

News story: £40m investment in high-tech Typhoon Defence System

Updated: updated tag.

The contract, announced at today's Airpower Conference in London, has been awarded to UK-based company Leonardo and will upgrade the aircraft's Defensive Aids Sub System (DASS).

The DASS will upgrade the way the aircraft protects itself from a full range of threats, including enemy aircraft and missiles launched from the ground, enabling it to continue carrying out successful missions like protecting Britain's skies as part of Quick Reaction Alert and defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria as part of Op Shader.

Running over a two year period, the contract will sustain 65 high-value jobs at Leonardo's site in Luton, as well as 41 jobs at BAE Systems in Warton, Lancashire.

The contract comes as Royal Air Force pilots test advanced weapons and software upgrades for the Typhoon.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our Armed Forces face ever-evolving threats so we must invest in cutting-edge technology to ensure they can operate in hostile theatres. Our growing Defence budget and £178 billion equipment plan makes this possible; giving UK forces the defences they need to protect them, their kit and the people of Britain.

The RAF's Typhoon jet is already a state-of-the-art combat aircraft that protects the UK both at home and abroad, but today's announcement is a clear example of how it is being continually enhanced and upgraded so it remains as effective tomorrow as it is today.

The Typhoon, which provides a Quick Reaction Alert to help protect the UK, is expected to operate in a range of hostile environments with the Defensive Aids Sub System providing a set of self-defence sensors and countermeasures which detect and evaluate potential threats and automatically deploy the most effect countermeasure.

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

This contract is the product of close cooperation between MOD and

Industry and comes at an incredibly productive time for Typhoon which has also seen a new package of advanced weapons, software and avionics enhancements being tested by Royal Air Force pilots.

This upgrade will ensure Typhoon can identify and defeat known and emerging threats and shows that the MOD is committed to ensuring our Armed Forces have the best equipment and technology available to them.

The Defensive Aids Sub System includes Electronic Support Measures, missile warning, on-board electronic countermeasures and towed radar decoys.

The Typhoon force is currently operationally based at RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire, RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland and the Falkland Islands.

[Speech: Defence Secretary celebrates UK's partnerships at Airpower 2017](#)

It's great to be here again.

Let's begin with a few thank yous.

First to the Air Power Association and our sponsors today for putting together a marvellous event in a majestic venue.

Next, to our overseas guests. We've managed to squeeze the world into one room, with 45 or so air forces from five continents here today, and more than 40 further locations joining us virtually.

Those who can't be here will be disappointed to learn they are, for once, missing out on some unusually balmy British weather. However, I'm not just grateful for your attendance, but also for your co-operation week in week out providing over flight access, training with our squadrons, who operate side-by-side with us.

When I think of our joint efforts, I think particularly of our 70 nation Counter Daesh coalition. As I took office three years ago this week, these Islamist terrorists were barely an hour from the gates of Baghdad. Following your contribution in support of Iraqi Security Forces they've been defeated in Mosul – the last Iraqi city they've held.

When I think of joint effort too, I think of our NATO missions. Many in this room are part of those air policing patrols over the Baltic and now Black Sea skies.

And in the year of its 70th birthday, let me thank the United States Air

Force for being our enduring ally throughout that time. I'm delighted we have General David Goldfein, the US Air Force Chief of Staff here today. Because he will attest to the role the USAF and Marine Corps have played in training up our F-35 pilots and ground crews.

We have around 125 pilots and ground crew training in the United States on our 10 F35s and others in the United States, turning our Royal Air Force into a 5th generation enabled force that takes us that one step closer to the regeneration of our carrier strike capability. With HMS Queen Elizabeth now embarked on sea trials the day when those fighters will fly from her deck will soon be with us.

The story of our new fighters brings me neatly to another thank you: to industry.

Last year the UK became the European repair hub for F-35 avionic and aircraft components. It's a huge endorsement of the Team UK approach, involving a pioneering collaboration between two companies and our own Defence Electronics and Components Agency. And that bid proved so compelling that the UK was chosen not just as the European but as also the global support provider. Beyond F-35, we know that our pilots couldn't fly without seamless synchronisation with industry partners arming and maintaining their aircraft.

I've one final thank you if I may. To our Royal Air Force – many of whom are with us at their home bases and deployed on location across the globe. You're currently involved in 13 missions across four continents in more than 22 countries.

Besides striking more than 750 Daesh targets in Mosul, you are providing much valued ISR to our Coalition partners in southern Syria, you're helping to lead NATO in Eastern Europe, making friends and promoting British influence and industrial brilliance through our Typhoons and Red Arrows on Eastern Venture last year. And while you've been doing all that, our Quick Reaction Alert crews are tirelessly guarding the home front 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to secure our skies.

99 years on from the formation of the RAF, you are delivering air and space power, epitomising professional excellence and taking that extraordinary relationship between human and machine to new heights.

PARTNERSHIPS

Now, these partnerships between people and planes, between industry and the RAF, between the RAF and our great overseas allies, have been the mainstay of air power for almost a century.

But, as this the title of this conference's suggests, '21st century partnerships', our team approach must change to endure. To understand why and how consider again those three key air power partnerships.

1. PEOPLE AND AEROPLANES

First, planes and people. Our machines are undergoing a radical revolution. We're been using our rising defence budget to spend £178bn Stirling on upgrading our kit and our future air fleet is now beginning to emerge.

It will include eyes in the sky like Protector: capable of circling at 50,000ft feet for 40 hours, more than doubling the capability of our relentless Reapers.

It will include fifth generation strike fighters like F-35 and two new squadrons of Typhoons.

And I can announce today we have signed a £40m contract over the next two years to upgrade their Defensive Aids Sub System, which already includes missile warning, on-board electronic countermeasures and decoys, but will provide even stronger protection against evolving air-to-air and surface-to-air threats.

In the coming weeks and months you can expect to find some of our next generation equipment on display at RIAT, this week, and DSEI in September.

A reminder that these are also sources of prosperity we can export to allies. All these disparate devices are linked by their capacity to Hoover up information. But as we soak up more and more intelligence, we must get better and better at getting to grips with all this big data.

Increasingly, the secret lies in automation: not removing people from the equation, but helping humans solve the problem.

Recently, we launched a £3 million pound competition for companies to develop machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence to crunch the data and create a comprehensive picture of the virtual battlefield, freeing up our people to make better decisions.

Already, 30 firms have been allocated the money they've got six months left to deliver before the next phase. And I for one, can't wait to see what they come up with. Yet, as we embrace this new tech we must also start to attract a new type of high flier into the air service.

The new RAF strategy is rightly focused precisely on these people challenges and has already put some of the sharpest minds in the RAF onto that task. The emerging picture looks set to challenge cherished preconceived ideas raising such questions as whether it's time to wean ourselves off our attachment to hierarchy.

In the future, we'll need surely to pick people based on a wider range of skills: people as attuned to apps as aeroplanes, switched on cyber warriors who don't fit the traditional mould.

What will make our life harder in seeking and retaining these people is the fact that our competitors in the jobs market will come from multinational tech companies like Google who spend on infrastructure what we spend on

defence.

But there are things we can do to make our life easier: widening our recruitment pool, making the most of the talents of all our people whatever their colour, religion or gender.

Last year I lifted the ban on women serving in close combat units in the British military. Since then the Royal Armoured Corps has opened its ranks to women. The Royal Marines will follow on next year.

Today I can announce the RAF regiment—the ground fighting force of the Royal Air Force – is also adapting to the modern age—a year ahead of schedule—by offering roles to women from this September.

2. INDUSTRY AND AIR FORCE

As we reconfigure the relationship between the RAF and our personnel we also need to reset that vital relationship between defence and industry to keep ahead of the curve.

We've already heard about how the RAF's Rapid Capability Office is partnering with Leonardo to develop next generation decoys to defeat air-to-air and surface to air missiles: an arrangement based on mutually aligned incentives, where both sides put in equal funding and gain an equitable share of the profits, so the RAF can then invest again in new capability.

Yet, this same Office is not just looking for the next big idea but for simple, smarter ways to deliver more from what we already have. Take Weapon Stockpile management critical for sustaining fight in flight. The Rapid Capability Office is working closely with our Defence Equipment and Support organisation to calculate and understand the shelf life of weapons, potentially saving defence millions, whilst ensuring our personnel have access to the most up-to-date capabilities to take the fight to the enemy.

That kind of RAF efficiency needs to become the rule not the exception. So we're now re-activating the famous Battle of Britain 601 Squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, tapping into the talents of leaders from industry, academia and research to advise and shape and inspire our organisation.

To inspire industry to develop blue-skies disruptive capability and introduce a younger generation to subjects like science, engineering and maths, so integral to the future of air power. That will mean reminding young people of the stories of our great inventors and imagineers.

We have had no shortage of brilliant brains. From jet engine inventor Frank Whittle 80 years ago, to Michael Faraday, whose statue you passed as you walked in this morning, and who 170 years ago was the first to report the effects of quantum size particles, contributing to the birth of nano-science, and is now being used to devise kit like self-healing aircraft.

These are stories that remind us that a job in air power is a chance to truly change the world.

3. RAF AND THE WORLD

The final relationship that must change fundamentally in the 21st century.

The partnership between our RAF and our international friends and allies who are so welcome here today. We're stronger when we stand together.

Today there's never been a greater need to unite, since we're facing a raft of 21st century threats from Russian aggression in Ukraine and further afield to the nuclear menace of a belligerent North Korea. From the impact of mass migration on the shores of our continent to the wave of cyber attackers we've seen recently.

These threats—unprecedented in their complexity, in their concurrence, and their diversity and multiplicity—demand a new response.

I know that partnership comes as second nature, not just to the RAF, but to all the airmen and women who are here in this room.

Yet, in the past partnership almost happened by accident. Today, as our 2015 SDSR and the new RAF strategy conclude, it has to happen by design. Across the globe, you'll find us strengthening our commitment to co-operation. When it came to the purchase of the P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft there was another opportunity to join forces with others.

So, a fortnight ago, I signed a trilateral statement of intent with Norway and the US, creating guiding principles for a trilateral P-8A coalition, whilst laying down a framework for further cooperation in readiness, enhanced defence capability and interoperability.

And while I'm mentioning our new P8 Squadrons, I can today reveal their first commanding officer will be Wing Commander James Hanson. They will be based in RAF Lossiemouth in Morayshire and their names will be 120 Squadron—recalling the RAF's highest scoring anti-submarine unit in the Second World War, fittingly for a Squadron that will scour the seas their motto is "endurance"; and 201 Squadron, named after one of the RAF's oldest formations.

201's old motto "here and everywhere" neatly sums up the approach of our Joint Expeditionary Force which we've just extended to nine-nations, with Sweden and Finland joining last month. This too will provide us with greater possibilities for partnership: from responding very quickly to humanitarian tasks, to rescuing our citizens from crisis hotspots, and conducting more minor military missions.

We're not just strengthening bi-lateral ties with the US and Norway, but with our close French partners. Six years ago, when the Lancaster House treaties promised ever closer cooperation some were sceptical as to what that might mean.

Yet today our aircrews are flying in each others' aircraft against the Daesh, our defence companies are producing world-leading missiles, and we are supporting French operations, by providing air transport to assist French counter-terrorism operations in Africa.

This agreement made at Amiens last year expires at the end of this month. But the need does not. So, as we look forward to the next UK-French Summit this autumn, I have agreed to continue providing this air transport support for at least the next six months.

The point is our nations are key allies. Together we are the backbone for European security in an era of evolving threats and instability, originating from both southern and eastern flanks of Europe.

As we look to life beyond the political framework of the EU, with the largest navy in Europe, an Armed Forces whose professionalism is second to none, you will find Britain stepping up and reaching out to old friends and new allies alike, with our RAF, our greatest ambassadors, leading the way.

CONCLUSION

In the past 99 years great airpower partnerships changed the nature of warfare. And as the 21st century threats increase, as our 21st century air fleets emerge, let's now seize the chance to forge even stronger 21st century partnerships: augmenting our air forces, inspiring our people, overwhelming our adversaries, and helping our nations soar to even greater heights.

[News story: Defence Secretary announces new Maritime Patrol Aircraft squadrons](#)

Nine new P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft will be operated by number 120 Squadron and number 201 Squadron from RAF Lossiemouth in Moray.

120 Squadron was the RAF's highest scoring anti-submarine unit in the Second World War with 14 kills. 201 Squadron can trace its origins back to the formation of No 1 Squadron, Royal Naval Air Service in 1914. Wing Commander James Hanson will oversee the formation of 120 Squadron from April 2018. 201 Squadron will form in 2021.

The aircraft's key role will be to help protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers.

The UK Government is investing £3 billion over the next decade in its Maritime Patrol Aircraft capability.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our nine new Poseidon aircraft are part of our plan to monitor and

deal with increased threats to our country. They can operate at long range without refuelling and have the endurance to carry out high and low-level airborne maritime and overland surveillance for extended periods, helping keep us safe. The P-8A aircraft will allow us to work more closely with our allies, improve our surveillance coverage and will provide value for taxpayers' money.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

Today is an important milestone in the P-8A Poseidon programme which will bring to the Royal Air Force an unrivalled maritime patrol capability. The advanced state-of-the-art sensors aboard the P-8A will provide global protection to UK, NATO and our Allies' submarines and warships, and enhance and complement the UK's standing search and rescue responsibilities.

It is also a great pleasure to welcome back 120 and 201 Squadrons. Both have long and distinguished records serving in the maritime role and together they will help forge the next generation Royal Air Force.

Poseidon will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities and is designed to conduct anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering. They can carry torpedoes and anti-shipping missiles.

As a leading members of NATO, the UK Ministry of Defence has already signed agreements with the US and Norwegian militaries to cooperate closely on operating their P-8A aircraft across the North Atlantic.

With the first aircraft due to arrive in the UK in 2020, the RAF has maintained its Maritime Patrol Aircraft skills by embedding aircrew within MPA squadrons of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Poseidon will bring wider economic benefits with an additional 400+ service personnel to be located at RAF Lossiemouth, where £400m is also being invested in new support infrastructure for the aircraft.

As the Poseidon P-8A is based on the Boeing 737, it will help support several hundred direct UK jobs, and create opportunities for UK firms to bid for training and support contracts.

[**News story: RAF opens close combat**](#)

role to women ahead of schedule

Updated: picture

Speaking at the annual RAF Air Power Conference in London, Sir Michael praised the opening up of close combat roles to women, ahead of schedule, as a defining moment in the RAF's history.

The opening of the RAF Regiment to women means that from September 2017, every trade and branch in the RAF will be open to all genders.

The RAF Regiment is the Air Force's ground fighting force, protecting RAF bases, aircraft and equipment at home and abroad.

Announcing the opening of the RAF Regiment to women, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

A diverse force is a more operationally effective force. So I'm delighted that the RAF Regiment will be open to recruitment to women from September. Individuals who are capable of meeting the standards for the regiment will be given the opportunity to serve, regardless of their gender. This is a defining moment for the RAF, as it becomes the first service to have every trade and branch open to both genders.

In July of last year the Prime Minister and Defence Secretary announced that all three services would open up recruitment to ground close combat roles to women.

The RAF Regiment was due to open its recruitment to women by the end of 2018, at the same time as the Infantry and Royal Marines. However the opportunity to invite women to recruit into the Regiment earlier than expected has become available due to a review of work practices which concluded that the Regiment was closer to the Royal Armoured Corps, which is already admitting women into their training ranks, in terms of risks.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier said:

The RAF is committed to providing equal opportunity to all, so it's fantastic to be able to open recruitment to the RAF Regiment to women ahead of schedule. We want the best and most talented individuals to join the Air Force, regardless of their gender, race, or background. A diverse force is a more effective force, and we need the best people to deliver the important work we do, be it defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, or protecting Britain's skies.

Stepping up to support Allies

Sir Michael Fallon also announced that the UK will continue to provide Air Transport support to French counter-terrorist operations in the Sahel for at least the next six months. Working together with the UK's firm ally of France in tackling extremism, the RAF has been providing C-17 air transport flights supporting the 3,500 French personnel deployed as part of the French pan-Sahel counter-terrorism initiative, Operation BARKHANE.

France is one the UK's most important European Ally on defence and security matters and both nations aim to uphold the security of Europe through sharing capabilities in the most efficient way.

Investing in equipment

Today's announcements follow yesterday's investment, announced by the Defence Secretary, of around £40 million in cutting-edge technology to improve the defence of the RAF's Typhoon fighter jets that will sustain over 100 highly skilled British jobs.

[News story: Ministry of Defence Police awarded a gold banding in the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark](#)

This is the UK's most comprehensive benchmark for workplace gender and race diversity where organisations are assessed on a range of key areas, including:

- career progression
- recruitment
- supplier diversity
- senior management and board representation of ethnic minorities and women

Business in the Community (BITC) said:

Congratulations to Ministry of Defence Police on being awarded gold for both gender and race diversity in the workplace in the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark.

They have demonstrated a strong commitment to creating inclusive workplaces where employees are valued and rewarded for their contribution to the organisation, regardless of gender or race.

I hope other employers will learn from their example and use it to drive real change within their own organisations.



Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark: Gender gold award. All rights reserved

The gold banding marks a significant leap in the force's progress as they were previously awarded a Bronze banding for their 2016 submission.

The Force's Gender Champion, Deputy Chief Constable Andy Adams is delighted with the result and said:

A gold banding recognises our achievements and commitment to diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. This benchmark helps us identify what we are doing well and where we need to improve.

Our workforce is the key to our success therefore it is critical we recruit and retain the best people. This accomplishment will support our efforts to further diversify the force and create an environment where all our staff can contribute to providing the best service.

The benchmark measures age, gender and race workplace diversity. It is a management tool to help organisations evaluate their performance, including peer comparisons, and inform evidence-based decision-making around workplace diversity.

BITC works with organisations to ensure that age, gender, race and wellbeing do not limit an employee's engagement and success in the workplace.