

News story: Fighter jets join forces with British aircraft carrier to make history

Royal Navy Commander Nathan Gray and RAF Squadron Leader Andy Edgell were the first pilots to land their stealth F-35 Lightning fighter jets on board the carrier, demonstrating the formidable force HMS Queen Elizabeth and her fleet of jets will be.

The first landings and take-offs from HMS Queen Elizabeth are the culmination of a national endeavour lasting more than a decade to bring an aircraft carrier back to the UK's arsenal. Able to embark up to 36 of the supersonic jets, the carrier provides the Royal Navy with a capability possessed by few others.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The largest warship in British history is joining forces with the most advanced fighter jets on the planet. This marks a rebirth of our power to strike decisively from the seas anywhere in the world.

The historic first landing on the deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth is a monumental moment in our country's proud military history. It is also a statement of Britain's determination to promote peace and prevent war.



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The landings mark the start of more than 500 take-offs and touch-downs set to take place from the mammoth warship during the next 11-weeks, with the jets being put through their paces in a range of weather conditions.

The return of 'Carrier Strike' to the UK comes eight years after a fighter jet last landed on a British carrier.

Commanding Officer, Capt Jerry Kyd, who was also the captain of HMS Ark Royal when the last Harrier took off from a carrier, said:

I am quite emotional to be here in HMS Queen Elizabeth seeing the return of fixed wing aviation, having been the captain of the aircraft carrier which launched the last Harrier at sea nearly eight years ago.

The regeneration of big deck carriers able to operate globally, as we are proving here on this deployment, is a major step forward for the United Kingdom's defence and our ability to match the increasing pace of our adversaries. The first touch-downs of these impressive stealth jets shows how the United Kingdom will continue to be world leaders at sea for generations to come.



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Commander UK Carrier Strike Group, Cdre Andrew Betton added:

The Queen Elizabeth Class carriers have been specifically designed and built to operate the F-35 Lightning, offering an immensely flexible and potent combination to deliver military effect around the world. Conducting these trials is a critical and exciting step on this journey and I applaud the many thousands of civilian and military personnel who have played a part in bringing the strategic ambition to reality.

While the HMS Queen Elizabeth Class carriers will be able to project British military power across the globe for the next half-century, they can also provide humanitarian relief, deepen defence relationships with key allies and provide critical support to our forces as they are deployed across the world.

In recent operations, US aircraft carriers like the USS George HW Bush and USS Harry S. Truman have played a central role in the Gulf and the Mediterranean, conducting strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

This week's historic flight trials come more than 100 years after the UK's HMS Argus became the world's first carrier capable of safely launching and recovering naval aircraft.

The ship will go on to continue her programme off the US east coast. The flight trials are expected to take around 11 weeks, during which time the

ship is also expected to call into New York.

HMS Queen Elizabeth remains set to be deployed on global operations from 2021. Britain now has sixteen of a planned 138 F-35 Lightning jets as part of its world-leading fleet of military aircraft.



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[News story: Cadet Forces increase social mobility and help young people's self-belief, new report finds](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has welcomed an independent report highlighting the positive effects of Cadet Forces as dozens of new units across the UK are approved.

The University of Northampton's independent report, published today, finds that joining the cadets offers a range of benefits to individuals and the wider community. Following research across the entire cadet organisation, the report outlines the huge positive impact that Cadet Forces have on social inclusion, mobility and the mental wellbeing of young people.

Speaking today at Aston University Engineering Academy, a state school with an RAF Cadet Force, the Defence Secretary also announced the approval of 30 new cadet units in schools across the UK. Part of the Cadet Expansion Programme, these latest approvals bring the total of units up to 472, benefiting approximately 43,000 cadets.

Speaking at the academy, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Being a cadet offers students unrivalled opportunities to develop new skills, enjoy unforgettable life experiences, and be inspired by our world class Armed Forces.

This report confirms that joining the cadets gives people from all communities the confidence to succeed in life and I'm pleased these latest approvals for new units will give even more young people the opportunity to join the cadets.

The report concludes that being a member of the Cadet Forces:

- increased an individual's belief in their ability to complete specific tasks;
- improved their motivation;
- improved school attendance and led to better behaviour and attitudes; and
- may lead to greater academic success which can contribute to increasing social mobility.

Many respondents commented on how being a member of a Cadet Force had improved their confidence, teamwork skills and homework completion. The report also identified links with resilience, leadership, teamwork, attendance, behaviour and communication skills.

Professor Simon Denny, Executive Dean: Research, Impact and Enterprise, The University of Northampton said:

The evidence so far has been overwhelmingly positive and demonstrates that the Cadet Forces make a huge difference to improve school attendance, develop confidence and help young people become more successful.

The new cadet units, established under Cadet Expansion Programme, are backed by £50 million funding from LIBOR funds, which pays for set up costs, cadets

uniforms, equipment and training.

The schools that will be setting up new cadet units are:

- Alton School – Hampshire
- Armadale Academy – West Lothian
- Arthur Mellows Village College – East Anglia
- Birkenhead High School Academy – Merseyside
- Blessed John Henry Newman Roman Catholic College – Greater Manchester
- Broadoak Mathematics and Computing College – Somerset
- Camborne Science and International Academy – Cornwall
- Cardiff and Vale College – Cardiff
- Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School – Kent
- Chatham Grammar School for Girls – Kent
- Dame Elizabeth Cadbury School – West Midlands
- East Norfolk Sixth Form College – East Anglia
- Gateacre School – Merseyside
- Harris Academy Chafford Hundred – Essex
- Ixworth Free School – East Anglia
- John Lyon School – Harrow
- La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School – London
- Liverpool Life Sciences UTC – Merseyside
- Llandarcy Academy of Sport – Glamorgan
- Millfield School – Somerset
- Reading UTC – Berkshire
- Stamford Welland Academy – East Midlands
- Streatham and Clapham High School – London
- The Boswells School – Essex
- The De La Salle Academy – Merseyside
- The Stockwood Park Academy – Bedfordshire
- Thistley Hough Academy – West Midlands
- Torquay Academy – Devon
- Walkden High School – Manchester
- Wellacre Technology Academy – Lancashire

Press release: New competition: 'Don't Blow It! Safely eliminating munitions on the battlefield'

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is launching a new competition aimed at the private sector and academia, to seek innovative solutions and approaches to accessing, disabling and/or irreversibly destroying chemical and biological weapons munitions, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and bulk agents on the battlefield.

The competition is aimed at non-traditional defence and security innovators. DASA will be particularly interested to hear from those in allied technology areas such as the oil and gas, mining sectors as well as those which have experience in handling hazardous materials.

With an initial £500,000 to fund multiple proof-of-concept proposals at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL), it is anticipated that an additional funding of £1.5 million may be available depending on the outcome of the initial funding phase.

It is jointly funded by the UK Ministry of Defence and the US Department of Defense, and will operate under an existing memorandum of understanding between both nations.

The competition was formally launched at an event in London on 26 September 2018.

Registration for this event has now closed, however, if you wish to attend please email accelerator@dstl.gov.uk and we will endeavor to add you to the delegates list for the day. Places are limited and we reserve the right to limit attendance if needed. If you are accepted to attend the event, you will be sent full details and an agenda.

Competition Summary Document

Details about the competition can be found [here](#)

Any queries regarding this competition, should be sent to accelerator@dstl.gov.uk.

[News story: Multi-million-pound competition to destroy battlefield chemical weapons launched by UK and US](#)

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA), part of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and UK Ministry of Defence, has launched the 'Don't Blow It!' competition, the first joint UK-US industry competition run by DASA and funded by the MOD and US Department of Defense.

Competitors have been asked to identify innovative concepts or adapt current technologies to access, disable and destroy chemical and biological devices. This includes chemical and biological munitions, improvised explosive devices containing lethal agents or containers of bulk quantities of chemical or biological agents discovered on the battlefield or in other austere and resource-limited environments.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Horrific incidents stretching from Salisbury to Syria this year have shown us that chemical weapons are sadly still very much a reality – but a reality that we are determined to deal with. Destroying these deadly weapons is a complicated process and not doing it properly could mean devastating collateral damage. These are challenges that we share with our allies like the US. Competitions like this help us to tackle them head on with some of the best and brightest minds across both our countries.

Although it is over 100 years since the first large-scale use of chemical weapons, the threat from both chemical and biological weapons persists. This has been demonstrated by the recent rise in the use of such deadly weapons on the battlefield and in targeted attacks.

Much progress has been made to destroy state-declared global stockpiles of chemical weapons through very successful large scale destruction programmes, utilising techniques such as incineration, explosive destruction or neutralisation. However, to meet emerging and future challenges, such as the destruction of smaller caches produced by terrorists in resource-limited or hostile environments such as Iraq or Syria, there needs to be a focus on developing more robust elimination capabilities that are less labour intensive.

The competition has an initial £500,000 to fund multiple proof-of-concept proposals at low Technology Readiness Levels. Based on the outcome of the initial funding phase, an additional £1.5 million of funding could be released.



'Don't Blow It!' will see innovative concepts developed to access, disable and destroy chemical and biological devices. Crown copyright.

The competition is seeking innovative ideas from non-traditional supply sectors and is looking for 'outside-the-box' proposals that will:

- Enable rapid and flexible destruction
- Reduce logistical support requirements
- Maximise ease of operation and transportability
- Address a greater breadth of threats

MOD Chief Scientific Advisor, Dr Simon Cholerton said:

As the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the Novichok attack in Salisbury demonstrate, the risk from chemical weapons still remains and the issue of safely eliminating them from an austere tactical environment remains an enduring technical challenge. I am delighted therefore that we are working with our closest ally to launch a new industry competition to help us develop effective and safe elimination capabilities. Our collaboration is the first time we have launched a truly joint UK-US competition through the UK Ministry of Defence's Defence and Security Accelerator, which is charged with enabling us to innovate by rapidly transforming the ideas of today into the capabilities of tomorrow.

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Defense Programs, US DOD, The Hon. Guy Roberts said:

The expanding proliferation of chemical weapons use, from state and non-state actors, portends the greatest threat of their use on the battlefield since World War I. My responsibility is to ensure our forces are protected from, and can fight through, any such threats. To that end, we must continually innovate our capabilities, and it is especially important to do so in collaboration with those who fight alongside us. This competition does just that. It allows us to jointly invest in research and development with our closest ally as well as seek innovative ideas from a broader set of brilliant minds who I am confident will lead us to creative solutions.

The competition will be launched at an event in London on the afternoon of 26th September. Potential suppliers will be provided with context on the challenge by both UK and US speakers, as well as information on how to apply to the competition by DASA. The submission deadline for proposals is 5 pm GMT (midday EST) on 7 November 2018.

[Follow this link for more information on the competition](#)

or contact DASA directly on accelerator@dstl.gov.uk

[News story: Minister calls for women to be included in peacebuilding process](#)

In the margins of the UN General Assembly, the Minister for Human Rights and the UN Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon co-chaired a roundtable event with Afghanistan and Norway to discuss how to increase the participation of women in peace building and conflict resolution, how to connect formal peace processes to women tirelessly working to build peace on the ground.

Research shows that peace agreements that result from negotiations involving women are 35 percent more likely to last for at least fifteen years. The meeting looked at how the international community could promote, support and champion the role of women in decision making and conflict resolution to help ensure lasting and sustainable peace.

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for Human Rights and the UN said:

When women are denied a seat at the table, when the hopes, fears, needs and interests of half of the population are not represented evidence shows that an enduring peace and stability impossible.

Today's meeting is about how we can not only prevent, but ensure that women are empowered and encouraged to help broker peace, because we know that when women are part of the picture, peace agreements are much more likely to last.

The UK is a world leader on women, peace and security. Since November 2016, all UK troops on overseas missions have received training on women, peace and security and preventing sexual violence and UK personnel have trained over 10,000 African peacekeepers on sexual violence. In Afghanistan, UK personnel have mentored the trainers of future female leaders at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy, which has seen over 100 female cadets now pass out.

Further Information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon [@tariqahmadbt](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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