

News story: UK fighter jets intercept Russian bombers approaching UK airspace

Today (20 September), RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon fighter aircraft scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth to monitor two Russian planes approaching UK airspace. The Russian Blackjacks long-range bombers were not talking to air traffic control, making them a hazard to all other aviation.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Russian bombers probing UK airspace is another reminder of the very serious military challenge that Russia poses us today.

We will not hesitate to continually defend our skies from acts of aggression. Once again the rapid reactions of our RAF have demonstrated how vital our Armed Forces are in protecting Britain.

The RAF worked closely with NATO partners to monitor the jets as they passed through a variety of international airspace before they were intercepted by the RAF over the North Sea. Subsequently, our fighters escorted the Russian Blackjacks north, out of the UK's area of interest. At no time did the Russian bombers enter UK sovereign airspace.

RAF QRA was launched today because the Russian Military aircraft were not talking to air traffic agencies. The RAF routinely intercept, identify and escort Russian aircraft that transit international airspace within the UK's area of interest and continue to be on call; 24/7, 365.

News story: Facilities management suppliers invited to bid for places on new framework

The Future Defence Infrastructure Services (FDIS) contracts will provide FM services across the UK defence estate, replacing existing arrangements when they come to an end.

The contracts are being procured as part of the Crown Commercial Service's (CCS) Workplace Services Facilities Management Marketplace framework. This is

a new way of working for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and enables access to a more diverse supplier base, while improving value for money for the taxpayer by leveraging government buying power.

This phase of the FDIS programme will procure new Hard FM arrangements for 4 Regional Prime contracts and five contracts that will replace the current National Housing Prime. The contracts have a collective value of £2.9 billion, excluding additional works. A later stage of the process will procure a National Training Management contract to replace the current National Training Estate Prime.

DIO's Commercial Director Jacqui Rock said:

DIO is not only one of the largest providers of housing in the UK, with a stock of nearly 50,000 homes, it is also responsible for managing land and buildings across hundreds of diverse MOD sites.

We are pleased to be working with CCS to procure these contracts. We want to make DIO easier to do business with and adopting this route to market is one of the ways that we hope to achieve this, while enabling us access to a wider, more diverse and increasingly resilient supply base.

CCS Strategic Category Director – Buildings, Sam Ulyatt said:

This procurement is a part of the FM Marketplace, which is changing the way in which central government and the wider public sector procure their FM deals, delivering great value for the taxpayer. We are proud to be working in partnership with DIO and supporting delivery against their commercial strategy for common goods and services.

The initial phase of the procurement process will see suppliers qualifying onto each of the lots in the framework, enabling them to participate in subsequent call-off competitions. The award of places to suppliers on each of the framework lots is expected to be completed by the end of February 2019, with call off competitions starting soon afterwards.

Each DIO call off contract will be 7 years in length, with options to extend up to a further 3 years, subject to satisfactory performance and other considerations.

An advertisement inviting supplier participation has been released in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) and can be accessed via [Crown Commercial Service](#)

[News story: Grave of courageous World War 2 pilot has been rededicated 77 years after his death](#)

The grave of 26 year old Flying Officer (F0) David Stein who served in the Royal Air Force (RAF) volunteer reserve, has been rededicated in France at a cemetery where he lay as an 'unknown' for many years. The moving service took place on Wednesday 19 September at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Brest (Kerfautras) Cemetery, Brittany in France.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was attended by F0 Stein's cousin, Carol Taylor who was accompanied by her husband, Stuart Taylor and son, David Taylor. It was led by The Reverend (Squadron Leader) Rachel Cook, RAF. Members of the RAF including the RAF Exchange Officer Wing Commander Yves Gagnon, RAF Exchange Officer French MOD and local dignitaries were also in attendance.



Sergeant Mark Windsor MBE RAF, The Reverend Rachel Cook, F0 Stein's cousin, Carol Taylor, son David Taylor and husband, Stuart Taylor, Wing Commander Yves Gagnon, RAF Exchange Officer French MOD, Crown Copyright, all rights reserved

F0 Stein's cousin, Carol Taylor of Rotherham, South Yorkshire said:

Our family know that David's mother, father and sister would have been very grateful, as are we, that his final resting place has been found, and that so many people have joined us in honouring him.



Cousin, Carol Taylor accompanied by son, David Taylor and husband, Stuart Taylor at F0 Stein's graveside, Crown Copyright, all rights reserved

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

This has been a fascinating case to work on and I would like to thank all those who have helped. It is a privilege to have arranged the ceremony for this daring young man who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

F0 Stein was killed on 30 October 1941 flying a Westland Whirlwind plane on a low-level ground sortie on an aerodrome in Brittany, France. He was brought down by ground anti-aircraft fire and last seen flying away from the target with one engine on fire.



Wing Commander Yves Gagnon, RAF Exchange Officer French MOD presenting the Union Flag to FO Stein's cousin, Carol Taylor, Crown Copyright, all rights reserved

Although FO Stein was buried alongside other Allied airmen in Brest (Kerfautras) Cemetery, his identity remained unknown until research, which was later analysed and verified by the JCCC, proved a connection with the site where his aircraft was found.

David Stein was born on 23 December 1914 in Lassodie, Dunfermline, Scotland. Prior to enlistment in 1939 he was a tobacconist living in Edinburgh; his service records note he was a keen footballer and golfer, enjoyed the "occasional beer" and his hobby was motor engineering.

David was commissioned as a pilot officer in 1940, promoted to flying officer in July 1941 before being posted to No 263 Squadron in Grangemouth, Scotland.

Reverend Rachel Cook said:

Today, we formally honour the memory of FO David Stein in the presence of military colleagues and family. It is a real privilege to be able to do this. FO Stein gave his life in the service of others, we now come together to recognise this and to remember him before God. This brave airman now has a named resting place. May he rest in peace.

Steve Arnold, CWGC said:

Today, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission are honoured to mark the grave of Flying Officer Stein with a new headstone bearing his name and a personal inscription chosen by his family. We will ensure that the graves of David, his brother John and all those who served and fell are cared for in perpetuity.

[Speech: Defence Minister Stuart Andrew at DVD18, Millbrook](#)

Let me begin with a few thank yous. First to Millbrook for hosting this event. I've now been in the job for a couple of months but I'm still coming to terms with the Army jargon. I thought DVD had something to do with movies! Fortunately, my delight at seeing Great British capability in action from Warrior to Wolfhound, Bulldog to Mastiff...has yet to be diminished or dented.

And there's no finer place to see some of that capability up close than the Millbrook Proving Ground. Earlier today I had the chance to ride in both a JLTV and Boxer. I'm glad my office told me not to wear a suit today. And it was much less bumpy than the Land Rover I encountered beforehand.

Next I want to thank that battalion of people who operate, design and build this fantastic kit. This year we recall several anniversaries where the intervention of Defence vehicles proved decisive. At the Battle of Amiens 100 years ago...500 tanks helped punch a hole in the enemy lines and allowed the Allies to advance an unprecedented eight miles on the Western Front...delivering the hammer blow to enemy morale. And 75 years ago tanks from the British Eighth Army advanced into Tunisia catching the Axis unawareness and forcing the Nazi surrender.

Today our cavalry continue coming to our nation's rescue...mobilising to deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe...bringing humanitarian aid to sub-Saharan Africa and the hurricane-hit Caribbean islands...as well as providing vital assistance...closer to home... in the Salisbury clean-up operation – after British citizens were callously targeted by agents wielding Novichok.

Finally, I want to thank DE&S. Whether navigating contractual complexities, overcoming logistical obstacles, or engineering ingenious solutions... you do a magnificent job in often tricky and trying circumstances.

But today our focus is not on land vehicles past or present but on the future and it strikes me that three points, in particular, are of relevance.



A programme to supply the British Army with a new fleet of eight-wheeled armoured vehicles has taken a major step forward, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew has announced at one of the world's leading land equipment events. Crown copyright.

1. LAND POWER AS VITAL AS EVER

First and foremost as generals, strategists and experts all agree, and as the impressive attendance at this conference confirms, land power is as important as it's ever been.

Technology might be advancing apace.

We might be witnessing the advent of cyber and Artificial Intelligence.

But wars are still won and lost in the land domain.

We will still look to land forces to guard borders, confront aggression, seize hostile territory and deny its access to the enemy.

At the same time, we shouldn't forget that this environment is also worth its weight in gold.

Not only does it bring in hundreds of millions for the British economy but it sustains the livelihoods of thousands up and down the country, directly and indirectly through the supply chain.

2. INNOVATION CRITICAL

However, my second point is that land power must continue to evolve and...as the title of this conference reminds us...innovate. If you happen to glance at the Army's vision for Joint Force 2030 you'll find a focus on making the most of technological opportunities.

It's about maturing our cyber and information capabilities to enhance our prowess.

Wireless routers, satellites, computer networks, cyber space, radar and sensors give us the ability to up our situational awareness and maintain a high tempo over an increasingly dispersed and complex battlespace.

Enhancements in ISTAR allow us not just to target an enemy's engaged forces but their uncommitted forces too.

Autonomous platforms and AI give us the wherewithal to replace soldiers for the most dangerous tasks... or reduce our dependence on deep logistic lines...so we can make better use of our forces.

All the while we have to be ever on our guard against adversaries seeking to exploit our weaknesses in the electromagnetic spectrum and control the bandwidth of the battlefield

But innovation extends beyond purely technological solutions. It's about becoming more versatile. In a more unpredictable age, our Army are having to cope with increasing demands and a broader set of challenge.

In Iraq and Syria...we've seen how our enemies are adopting ever more ingenious methods to attack us – from trucks laden with bombs to commercially sourced drones packed with explosives that attack us in swarms.

Nor are today's threats just coming from extremists but from state aggressors, from lone wolf attackers, even from extreme weather events.

And versatility must be complemented by speed. In this age of constant flux, the dangers come from out of the blue, from any direction, so we must have the right vehicles, ready to move at moment's notice.

3. WE'RE ON THE CASE

Britain is on the case. Our nation has always had long history of innovation in the land domain.

Richard Edgeworth came up with the caterpillar track almost 250 years ago.

James Boydell devised the delightfully named "Dreadnaught Wheels" back in 1856.

And in 1901, British inventor Frederick Simms produced a design for a motor-war car. All these ideas ...and more...were blended by British engineering genius under Churchill's watchful eye...until they became the tank...which as we've already seen helped shorten the Great War. But to succeed in a new age of

warfare we're going need to get even more creative.

That's why we're investing in next-generation capability like AJAX. A step change in armoured fighting vehicle. It possesses the capacity to Hoover up data from all domains and detect invisible signs of cyber disturbance.

Army experimentation continues and I know they are eagerly awaiting the delivery of production vehicles to continue their exciting journey towards operational capability

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. A much wider capability renewal is underway in the land domain.

In May, my predecessor announced that the UK was re-joining the BOXER eight wheeled armoured Vehicle Programme...to equip our new STRIKE Brigades with a Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV).

I am pleased to inform you that we issued the formal Request for Quotation on Friday. That means ARTEC, the consortium who lead on the production of BOXER, will now be able to complete supplier selection and confirm proposals to manufacture and support BOXER from the UK.

Work on our UK Multi-Role Vehicle – Protected (MRV-P) programme...to support our STRIKE brigades...is also proceeding alongside our Modernising Defence Programme.

Meanwhile, we're buying autonomous robots which we had the pleasure of seeing today. Specifically, spending £55m for 56 STARTER bomb disposal robots.

These neat bits of kit use advanced haptic feedback' to allow operators to 'feel' their way through the intricate process of disarming from a safe distance, protecting UK personnel from threats such as roadside bombs.

The first 2 robots have been delivered and are successfully undergoing trials. All 56 robots are due to be delivered to the UK and be in service by the end of 2020.

And we're investing in sophisticated systems like Defence Targeting Toolset (DTT).

By allowing users...whether based in theatre or back in the UK...to see exactly the same thing...this remarkable piece of software enables Military Targeteers to co-ordinate Land and Air strikes against enemy targets more effectively...improving the speed and accuracy of decision making in complex targeting situations.

In addition, we're introducing several new projects

We're creating a Next Generation Weapon Locating System (NGWLS) that will sustain our capability to detect, acquire, track and assess current and future Land Environment indirect fire threats.

And we're bringing in new Mobile Fires Platform (MFP) that provide our Army

with a 155mm artillery capability...embracing 21st century technology...capable of supporting both Divisional deep fight and Strike.

Repurposing old kit

But we're not just evolving new technology...we're repurposing old equipment. As you've wandered through the displays here today, you may have come across our Enhanced Palletised Load System or EPLS, which will form the logistic backbone of the British Army, rapidly loading and unloading flatracks or containers.

We've placed a contract with MAN truck and Bus to convert 382 of our MAN SV vehicles...the workhorse of our fleet...into EPLS. The one you see here today is the first.

From a workhorse to a Warrior. We're running a programme to improve our Warrior vehicles' lethality, survivability, situational awareness and electronic architecture.

Most importantly, it will equip this Armoured Infantry Vehicle with Fire on the Move technology: a game-changing capability. Eleven Demonstration Vehicles have been delivered to the Army's facilities at Bovington where personnel are currently conducting trials.

And from Warrior to Challenger 2...the UK's only guaranteed 24-hour, all weather mobile, protected precision direct fire, anti-tank, manoeuvre capability. Challengers have been bastions of our Army from the dark days of the Cold War.

Our Life Extension Programme for the Challenger 2 main battle tank is proceeding apace. Designs are rapidly maturing which will inform an anticipated main gate decision next year.

People and partnerships

Finally, innovation is about much more than technology. It's about people and partnerships. Ultimately, we can't drive anything off the production line unless Government, Armed Forces and our suppliers pull in the same direction.

So the more we can do to talk to each other, to understand our requirements and to discern the art of the possible... the better the kit we can make. That's why events like today...bringing together 250 individuals from right across our enterprise... are so important.

CONCLUSION

So innovation will keep our Army and our nation on the road. But let me end on this point. Innovation is also a product of inspiration.

If we want to make sure our vehicles remain at the cutting edge in future we're going to need to inspire new generations of Edgeworth's, Boydell's and Simms.

That's why MOD is not only championing 2018 as a Year of Engineering but this

DVD, for the first time ever, welcoming University Technical College engineering students and staff.

I know from my own experience wandering the displays that...when you see what people are capable of...when you talk to those who've actually made this incredible capability and when you hear about how it makes a difference worldwide...it cannot help make you want to get involved.

So I hope you enjoy the day and that it whets your appetite to enter this industry. And I very much look forward to the day you come back here...not as students but as masters...showing off your latest inventions...and driving Britain's fortunes to even greater heights.

[News story: British companies get green light to press ahead with new Army vehicle plans, Defence Minister announces](#)

The Army intends to make an initial purchase of over 500 Boxer vehicles, and the Defence Minister has today announced that British suppliers have been given the green light to bring forward concrete plans for the project, which is set to support at least 1,000 UK jobs.

Artec, the consortium who lead on the production of the troop carriers, have been given the go-ahead to invite industry to bring forward actual contractible proposals for work on the vehicles. A big step towards making a purchase, the news means that Artec will now ramp up work to complete their supplier selection process before returning to the MOD with a formal proposal next year.

The Defence Minister made the announcement whilst speaking at DVD2018 at Millbrook Proving Ground in Bedfordshire, which showcases equipment and technology for the British Army and is one of the biggest land equipment events in the world.

Speaking at the event, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

A new 8x8 armoured vehicle is a key part of our British Army's future, and today marks a big step towards equipping our soldiers with this brand-new troop carrier. British companies are stepping up to the plate yet again for a project which could support up to 1,000 jobs across the country, and it is great to give industry the green light to now pull together a full plan of action. I am

looking forward to pressing ahead with negotiations in our pursuit of a vehicle which works best for the Army, the taxpayer and British industry.



British companies get green light to press ahead with new Army vehicle plans, Defence Minister announces. Crown copyright.

The MOD [announced that the British Army had re-joined the Boxer programme back in March](#), as it looks to modernise its vehicle fleet and meet the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV) requirement, which is central to the Army's plans for fast-moving 'strike brigades'.

Artec will now complete supplier selection and confirm their proposal to manufacture and support Boxer in the UK, offering new opportunities to British suppliers for what is set to be their largest single order.

The UK played a major role in the original design, development and testing of the Boxer, and would reassume the rights it had as a project partner if a deal was to go through – allowing the option for the vehicle to be built and exported from the UK.

Artec has already made commitments to UK industry by signing partnership agreements with various British companies in anticipation of a deal being struck, whilst there are a number of British firms which already supply systems for the vehicle, which is already in service with the Netherlands, Lithuania and Germany.



British companies get green light to press ahead with new Army vehicle plans, Defence Minister announces. Crown copyright.

The MOD conducted a comprehensive market analysis of Mechanised Infantry Vehicles in service, entering service and in development. The analysis was guided by the British Army's requirements and how best to deliver them. The Boxer delivered on protected mobility, capacity, flexibility, utility and agility. The first vehicles are set to be in-service by 2023.

Production of the £4.5 billion Ajax family of armoured vehicles is already ramping up, and they are set to enter service in 2020. The Defence Minister also revealed today that Lockheed Martin UK has successfully delivered the first eight production turrets to Ajax's prime contractor, General Dynamics Land Systems.

Lockheed Martin UK is under contract to manufacture, test and certify 245 turrets for the reconnaissance variant of the Ajax fleet at its multi-million pound Ampthill site, which is just a five minute drive from the testing centre which hosts DVD.

Welcoming the news, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Ajax is the UK's biggest order of armoured vehicles in a generation, supporting thousands of jobs across the country and modernising our frontline fleet. Having been expertly produced just a few miles away in the same county, it is apt that this first batch of turrets have been delivered in time for Bedfordshire's Army showcase, marking another step towards bringing these vehicles

onto the battlefield.



Defence Minister Stuart Andrew addresses the crowd at DVD18. Crown copyright.

While at the show the Minister also revealed that the MOD has recently taken delivery of the 200th Cased Telescope cannon – the innovative weapon, developed between UK and French industry, which will provide the stopping power for the armed Ajax variant, as well as the upgraded Warrior vehicle being developed through an MOD Capability Sustainment Programme.

DVD is the premier defence land equipment event in the UK and one of the biggest of its type in the world. Attending UK companies ranged from SMEs to larger suppliers. Manufacturers marking recent export successes at the show included QinetiQ which has won two contracts to supply armoured vehicle drive and suspension systems for the US Office of Naval Research.