

News story: First ever memorial to African and Caribbean Service Personnel unveiled in Brixton.

Today (22nd June 2017) the first ever memorial to African and Caribbean servicemen and women was unveiled in a ceremony attended by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

Speaking ahead of the event at Windrush Square, Brixton, where a new permanent memorial was unveiled, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The UK is indebted to all those servicemen and women from Africa and the Caribbean who volunteered to serve with Britain during the First and Second World Wars. It is thanks to their bravery and sacrifice that we are able to enjoy our freedoms today. We should also congratulate those who have worked tirelessly to place this memorial in the heart of Brixton.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The brave men and women commemorated today came from all walks of life but were bound together by their immense courage and determination.

Serving thousands of miles from home, they fought and fell with British soldiers to defend the freedoms we enjoy today, despite the majority never having visited this country.

We owe them all a tremendous debt of gratitude for their sacrifice and for the substantial contributions so many veterans have made to enrich British life.

The Government has supported the monument by providing £80,000 worth of funding through the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Black Britons volunteered at recruitment centres to serve in the Army and Navy soon after Britain joined the First World War in August 1914. As the war pulled in volunteers from all four corners of the world, they were soon joined by volunteers from the Caribbean, many of whom paid for their own passage to fight for the "Mother Country". The West Indies not only contributed men to the war effort but people from the islands made significant donations despite significant economic hardship.

The British West Indies Regiment was enacted by Army Order in 1916, with the first battalion formed in Seaford, East Sussex. By the end of the war 11

battalions comprising over 15,000 soldiers – 66 % of whom came from Jamaica – had seen action, particularly in Palestine and Jordan. However, many men also fought in the European battlefields of France, Belgium and Italy, as well as in Egypt, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and East Africa. Altogether 2,500 were killed or wounded.

During the war servicemen from the unit received 81 medals for bravery, with 49 servicemen were mentioned in despatches.

55,000 men from Africa were recruited for military service and hundreds of thousands of others carried out vital roles, fundamental to sustaining the war effort as carriers or auxiliaries as part of the Labour Corps. They came from Nigeria, the Gambia, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Nyasaland (now Malawi), Kenya and the Gold Coast (now Ghana).

While African troops did not see active service on the battlefields of Europe, they did fight in the Middle East and on the African continent. It is estimated that 10,000 Africans were killed with 166 receiving awards for bravery.

Jak Beula, CEO of the Nubian Jak Trust said:

More than 2 million African and Caribbean Military Servicemen and Servicewomen's participated in WWI and WWII but have not been recognized for their contribution. The unveiling of this memorial is to correct this historical omission and to ensure young people of African and Caribbean descent are aware of the valuable input their forefathers had in the two world wars.

During the Second World War, forces from the British Commonwealth of Nations were active in all the major theatres of war. Some 16,000 men and women from the Caribbean left their families and homes to volunteer for the British Armed Forces.

Around 6,000 served with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force working as fighter pilots, technicians, air gunners and ground staff.

In addition thousands of West Indian seamen also served in the Merchant Navy, transporting cargo and people. This proved to be one of the most dangerous services during the Second World War with almost one third of all merchant seamen dying at sea.

West Indian women also served in Britain with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), with 80 choosing to serve in the WAAF while around 30 joined the ATS. 236 Caribbean volunteers were killed or reported missing during the Second World War, 265 were wounded. Caribbean air force personnel received 103 awards for bravery.

Paul Reid, Director of the Black Cultural Archives said:

The histories of World Wars often overlook the significant contributions made by African and Caribbean soldiers. However, today we can proudly mark the recognition of their bravery and sacrifice to the struggles of independence.

As the national heritage centre dedicated to the preservation of Black history, we will continue to tell the stories of their service and to ensure their contributions and the legacy of this historical narrative becomes part of a more inclusive British history, and remains accessible to all through our archive collection.

Notes to Editors

1. June 22 is Windrush Day which marks the anniversary of the arrival into Tilbury Docks, Essex of the MV Empire Windrush and the first wave of post-war immigration, 69 years ago.
2. The memorial was devised by the Nubian Jak Community Trust (NJCT). The Trust runs a commemorative plaque and sculpture scheme to highlight the historic contributions of Black and minority ethnic people in Britain and has led the three year campaign to honour servicemen and women from the First and Second World Wars.
3. The memorial comprises two obelisks in Scottish whinstone, resting on a 12 foot pyramid shaped plinth of Ancaster Limestone, weighing just over 5 tonnes.

[News story: New Director-General of Border Force appointed](#)

He will replace Sir Charles Montgomery, who will be moving on in September after a distinguished 44-year career in the Royal Navy and Civil Service.

Mr Lincoln, who is currently Director-General of the Home Office's Crime, Policing and Fire Group (CPFG), will take up his new role in the autumn.

He will take overall responsibility for Border Force, a law enforcement command within the Home Office which secures the UK border by carrying out immigration and customs controls for people and goods entering the UK.

Mr Lincoln joined the Home Office in 2014 as national security director and

then acting Director-General in the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) before joining CPMG.

Permanent Secretary Philip Rutnam and Second Permanent Secretary Patsy Wilkinson said:

Paul has done a tremendous job in leading CPMG over the past year, overseeing and driving its mission to keep people safe, cut crime, protect the vulnerable and reform police, fire and rescue services.

We would like to thank Paul for his leadership in this area and look forward to working with him as director-general for Border Force.

We would also like to thank Sir Charles for his dedicated years of service in the Home Office and, before that, the Ministry of Defence. Sir Charles has played a vital role in leading Border Force through a period of significant transformation whilst ensuring that the UK borders remain secure.

Commenting on his appointment, Paul Lincoln said:

I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead Border Force at such an important time. I look forward to working with colleagues across the organisation who strive to secure our border and promote national prosperity.

It has been a privilege to have been the Director-General of CPMG, working with colleagues and partners to make the country a safer place.

Sir Charles was appointed Director-General of Border Force in 2013 after a long career in the Royal Navy.

Sir Charles Montgomery said:

It has been a great privilege for me to lead the men and women of Border Force in fulfilling its vital role and meeting its operational objectives.

I am committed to making this personal contribution until the very last moment I leave the office.

I am delighted that I am to be succeeded by Paul, who has all the personal and professional qualities to be an outstanding Director-General of Border Force.

Press release: Prisons Minister visits HMP Stoke Heath and local probation service

- Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah visits HMP Stoke Heath to thank staff for their vital work
- a record number of prison officer recruits have undertaken training across the country
- government is spending £100 million every year to recruit 2,500 extra officers by 2018

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah today (22 June 2017) visited HMP Stoke Heath to speak with staff and see reform in action.

As part of his continued nationwide tour of prisons, the Prisons Minister sat down with Governor John Huntington and staff from various roles to hear about the challenges they face and how the recruitment efforts of prison officers are progressing.

The government has been clear in its commitment to building on the essential reforms that are already under way, including supporting both offenders and ex-offenders in finding sustained employment.

As a training prison, HMP Stoke Heath prepares prisoners to lead a life without crime by providing relevant skills for a career on release.

The prison is installing a new car mechanics workshop, which will utilise a large range of technical and bespoke equipment to teach prisoners about all aspects of motor mechanics. This provides them with a more realistic training environment.

In addition, the prison is establishing links with local employers to provide further opportunities for prisoners to gain employment on release and so they can start to rebuild their lives.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Prison and probation officers do a vital and often challenging job, protecting the public by supporting offenders to turn their backs on crime and getting into education and work.

I am grateful to the staff who have taken the time to show me around their establishment and who have openly and honestly discussed matters which are important to them.

I want staff across the service to know that whilst their work for

the public is often unseen, it is highly valued.

The prison tour followed a visit to the Warkwickshire and West Mercia Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). The CRC delivers employment and training to support individuals back to work once released from the prison.

Record numbers of new prison officers joining the service

This additional resource meets the commitment to recruit 2,500 new officers as part of the major package of reforms. In addition the government is recruiting an additional 600 probation officers over the next 12 months.

By having more staff on the ground, the government will provide the support that they need to do their job and enable more time to be spent reforming offenders which will ultimately prevent victims and better protect the public.

Notes to editors

- This last year saw the highest level of new joiners (band 3-5 officers) since March 2010 and Prison officer numbers have increased for the first time since March 2016.

The Ministry of Justice has:

- appointed 75 mentors for new starter prison officers to help them in their first few months in the job which we know can be a difficult time
- started targeted local recruitment initiatives at 30 sites so that governors can more easily recruit the people they need
- developed a new graduate scheme 'Unlocked' that will encourage people from a broader range of backgrounds to join the Service
- launched a Troops to Officers scheme that will support people to join the Prison Service after leaving the military
- introduced a pay increase for Band 3 Officers on Fair and Sustainable (F&S) terms at 31 difficult-to-recruit prisons
- prison officers have the opportunity to earn over £30,000 depending on location of prison and hours contract. Plus public sector pension and other benefits
- substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles

Visit www.prisonandprobationjobs.gov.uk to find out more.

[Press release: British Ambassador](#)

highlights need for renewed action on World Refugee Day

Ambassador Susanna Moorehead visited Nguenyiel refugee camp in Gambella region of Ethiopia

To mark World Refugee Day, on 20 June, British Ambassador Susanna Moorehead accompanied Foreign Minister Workneh and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Filippo Grandi to the Nguenyiel refugee camp in Gambella. There they saw first-hand how the Ethiopian authorities and international community are working together to provide emergency support to people fleeing the terrible conflict in South Sudan.

Through its Department for International Development (DFID), the UK has a £125m programme to provide emergency support and basic services for refugees, host populations and migrants across Ethiopia, including in Gambella. In addition, through its £80 million of support for the Jobs Compact announced by Prime Ministers May and Hailemariam last year, the UK is helping create tens of thousands of jobs for refugees and Ethiopians to give them more opportunities for the future. And last week, UK Secretary of State for International Development Priti Patel announced a further £30 million of UKaid to help Ethiopia respond to the drought.

Speaking following the visit Ambassador Moorehead said:

This new camp is an excellent demonstration of how Ethiopia and international partners like the UK are working together to support refugees. The generosity of the host community shows humanity at its best. But this support is only necessary because of the terrible and persistent man-made conflict in South Sudan. As well as our support to those who need it most, we must also look ahead. The region must again lead the way to press for peace in South Sudan. And we must all look at how we can innovate to ensure those who have fled for their lives have opportunities for the future. I am proud that the UK-Ethiopia partnership is leading the way through the Jobs Compact, which will support both Ethiopia's own development and prospects for refugees here. I hope that in future on World Refugee Day I can be seeing not just how we are helping keep refugees to survive, but how we are enabling them to thrive.

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Speech: HS2 will be an integral part of our national rail network, and it will make the whole work better

Introduction

It's an honour to open today's (22 June 2017) conference.

It's an honour; not least because of where we are this morning.

In Birmingham, the city where a thousand-strong HS2 team is getting the project off the drawing board and into reality.

On Curzon Street, just over the road from Birmingham's original station – opened in 1838, abandoned in the 1960s, and which we want to open again for HS2.

And in Birmingham Science Museum, whose halls show what this city has already achieved for science, technology and transport – and point to what it will achieve in future.

But if it's an honour to be here, today's conference is for me also a special occasion for one more reason.

New role and progress on HS2

This is the first speech I've delivered in my new job – as Minister for HS2.

For most of the past year, I've been working as Minister for Rail.

Taking responsibility for everything to do with our railways.

Except for HS2.

A year ago, that division made sense.

Back then, the HS2 Bill for Phase One – the stretch from Birmingham to London – was a concept that had yet to be approved by parliament.

The route for much of the second phase of HS2 – from Crewe to Manchester and Birmingham to Leeds – had yet to be announced.

The procurement for the main engineering works, the rolling stock, and the franchise for operating the railway – all had yet to be triggered.

Back then, HS2 was still in the planning phase.

A distinct, stand-alone project.

But today, things have moved on.

Those plans are now starting to be implemented.

On sites up and down the route, the first enabling works are underway – we've begun the utility diversions, land clearance and environmental surveys.

We'll shortly award the multi-billion-pound contracts for the main engineering works.

In April, we began the hunt for designers for 3 brand new stations, at Curzon Street, Birmingham Interchange and London's Old Oak Common, as well as the expansion of London Euston.

We've launched the competition to design, build and maintain HS2's fleet of trains, and we expect to award the contract in 2019.

By the end of this year, we expect to deposit the bill for the stretch of track beyond Birmingham and on to Crewe.

And we have announced our preferred route for much of the sections from Crewe to Manchester and Birmingham to Leeds.

Yet today is the start of our integrating this part of the future rail network into the rest of the passenger network.

Because, most significantly of all, I am delighted that today we have announced the shortlist of bidders for the West Coast Partnership franchise – the franchise to operate services both on HS2 and the existing West Coast Line.

One of the 3 consortia in the final round, each with a vast range of skills and much experience, will deliver that integration with us.

One of these bidders will take on the role of running both the West Coast Main Line and HS2 simultaneously.

Their responsibility – for integrating HS2's services as part of the existing national rail network – mirrors my responsibility, in my new job, to oversee both our existing railways and HS2, and to ensure the successful integration of the two.

The uniting of the HS2 brief and the rail brief under one minister for the first time should be taken as a signal.

Of how far HS2 has come.

But also of the government's expectations for this project.

That HS2 should not be a railway apart, or a better, faster alternative to the classic rail network.

But rather for HS2 to join the existing network, to expand and enhance it.

The case for HS2

That vision of HS2 as an enhancement of the existing network has always been integral to the case for the project.

And it's a case still worth making.

Take that old station over the road.

Twelve years after it was built, the West Coast Main Line was completed.

For the first time it became possible to take a direct train from London to Glasgow.

That year, the UK population was 15 million people.

That year, those 15 million people made 60 million rail journeys.

It's an impressive figure.

But it's small fry compared to the numbers our rail network caters for nowadays.

Today we have a population of 65 million people.

In 2015 we took 1.7 billion rail journeys.

And the numbers keep going up, year on year.

Already it can be a struggle to get a seat at peak times across much of the network.

If we do nothing, the situation will get worse.

Benefits of HS2

But when we've built HS2, our railways will be able to carry an extra 300,000 people every day.

It will be a radical upgrade to Britain's rail capacity – and not just for the places that HS2 will directly serve.

Yes, there's the 8 out of 10 of Britain's biggest cities that will be directly connected by HS2.

And the many more places that will be served by HS2 trains running onto the existing network.

But it's because we're treating HS2 as an addition and enhancement to our existing network that the benefits of HS2 won't be restricted to its passengers – or even just those who live near a future HS2 station.

Thanks to the way that HS2 will free space on our existing network, over 100 towns and cities across the country could benefit from new services on that existing rail network.

We know that transport has a unique power to transform places.

And I'd like us to start thinking about how HS2 will help places along the length and breadth of the country.

I am grateful that, thanks to the hard work of many people in this room today, we are already making good progress: looking at how HS2 can have the same positive effects that high speed rail has had in cities such as Bordeaux and Utrecht.

And how we can bring those effects to places such as Euston, Old Oak Common, Curzon Street, Crewe, Toton, Sheffield, Manchester and Leeds.

It's great to see, for instance, the plans already being made by the councils and local enterprise partnerships of Staffordshire and Cheshire.

Plans for how HS2 could help support 100,000 new homes and 120,000 new jobs in the area.

Then there's Leeds City Council's plans for how HS2 could help reshape the South Bank area of the city.

And Greater Manchester Combined Authority estimates that, by 2040, HS2 will help create 180,000 new local jobs and add £1.3 billion to the region's economy.

These are some of the big cities and regions directly served by HS2.

Their plans are well advanced, and I am grateful to everyone here who has contributed to these plans and many others.

But I also want to maintain a focus on the smaller places along the route who will receive better rail services as a result of HS2.

Even if, in many cases, it might still be too early for us to make concrete plans in every place.

It's not too early for us to start to shift expectations.

To think what it might mean, for example, if HS2 can create more seats for passengers travelling between places such as Milton Keynes and Leicester.

Or better intercity services to London from Shrewsbury and Telford, Tamworth and Nuneaton.

Or more intercity services to London, perhaps from Middlesbrough, Hull and Lincoln.

Along with many other places along the line of route.

We know that HS2 will transform Euston and parts of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Crewe.

But we also need to start planning for the way that HS2 will bring improvements across much of the existing network.

Skills

Of course, I also want to be clear that the opportunity of HS2 is by no means restricted to the rail network.

It's an opportunity for our economy as a whole.

Even someone who never travels by train stands to benefit from the thousands of jobs and apprenticeships created on the project.

As well as thousands more created by the better connections HS2 will bring.

During peak construction, we expect HS2 to employ 25,000 people.

And when HS2 is complete, it will support many, many times that number of jobs in the wider economy.

Then there's the thousands of skilled engineers who will be trained at our High Speed Rail Colleges in this city and in Doncaster.

Each of whom will gain the skills to work on HS2, but also the skills needed to maintain and enhance our existing infrastructure and to work on new projects.

Then there's all those who will be employed at the HS2 regeneration sites across the country.

Where, in the Leeds South Bank project, 35,000 jobs are expected to be created.

And in this region, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull growth strategy for the areas around the HS2 stations is planning for 36,000 new jobs – and 4,000 new homes.

I could go on – but I know that later today you'll hear much more about these plans and others.

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by saying thank you.

Thank you to everyone here who has already done so much to prepare the way for HS2.

Whether you're planning for regeneration, preparing to bid for contracts on the project or already involved in any way.

The political case for this project has already largely been won.

But to win the public case we need people to see what this project will do for our country.

How it will transform places.

Raise skill levels.

And spread new opportunity.

That's exactly what – in one way or another – everyone gathered here is helping to do.

So, thank you – and I look forward to working closely with you in the months and years ahead.