the drum for Britain's world-leading aerospace industry around the world.

[News story: HRH The Prince of Wales awards MOD Apprentice of the Year 2017](#)

His Royal Highness, a longstanding advocate of apprenticeships and getting more young people in to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subject areas, presented the awards at a ceremony which took place in MOD Main Building. His Royal Highness also announced the winner of this year's MOD Apprentice of the Year in the Memorial Courtyard.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

We are committed to investing in and celebrating the next generation of engineers, to grow our future workforce and capability in STEM far into the future.

I am delighted to see the impact our engineering apprentices have on our equipment programmes. Over 800 apprentices worked on the QE Class Carriers, and should feel a great sense of achievement today as HMS Queen Elizabeth is commissioned into Her Majesty's fleet.

Defence is the largest employer of apprentices in the UK, with 9,000 engineering apprenticeships, and a total of 20,000 apprenticeships across a range of defence disciplines. Apprenticeships are a crucial way to develop the skills required by employers and to provide people, from all backgrounds, with the opportunity to obtain skills that will contribute to their achievement in the workplace.

Defence Minister Tobias Ellwood said:

Today's winners should be very proud of their achievements, and the impressive skills they have developed through their apprenticeships.

The MOD is the largest employer of apprentices in the UK, supporting the Government's commitment to achieve three million apprenticeship starts by 2020 through our range of civilian and Armed Forces schemes.

In recognition of HRH's attendance at the MOD Engineering Apprentice Awards, the inaugural presentation of 'His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales's Award for Services to Defence Engineering' was made. This was awarded to Chief Technician Rob Bates, who joined the RAF in 1995 as a Mechanical Technician Apprentice and was recognised for representing engineering within Defence by exemplary professional performance and selfless commitment to promotion of engineering as a career.

Chief Technician Rob Bates, winner of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales Award for Services to Defence Engineering Award, said:

Today has been the stand out moment of my life so far. I enjoy my work and I am humbled to be recognised for it.

Defence apprenticeships give young people the opportunity to work at the heart of some of the most important projects in the UK. Over 800 apprentices have been involved in the QE Class Carrier project, delivering HMS Queen Elizabeth, which was commissioned in Portsmouth today, and HMS Prince of Wales.

DE&S Apprentice Champion Air Marshall Julian Young said:

We in DE&S are proud of our long tradition of training the next generation of MOD Apprentices through our innovative schemes.

This strong pipeline of highly-skilled talent, who are among the brightest and the best, are central to the delivery of essential equipment and support programmes for the UK's Armed Forces. I offer my sincerest congratulations to all today's winners and runners up on their sterling achievements.

Each MOD engineering apprenticeship lasts three years and, after qualifying, most apprentices go on to employment across defence.

The MOD is also offering a range of apprenticeship schemes internally to existing staff in order to invest in our workforce, by providing staff with the right training opportunities to help them develop and increase their skills, gain valuable experience and achieve a recognised qualification.

The families and guests, representatives from senior management of participating business units, representatives from competition sponsors, awarding bodies, educational establishments, and local government officials attended the ceremony alongside the apprentices.

You can find out more about apprenticeships with defence here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-opportunities-in-the-ministry-of-defence>

List of winners

The full list of winners and their awards are as follows:

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales Award for Services to Defence Engineering

- Winner: Chief Technician Rob Bates

Apprentice of the Year 2017

- Winner: Matt Schofield

The Tom Nevard Memorial Competition

Phase 1 – Individual Design and Manufacturing

- Winner: Sarah Hughes (DE&S Devonport)
- Runner-up: Thomas Baker (DSTL)

Phase 2 – Individual Design and Manufacturing

- Winner: Thomas Diaper-Fox (DSTL)
- Runner-up: Chloe Garland (DE&S Abbey Wood)

Team Design and Manufacturing Event

- Winners: James Wiltshire (Phase 3, DE&S Abbey Wood), David Thomson (Phase 3, DM Beith), Will Robinson (Phase 2, DSTL), Kieran Stainer (Phase 2, DE&S Abbey Wood), Chloe Stephens (Phase 1, DE&S Abbey Wood).
- Joint runner-up: Ashley Conlon (Phase 3, DE&S Abbey Wood), Zachary Hall (Phase 3, DSTL), Ashley Biginton (Phase 2, DM Gosport), Thomas Hill (Phase 2, DE&S Abbey Wood), Chris Nowell-Smith (Phase 1, DE&S Devonport).
- Joint Runner-up: Ewan Walker (Phase 3, DSTL), Joseph Samways (Phase 3, DM Gosport), Stacey Bishop (Phase 2, DE&S Devonport), Hewlett (Phase 2, DE&S Abbey Wood), Oliver Nicholas (Phase 1, DE&S Abbey Wood).

Sir Henry Royce Memorial Foundation Medal

- Winner: Luke Worrall (DM Gosport)

QinetiQ Awards

First Year Mechanical Manufacturing Engineering Apprentice of the Year

- Winner: Oliver Kemp (DSTL)

First Year Electrical Engineering Apprentice of the Year

- Winner: George Sweeney (DSTL)

First Year Electrical Engineering Apprentice of the Year

- Winner: Cameron Fitze (DSTL)

IET Local Network Award for Student Excellence

- Winner: Zachary Hall (DSTL, Southern Region)

East Kilbride Group Training Association – Chairman's Award 2017

- Winner: Sam Rennix (DM Beith)

Glasgow and Clyde Campus Apprentice of the Year 2017

- Winner: Russel Vincent (DM Beith)

DIO Sustainability Recycling Challenge

- Winner: Declan Heard (Phase 1, DE&S Devonport), Lawrence Parker (Phase 1, DE&S Devonport), Sarah Hughes (Phase 1, DE&S Devonport), Chris Nowell-Smith (Phase 1, DE&S Devonport)

Babcock Land Division Excellence Awards Apprentice of the Year

- Winner: Joe Sayce (Babcock DSG Donnington)
- Winner: Sarah Malkin (Babcock DSG Donnington)