

News story: Armed Forces Muslim Forum Celebrates Eid with the Muslim Community

Defence Minister, Earl Howe, Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee, and Commander Home Command, Lieutenant General Bashall, hosted a dinner centred on the theme of being driven and united by common values and purpose.

Earl Howe gave the keynote speech, in which he highlighted how the Armed Forces and Muslim community often experience stereotyping and misconceptions.

Defence Minister Earl Howe said:

It is wonderful to be celebrating the end of Ramadan together, and in doing so celebrating the important role the Muslim community plays in our Armed Forces.

There is far more that unites us than divides us, and by working together we are building a diverse force which is therefore a stronger force, enhancing our cultural and linguistic skills for our operations at home and abroad.

In his speech, Earl Howe praised the Muslim community for their generosity and resilience in the face of recent events, including the devastating Grenfell Tower and the Finsbury Park attack. The Minister then turned to the "unknown" humanitarian efforts of our Armed forces, where personnel show the same values at home and on operations overseas.

Brigadier Peter Cameron, from the MOD's Operation Directorate, gave a presentation on the UK Armed Forces' recent humanitarian operations before Mr Aamer Naeem, CEO of UK based Muslim charity, Penny Appeal, highlighted their humanitarian activities overseas and endorsed the Armed Forces for the values they share.

Sergeant Ahmed Dhalai described his experience of helping to rescue migrants off the coast of North Africa, where he was able to use his linguistic skills and cultural background to carry out his tasks compassionately, showing the importance of building a diverse force.

Colonel Steve Davies spoke about his role in efforts to foster peace and security in South Sudan, and Major Naveed Muhammad spoke about his duties in the fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone.

News story: Defence Minister announces helicopter work will stay in the UK

Options had been considered to relocate the fabrication work for future AW159 helicopters orders – the export version of the Wildcat helicopters already in service with the British Army and Royal Navy – overseas.

After careful joint analysis with the Ministry of Defence, Leonardo Helicopters in Yeovil has confirmed that it will carry out all future fabrication for the AW159 helicopter in the UK, with much of this work being undertaken at its Somerset facility – an agreement that will sustain 40 highly skilled jobs across the UK-based supply chain.

Wildcat is a highly versatile aircraft, capable of a wide a range of tasks over land and sea. The Royal Navy's maritime Wildcat forms the core of the UK's Frigate and Destroyer aviation capability and performs tasks including Anti-Surface and Submarine Warfare, force protection, transport and the vital information, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance (ISTAR) role. Similarly, the Army variant performs reconnaissance, command and control, force protection, and transport roles in a wide variety of environments.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

I am delighted that a solution for UK-based fabrication for the AW159 helicopter has been identified between the MOD and Leonardo Helicopters. An agreement that secures Yeovil as the home of AW159 and Wildcat production and maintenance in the UK.

This work has not only helped sustain 40 of highly skilled jobs within the UK, but will act as a positive boost for the company and, through improved cost-effectiveness, their export customers. I would also like to pay tribute to Marcus Fysh MP, who has worked tirelessly to secure this great result.

Over a decade ago the MOD bought, as part of the 2006 Wildcat (then Future Lynx) demonstration and manufacturing contract, a number of specialised jigs and tooling for the fabrication of the AW159 Wildcat Helicopters. These essential parts are used to ensure airframe alignment, mould, patterns and manufacturing tools and gauges. These will now be used by Leonardo to carry out the fabrication work in the UK.

The MOD's continuing commitment to the Wildcat was also highlighted earlier this year, when a [£271 million five year deal](#) was signed to deliver a range of support and training services for the UK's entire fleet of 62 AW159 Wildcat helicopters, securing 500 jobs at Leonardo's facilities in Yeovil and Royal Naval Air Station Yeovilton.

[News story: Chief of the Defence Staff strengthens bonds with India](#)

Under the umbrella of the 2015 Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP), Sir Stuart met senior Indian military figures, including the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), currently Admiral Sunil Lanba; the Chief of the Army Staff, General Bipin Rawat; and the General Officer Commanding in Chief Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Praveen Bakshi. Sir Stuart also met with the Indian Defence minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, and the National Security Advisor, Shri Ajit Doval.

Sir Stuart's exchanges centred on the continued growing defence relationship through the recently established Capability Partnerships, the joint threats of terrorism and extremism faced globally, upcoming exercises and UN Peacekeeping among other topics.

UK Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

My interactions with the civilian and political officials have served to underpin our already strong bonds. Our shared values provide a platform on which, as partners, we can contribute to regional and global security and jointly develop cutting edge capabilities for our armed forces. Whether beating terror, securing peace and stability through better peacekeeping or sharing operational knowledge and technology, as defence partners, we are world beaters.

The Chief of the Defence Staff visited Delhi and Kolkata over four days. In addition to meetings with senior military and civilian officials, he laid a wreath at India Gate in commemoration of the 74,000 Indians who served and died in the First World War.



Chief of Defence Staff Sir Stuart Peach presents a memento to Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM AVSM ADC, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC).
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Sir Stuart also interacted with students at the prestigious National Defence College, India's principal establishment for strategic learning for senior Indian and selected international Defence officers. His trip was completed by a visit to the Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd, the premier Warship building Company in India.

The UK's and India's Armed Forces continue to benefit from a close relationship and Sir Stuart's visit fortifies this. Both countries' Armed Forces are undergoing a transformation in some guise and the learning experiences from each other in areas like the joint aircraft carrier projects, to combatting terrorism, develops best practice between global partners.

[News story: Defence Secretary visits the nation's future Flagship](#)

The Defence Secretary landed by Merlin helicopter on the deck of the new aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, which is currently on sea trials off

the coast of Scotland. He met with members of the crew and thanked them for their contribution to UK defence.

While addressing the Ship's Company, Sir Michael announced the Britain's second aircraft carrier, HMS Prince of Wales, will be officially named at a ceremony in Rosyth on 8th September 2017.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our carrier programme is a clear demonstration of British power and commitment to our global standing. With two aircraft carriers we will have one available at all times, providing a world-class carrier strike capability. They offer a prodigious promise to future generations of our determination to continue fronting up to aggression for years to come.

The magnificent HMS Queen Elizabeth provides us with power on a scale we have never seen before. Protecting us for the next half a century, she will be a highly versatile and potent force, capable of both humanitarian and disaster relief and high-end war fighting.



The Defence Secretary landed by Merlin helicopter on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Four weeks ago today HMS Queen Elizabeth sailed for the first time from Rosyth, under the authority of the Aircraft Carrier Alliance, which is responsible for building and delivering the ship to the Royal Navy.

Celebrating a number of firsts as we bring the ship to life, she has now had her first helicopter landing, first passenger boat transfer and first port call in Invergordon. The Ship's Company, a crew of over 700 Royal Navy and 200 industry personnel, have settled in well to the routine of ship's life.

The initial period of sea trials, expected to last around six weeks, will test the fundamentals of the ship. The trials are monitoring speed, manoeuvrability, power and propulsion, as well as undertaking weapons trials and additional tests on her levels of readiness. [Last week the Defence Secretary announced the name of the first Type 26](#), HMS Glasgow, as part of the new City class frigates that will form the backbone of the Royal Navy until the 2060s.

HMS Queen Elizabeth is expected to enter Portsmouth to be handed over to the Royal Navy later this year.



The Defence Secretary landed by Merlin helicopter on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

[News story: World Class Innovators at the MOD](#)

Announced by the Defence Secretary in Oxford in February, the Panel will be

charged with driving forward the MOD's Innovation Initiative, which aims to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship, in pursuit of maintaining a military advantage in the future. Today's session introduced the panel to key aspects of the MOD's work: from operations and research to partnerships with business and support for jobs and the economy.

The panel members are:

- Former Chairman of McLaren Technology Group, Ron Dennis CBE (co-Chair)
- Former CEO of GlaxoSmithKline, Sir Andrew Witty (co-Chair)
- Army Air Corps officer and European Space Agency astronaut, Major Tim Peake CMG,
- Former Director of GCHQ, Robert Hannigan CMG, and
- Chief Executive of Innovate UK Dr Ruth McKernan CBE.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

Our £800 million Innovation Initiative will help our Armed Forces maintain their edge into the future, where ever-evolving technologies present new challenges and opportunities. That's why we have committed to spending 1.2% of our £36 billion growing defence budget on science and technology.

The Innovation Panel will help meet the complex challenges of the 21st Century, while delivering the high-wage, high-skills jobs of the future; and it's particularly fitting that we welcome astronaut Major Tim Peake as I announce the UK's leading role in cutting-edge satellite research.

The Panel will drive the MOD's partnerships with the UK's most-influential and forward-looking innovators and ensure the Department is driving the right change at the necessary pace to meet its goals for the future. This might involve advising on individual projects, promoting dialogue with industry, or reviewing the MOD's Innovation strategy.

Chairman of McLaren Technology Group, Ron Dennis said:

Innovation is at the heart of what keeps the UK safe, so I'm delighted to join my fellow Panel Members—all world-leaders in their fields—to get to grips with the challenge of guaranteeing our security through innovation in Defence's technology, culture, and research.

UK Space Innovation

UK space scientists at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) are at the forefront of this drive for innovation; and Mrs Baldwin announced today that the UK is leading an innovative experiment to tackle the growing problem of space junk. If this problem is not addressed, space junk threatens

to make space exploration and satellite launches impossible. It also poses a hazard to existing satellites, which make an important contribution to the UK's military capability.

To tackle this problem, Dstl is leading the UK element of the Daedalus experiment – part of the Space Situational Awareness Project in Dstl's Space Programme – which is exploring the effect on satellites of so-called Icarus 'de-orbit sails'. When deployed, the sail increases drag, causing a controlled descent into the Earth's atmosphere where the satellite will burn up.

Innovation driving UK prosperity

Defence Innovation drives UK prosperity. This is demonstrated in a new report by independent economics consultancy SQW, which shows how Ploughshare Innovations, Dstl's commercialisation arm, has directly contributed to UK growth through the creation of hundreds of jobs and multi-million pound export deals. They have:

- Created 585 jobs since 2005;
- Seen an increase of 70% in exports from £44 million to £75 million since 2015;
- Attracted £140 million worth of investment for spin-out companies.

Ploughshare's work has contributed to the development of advanced vehicle armour, electronic warfare software, and bio and chemical threat detection. This also supports UK supply chains: 85% of the suppliers for the vehicle armour are UK-based. Ploughshare's achievements include:

- Ebola Detection Kit – Ploughshare helped to market Dstl technology that provides a screening test for the Ebola virus, trialled in Sierra Leone to support those affected.
- Rapid Biothreat and Explosives Detection – Ploughshare licensed technology for a device to identify powders or liquids in just 15 minutes.
- Autonomous Boats – licensed to ASV Global, this technology provides an autonomous navigation system which allows Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs) to operate safely and remotely at high speed.