

[News story: Defence Secretary highlights North East's military footprint at Gateshead defence firm](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson paid a visit today to Rubb in Gateshead, global-leaders in innovative defence structures and hangars for the military sector, where he outlined the benefits of defence to local jobs and industry.

The Defence Secretary met with staff and toured the facility during his visit of the company, which has been a long-standing supplier to the UK Armed Forces, going back to 1979 when the RAF tasked them to supply military buildings for the world-famous Red Arrows.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

A strong defence industry throughout the four corners of the UK is crucial to our economy as well as our national security, and Rubb UK are an outstanding example of our world-leading homegrown engineers in the North East.

Their workers are part of some 700 jobs we support in this area, and their pride in making the homes for our world-class jets and aircraft is clear to see.

With this region benefitting from £100m of defence investment and in line for more business, it is playing a key role in ensuring our Armed Forces have what they need to protect our country from intensifying threats.



Rubb's expertise in rapid deployable hangar solutions have been used to house operation-ready fighter jets and carry out essential maintenance on large Chinook helicopters.

The hangars have been invaluable to British, Canadian and US forces deployed on operations across the globe. Rubb continue to provide the Armed Forces with long-term assets and are exploring the potential of their cutting-edge cooling techniques and structural fabric technology for the UK's new Lightning jets.

Rubb are an exemplary British business who design and manufacture their military buildings in the local area, securing jobs and investment into the region and delivers the UK with a much-valued domestic industrial capability. Rubb also export their products across the globe to consumers in Africa, Europe, North America and the Middle East.

The company has over 50 local employees and currently benefits from a £6.86 million contract with the MOD. A significant local employer, Rubb's first ever apprentice in 1977 has now risen to become Steel Production Manager after more than forty years of service.

Ian Hindmoor, Managing Director at Rubb Buildings Ltd, said:

Working with the MOD is a long-standing relationship that we have nurtured over the years. We are proud to be part of an industry that helps provide equipment, which supports our troops at home and in the field. It is encouraging to learn that the North East is

being recognised for its engineering knowledge and skills, and for Rubb to be recognised as an 'outstanding' example in this field by the Defence Secretary. We hope to see future investment in this industry so R&D and jobs can continue to grow.

As outlined in former Defence Minister Philip Dunne's report on the contribution defence makes to British prosperity, the North East plays an important role in UK defence, providing over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces, supporting over 700 industry jobs, and is renowned for its defence manufacturing industry.

The region benefits from MOD investment in local industry and commerce totalling £100 million, where The largest MOD industry group expenditure in the area is with computer services totalling £63 million. Key suppliers include DXC Technology, Capita and Pearson Engineering.

[News story: Commander JFC commendations awarded to outstanding individuals](#)

Commander Joint Forces Command Commendations were presented to individuals from across the Command in recognition of outstanding work in support of JFC and the wider Ministry of Defence (MOD).

General Deverell, was pleased to meet with recipients and their families and to offer his personal congratulations on their achievements. He said:

Joint Forces Command is full of bright, innovative and hardworking personnel. It is of particular importance to me that we recognise and celebrate their achievements. It was a pleasure to meet with some of these individuals today and also to thank their families who support them in the excellent work they do.

These individuals should serve as an inspiration to colleagues across the MOD and to the public. Their selfless dedication to duty is not only inspiring but plays a big part in protecting the national security of the UK. And we thank them for this.

Awards were given to teams as well as individuals from JFC in recognition for excellent work in a number of areas. This ranged from providing essential support to operations in the UK and the Middle East, working in support of community development and charity projects, and also in recognition of

displays of exceptional courage in the line of duty.

Speaking about his commendation, Corporal Dean Cresswell from the British Army said:

Working at JFC was my most challenging but also my most rewarding posting to date. I am grateful for the recognition I have received for my work during this time and I feel honoured to be selected for this award.

Civil Servant, Rachel Spicer, said of her award win:

I am incredibly humbled to receive a Commander JFC Commendation for my role as Cyber & Influence Capability Planning Group Manager within JFC HQ.

Adding to this, Lieutenant Commander Craig Devlin from the Royal Navy said:

This award is recognition that innovation in the right environment can thrive and that procurement can be an agile process delivering at pace. I thoroughly enjoyed my time in JFC and feel privileged to receive this award.

The Royal Air Force's Sergeant Steven Peter Hollis said:

I am extremely honoured to receive this award. It was a pleasure to serve within JFC, working with personalities from across the three services. My role as a military skills instructor was very rewarding, ensuring personnel were prepared for operations.

The Commander JFC Commendations can be awarded to service personnel, civil servants and contracted staff from across the organisation. The winners of the Commander Joint Forces Command Commendations are:

- Cdr Ian Peattie, Royal Navy, Standing Joint Force Headquarters
- Capt Stephen Jenkins, French Navy, Combined Joint Expeditionary Force
- W01 Darren Lennon, Royal Navy, Permanent Joint Headquarters
- W02 John Heriot, Royal Navy, JFC C4 Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

- W02 Matthew Arthur, Royal Army Physical Training Corp, Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre
- Lt Col Douglas Cochran, Royal Regiment of Scotland, Joint Information Activities Group
- Cpl Dean Cresswell, Intelligence Corps, Permanent Joint Headquarters
- Maj Wayne Fielding, Royal Logistics Corps, Northwood HQ
- Bdr Simon Hall, Royal Regiment of Artillery, Standing Joint Force Headquarters
- Maj Christopher Hartley, Royal Corps of Signals, Global operations Security Control Centre
- Maj David Hollis, Princess of Wales Royal Regiment (PWRR), Officer Commanding Headquarters Company 2 PWRR
- Maj Frederick McNair, Royal Regiment of Scotland, Joint Force Development
- W02 Simon Mortiboy, Royal logistics Corps, Defence Academy
- Cpl Thomas Oldnall, Intelligence Corps, British Forces Cyprus
- Maj Benjamin Sawyer, Royal Logistics Corps, Joint Forces Command Capability
- Sgt Andros Adamou, Police, Community Police Sergeant
- Sqn Ldr Hayley Adamson, Royal Air Force, Joint Expeditionary Force
- Flt Lt Lee Ashcroft, Royal Air Force, Joint Movements Squadron
- Sgt Edward Coleridge, Royal Air Force, Joint Movements Squadron
- Sgt Steven Hollis, Royal Air Force, European Joint Support Unit
- Sqn Ldr Julian Park, Royal Air Force, Permanent Joint Headquarters

- Paula Banthrope, Joint Forces Command HQ
 - Rev Clive Larrett, Joint Intelligence Training Group
 - Alfred Rouse, Capability Special Projects
 - Rachel Spicer, Joint Forces Command HQ
 - John Strange, Technical Surveillance Countermeasures Practitioner
 - Crossbow Wyton Team, Team Award, Defence Intelligence
 - Joint Warfare Exercise Branch, Team Award, Joint Warfare
 - Non Standard Services Requirement Tiger Team, Team Award, Information Services & Systems
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News story: Defence Secretary meets civil society groups to discuss human rights in conflict-affected areas

Staff from organisations representing the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine, as well as several international action groups, were welcomed to London to discuss the issues faced in their countries, particularly by women.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Conflict can have devastating effects for anyone caught in its path, but life can be particularly traumatic for women. They are subject to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and their calls for justice are often falling on deaf ears.

I am determined we do more to listen to those who are often not given a voice. It is only by understanding the situation faced by women and girls that we will be able to protect them.

The event allowed the Defence Secretary to gain a greater understanding of the security situation faced by women, men, girls and boys in conflict-affected areas. In turn this will allow the military to develop better plans for protection of civilians.

The meeting was the first time a UK Defence minister has sat with civil societies groups specifically representing women's human rights from areas affected by conflict. The groups represented included Gender Action for Peace and Security, Action Aid, International Alert, the International Rescue Committee, Plan, Saferworld, Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Women for Women International, Security Women, Nigeria INGO Forum and Legal Action Worldwide.

The UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security has currently nine focus countries, five of which were discussed yesterday: DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. These nations either have UK military directly deployed there, or are nations where UK-trained peacekeepers are deployed.

The UK has already increased peacekeeping in Sudan and Somalia, has deployed four Military Gender and Protection Advisers to DRC and has established a UK centre of excellence to integrate guidelines on women, peace and security into its work. It is also among the first countries to publish a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

[News story: Defence Secretary and Australian Minister tour Scottish site building world-class warships as £1 billion is pumped into supply chain](#)

Australia's decision to choose BAE Systems to build the nine British-designed warships could be worth up to £20 billion, and has been hailed as the biggest Naval ship deal for a decade. The agreement has massive potential benefits across the entire existing Type 26 supply chain, which the Defence Secretary outlined has now seen investment of more than £1 billion across more than 80 companies.

Speaking during the visit to BAE Systems' Clyde Shipyard with Minister Payne today, the Defence Secretary revealed the massive investment had already boosted family firms and British businesses across the nation, showing the importance of shipbuilding in every corner of the country, and its potential to support allies across the world.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This renaissance in British shipbuilding is great news for our major yards, but also for the whole defence industry, with millions being injected into so many businesses, both big and small, supporting and supplying our world-class warships. The Type 26 supply chain has now seen investment worth over £1 billion, and many of the businesses involved are now perfectly placed to benefit from Australia's £20 billion build.

Australian Minister of Defence Ms Payne toured the shipyard where Britain's new warship fleet is being constructed. Her Government's 'Global Combat Ship' agreement, which was announced last month and will see nine of Britain's cutting-edge ships built in Australia, is also expected to draw on the United Kingdom's robust supply chain to support the construction of its fleet.



Defence Secretary and Australian Minister tour Scottish site building world-class warships as £1 billion is pumped into supply chain. Crown copyright.

BAE Systems Chief Executive Charles Woodburn said:

Australia's selection of the Type 26 Combat Ship for its Future Frigates programme reflects the world-leading anti-submarine warfare capabilities these ships will deliver to the UK and to the Commonwealth.

In the 12 months since cutting steel on the first of the UK ships, we have committed more than £1 billion with supply chain companies, large and small – vital partners in delivering cutting edge

capability to the Royal Navy, supporting thousands of jobs and contributing to national prosperity.

Our recent success on the Australian Future Frigate programme will not only deliver huge benefits for Australia, supporting jobs, local industry and sovereign capability – it will also generate opportunities for companies in our UK supply chain.

The pair's visit to the Govan shipyard comes almost exactly a year to the day since the first steel was cut on HMS Glasgow, marking the beginning on the build of Britain's first Type 26 frigate.

More than 80% of the total equipment spend has now be committed to the supply chain, and more than 80 companies have secured contracts to supply material for the first three ships.

Sixty-four of those companies are based across the United Kingdom, supporting more than 4000 jobs. The regional reach of the Type 26 ship helped secure the Australian deal for BAE Systems, with the success stories across Britain expected to be replicated in Australia.

The naval contract, which is the biggest surface ship deal in the past decade and saw the UK chosen ahead of Italian and Spanish firms, is the first time a British ship design has been exported since the 1970s.

The deal will secure more than 4,000 jobs in Australia and boost Britain's export economy for generations to come, opening a raft of opportunities for British firms to offer specialist knowledge and capabilities.

The 6,900 tonne multi-mission warships are designed to support anti-submarine warfare and a whole range of other operations anywhere in the world. They will form a key part of the Royal Australian Navy.

The formidable frigates will also allow interoperability between Australian and Royal Navy ships amid a climate of intensifying threats around the world, especially in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific regions.

The visit to the Scottish shipyard also came on the day the [Defence Secretary announced plans to ensure that thousands of troops resident in Scotland are not left out of pocket following recent tax rises from the Scottish Government.](#)

[News story: Autonomy for tomorrow's](#)

world

Updated: Headline edit.

In a new cross-government collaboration, the Ministry of Defence (MOD), the Department for International Development (DFID) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) are working together on turning cutting-edge designs for drones and robots into reality.

Experts from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) are leading the partnership as part of MOD's Innovation Autonomy Challenge, with joint competition funding from MOD, DFID and UKRI being placed through the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA).

This is the second phase of the competition, which will build prototypes for initial demonstration this year, and is worth a total of £3.8m over the next 12 months. Four of the five successful organisations are British-led, with a wide range of sub-contractors from small and medium enterprises, industry and academia.

Winning systems concepts include autonomous hoverbikes, powered paragliders and other unmanned air vehicles, operating alongside self-driving ground vehicles to deliver supplies across difficult, and potentially contested, terrain.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Defence makes an unrivalled investment in science and technology, creating thousands of highly-skilled jobs and brilliant career opportunities, generating billions for the UK economy.

This Autonomous Last Mile competition has seen next-generation concepts from unmanned hoverbikes to powered paragliders come to life.

And they could be saving troops' lives on the battlefield in years to come. I congratulate all those involved in the competition as they ensure our military remain ahead of our adversaries.



The Autonomous Last Mile Resupply project is looking at the technologies that could transform the delivery of logistics. Banard Dynamics copyright.

Phase 2 has selected 5 bids, led by Animal Dynamics Ltd, Barnard Microsystems Ltd, Fleetonomy, HORIBA MIRA, and Qinetiq, to build prototypes systems for initial testing and evaluation this autumn:

- Animal Dynamics with a system featuring novel autonomous powered paragliders;
- Barnard Microsystems Ltd with Cranfield University developing a vertical take-off and landing unmanned air vehicle-based system;
- Fleetonomy with Thales, Thesigers, Avartek & Callen Lenz to provide a system to demonstrate autonomous networked unmanned deliveries in the urban and other environments;
- Horiba Mira with Frazer Nash Consultancy featuring a highly autonomous all-terrain unmanned ground vehicle using artificial intelligence to provide GPS-denied navigation, advanced terrain perception and object recognition;
- QinetiQ with Hull University, Malloy Aeronautics, MilRem Robotics, Roke Manor Research, Oxbotica, IQHQ Ltd & Aberystwyth University offering an integrated highly-automated logistic system, featuring autonomous hoverbikes and advanced unmanned ground vehicles.

Peter Stockel, Dstl's lead for the Innovation Autonomy Challenge, said:

We're particularly pleased that we're able to take the next step on this important journey in partnership with DFID and UKRI, as part

of our innovation initiative.

Working together we can collectively make the best use of the resources available for the most promising proposals and this is good joining together of important government interests and investment.

It increases our options across similar requirements and offers a broader range of potential routes to market for this rapidly developing technology area where the UK has world-class expertise and innovation.

For future frontline military operations, the technology could reduce risk to soldiers by removing them from the hazards of frontline logistics resupply and improving the pace of operations.

Lt Colonel Richard Craig, Staff Officer for Robotics and Autonomous Systems, said:

The Autonomous Last Mile Resupply project is looking at the technologies for use in ways that could transform the delivery of logistics in not only Land, but also Maritime operations. It has the potential to reduce the amount of supplies stored at the front line and increase the speed of resupply. There is the potential to increase combat mass as the technology enables the redeployment of current manpower onto different tasks.



The Autonomous Last Mile Resupply project is looking at the technologies that could transform the delivery of logistics. Fleetonony copyright.

UK Research and Innovation, which has also invested £1.2 million in the Last Mile Challenge, is funding the project under their Robots for a Safer World Challenge, as part of the Industrial Challenge Strategy Fund. The investment aims to support the development of new technologies for extreme and challenging environments, including nuclear energy, deep mining or space.

DFID's investment in ALMRS Phase 2 presents an opportunity to strengthen cross-Whitehall collaboration around innovative technologies. The investment is part of a wider portfolio of projects to see how UAVs can be responsibly used to deliver life-saving aid to the world's poorest and most vulnerable people in hard-to-reach locations, including in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters.

International Development Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles could be a game changer in delivering life-saving UK aid to the world's poorest and most vulnerable people in the aftermath of humanitarian disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis and conflict.

This fund will help develop technology that can deliver vital supplies to the hardest to reach locations and I am proud that British experts are helping use this innovative technology to save lives.

Andrew Tyrer, Challenge Director of Robots for a Safer World Challenge, said:

The increasing amount of work that needs to be done in extreme environments means there are more applications for robotics and AI, such as hazardous humanitarian aid situations. Solving all these problems presents business opportunities for UK companies. Many of the challenges being addressed via this competition are consistent with those being addressed by the Robots for a Safer World Industrial Strategy Challenge and build on the same underlying technologies.