

# [Press release: Uk and India commit to closer military ties](#)

Both nations benefit from vibrant digital economies and will design, create and manufacture technologies that will help protect citizens and businesses against malicious cyber attacks.

The agreement will enable collaboration on internet governance, promoting international cyber stability, tackling online crime and developing cyber security sectors.

Minister for Armed Forces, Mark Lancaster, said:

Defence and security are at the centre of our friendship with India. By working together to combat terrorism, tackle cyber threats, and build regional security, we are keeping both our countries safe.

Discussions have also been held on how the Royal Navy can work more closely with their Indian counterparts to ensure the safety and prosperity of the Indian Ocean region – tackling piracy and drug trafficking, as well as protecting freedom of navigation rights. The UK already plays an active role in maritime security in this region through counter terrorism, counter piracy and maritime security operations because a free and open Indo-Pacific area is in the interests of the UK, India and the international community.

In addition, work is underway on building a long-term approach to the UK and India's defence industry-to-industry relations, allowing our Armed Forces to share technologies and learn skills from each other.

These new military links are among several ways the UK and India are working closer together across several departments, announced during an inward visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The armies of the UK and India already enjoy a close bond and work together on Exercise Ajeya Warrior every two years, sharing battle tactics and pool together ideas.

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## [News story: Seven british Army](#)

# soldiers killed during World War 1 are honoured as they are laid to rest

Captain Henry John Innes Walker, a New Zealand national serving with the British Army, has finally been laid to rest alongside 6 unknown soldiers after they were killed during World War 1. Known to his family as Jack, Capt Walker enlisted into the Royal Warwickshire Regiment as did 1 of the unknown soldiers. The 5 remaining were buried as unknown soldiers of unknown regiments, all at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission New Irish Farm Cemetery in Ieper, Belgium.



The Royal Regiment Fusiliers take Captain Walker to his final resting place, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, part of Defence Business Services, was held on Wednesday 18 April 2018 and was conducted by the Reverend Stuart Richards CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It's a great honour to be here today to lay to rest these 7 brave men who paid the ultimate price in the service of King and country. Although saddened that the 6 will remain unknown, I am delighted that we managed to return Captain Walker's name to him and

especially thrilled that his great nephews have travelled so far to be with us today.

After war was declared in 1914, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment left for the front and Capt Walker saw active service on the Belgian frontier as part of the 10th Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division. Capt Walker was aged 25 when he was killed on 25 April 1915 during the Second Battle of Ypres, which resulted in his regiment losing nearly 500 men. It is likely that all 7 died during the Second Battle of Ypres (April-May 1915).



Padre Stuart Richards delivers the service for Captain Walker and the six unknown soldiers, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Reverend Stuart Richards CF said:

It is a privilege to be part of this on-going act of national remembrance, to preserve and dedicate anew these memorials for future generations. Captain Walker travelled from the other side of the world to serve his country, and was never to see his home again. Today, a century on, his family have made that same long journey in his honour, and to remember those he led and died with.

During a planned archaeological dig on the western side of the village of St Julien in April 2016, human remains and artefacts dating from World War 1 were discovered. Capt Walker and the 6 unknown soldiers were found amongst a total of 38 casualties from various nationalities.



Royal Warwickshire cap amongst poppy wreath, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Capt Walker was found with a coin holder, binocular components and leather casing bearing the initials 'HJIW', plus a Royal Warwickshire Regiment cap badge and shoulder title.

Family members who paid their respects to Capt Walker included his great nephews, Allan and Alistair Innes-Walker, who travelled from New Zealand and Australia respectively. Also present was Greg Andrews, New Zealand Ambassador to Belgium and France, and Colonel James Phillips, the Defence Attaché from the British Embassy in The Hague. Current members of the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers paid their own tribute by providing the bearer party.

Allan Innes-Walker, great nephew of Capt Walker said:

According to his men, Jack's last words were 'Come on lads' as he raised his revolver and led his company towards German lines and heavy fire. His discovery and burial are a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for my children to connect to a family member and a devastating history – an unexpected and inspiring legacy.



Great nephew Alistair Innes-Walker receives the Union Flag from Captain Alex Edmund, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Alistair Innes-Walker, great nephew of Capt Walker said:

My son is named after Great Uncle Jack. At school we sat beneath his memorial stained glass window – an ever-present reminder of a sad but proud history. To have the chance to pay our respects and meet those involved from the MOD Casualty Centre will mean so much to Jack's now very extended family.



Great Great Nephew Jack Innes-Walker lays a wreath, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Michael Innes-Walker, the nephew of Capt Walker was unable to make the journey. Michael said:

From my earliest years my father told me stories of Uncle Jack – the schoolboy scholar and sportsman. He always wanted to be a soldier and joined the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, got posted to India and became a close friend of ‘Monty’ (later General Montgomery) before transferring to France. My family never knew what happened to him other than he was killed in action, and now we will be honouring him as he so justly deserves.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

Captain Walker was far from his New Zealand home, when he was killed in action in April 1915. He was a remarkable man, sent to serve with the British Army on behalf of his country, an outstanding athlete and a decorated officer. Today we have been able to lay him and his comrades to rest at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission’s New Irish Farm Cemetery, alongside the men they fought and died with. We remember his sacrifice and that of all those who served and will care for their graves and their memory with dedication, forever.

Colonel James Phillips, British Defence Attaché said:

It is a real honour representing the British Embassy at the burial of Captain Walker and six unknown soldiers. These were men who fought in such horrific conditions that it was impossible to identify them. They will never be forgotten – today has shown that. The end of the first World War may have been 100 years ago this year, but our memory of these men will live on. Their fight was instrumental for our freedom. It is important that these soldiers have been given a final resting place, with the full honours they deserve. They have made the ultimate sacrifice for us.



Headstone for Captain Henry 'Jack' Walker, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

One new headstone bearing Capt Walker's name and six inscribed with 'Known unto God' have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

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# [News story: Prime Minister of India's visit, April 2018](#)

*Updated:* closer military ties announcement added

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has today begun his second visit to the UK as an official Guest of Government, as part of the [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting](#).

The UK and India are bound together by numerous personal, professional, cultural and institutional ties, and also share a global outlook and a commitment to the rule of law, making us natural partners. The visit will help strengthen this partnership further, improving the prosperity and security for the UK and India.

## **Foreign Secretary welcomes Prime Minister Modi to the UK**

[Foreign Secretary welcomes Prime Minister Modi](#)

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## **Prime Ministers' meeting**

[Prime Minister Theresa May met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi](#).

They held wide-ranging and constructive discussions and underlined our strategic partnership and growing convergence on regional and international issues.

Read the [UK-India joint statement](#).

## **Memorandums of Understanding, agreements and partnership announcements**

The UK and Indian governments announced a wide range of new initiatives and agreements.

View the full list of [Memorandums of Understanding and agreements](#).



## Health

The United Kingdom and India will [extend their health partnership](#) and share research, knowledge and technology in areas of anti-microbial resistance, low cost health products and high yield crops.

## Research

The UK will continue to [grow our already strong research partnership](#) with India with tech-focused investments that focus on issues of global importance including agriculture, clean energy, global health and the environment.

## Tech

A [new UK-India Tech Partnership](#) will pair businesses, universities and others from different regions in the UK with states in India.

## Trade

A [new India-UK Trade Partnership](#) will seek to improve the accessibility of trade and remove barriers for businesses in both countries.

[UK-India trade links](#)

## Closer military ties

The UK and India will [continue to strengthen their defence and security relationship](#), working more closely together than ever before to tackle terrorism and threats to cyber security.

## UK-India cultural links

The UK and India are joined by a 'living bridge' as thousands of British and Indian people live, work and study together each year.

[UK-India cultural links](#)

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## [News story: RAF's Legendary Dambusters squadron reforms to fly F-35 jets](#)

Gavin Williamson announced the new 617 Squadron after an event in Washington DC to mark the centenary of the RAF, which was attended by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier.

The naming of the new 617 Squadron follows the 75th anniversary of the

original formation of the squadron, commonly referred to as the 'Dambusters'. Originally set up for the highly-specialised mission to knock out dams and disrupt industrial production in the Ruhr Valley of Germany, the new 617 Squadron will be the first to fly the UK's brand new, state-of-the-art F-35 fighter jets – the most advanced and dynamic fighter aircraft in the RAF's 100-year history.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The 617 Squadron name was made famous by 'The Dambusters', who played such a vital role in the Second World War. So it is fitting that by flying the world's most advanced fighter jets, our new squadron will be ensuring that the legend of world-leading air power lives on.

The F-35B Lightning will defend our nation and ensure that Britain remains a pioneer in innovation, with a unique ability to adapt to this increasingly dangerous world.

The UK is currently flying the F-35B Lightning, a multi-role fighter jet capable of a wide range of operations. It is the world's first jet to combine radar evading stealth technology with supersonic speeds and short take-off and landing capability.

Lightning Force Commander Air Commodore David Bradshaw said:

This is a most momentous day for the UK Lightning Force as we celebrate the reformation of 617 Squadron. Manned by highly capable Royal Air Force and Royal Navy personnel and equipped with the truly remarkable F-35B Lightning, 617 Squadron will once again provide potent, flexible Air Power for the nation.

In a simple yet highly significant ceremony held in the heart of Washington DC amongst friends and colleagues as part of celebrations for RAF100, the famous Dambusters marked the start of another exciting chapter in their Squadron's proud history. I very much look forward to welcoming 617 Squadron home to RAF Marham this summer as they prepare for operational service from land and sea.

## **The Dambusters**

Wing Commander Guy Gibson hand-picked his bomber crews for the original 617-squadron, who then went on to deploy the iconic 'bouncing bomb' which had to be dropped above the water at an exact height of 60 feet and a speed of 220mph. The crews successfully managed to breach the Mohne and Eder dams.

## Today's 617 Squadron

Today's 617 Squadron, currently training with the UK's 15 F-35B Lightning jets in America, will move to the UK with a number of aircraft to their new home at RAF Marham this Summer. Like their predecessors they will be operating at the forefront of aircraft technology.

The aircraft will be jointly operated by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and have the ability to operate from land and sea, forming an integral part of Carrier Strike operating from the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary highlights importance of partnering with charities during visit to military recovery centre](#)

*Updated: tweak*

Mr Williamson visited Tedworth House on Monday, a recovery centre run by Help for Heroes.

The £24million residential centre offers comprehensive post-rehabilitation programmes and life skills courses to help injured veterans, service personnel and their families, lead active, independent and fulfilling lives.

The Defence Secretary was shown round the facility and spent time looking in the adaptive gym kitted out with specialist equipment.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are committed to making sure that our troops, veterans and their families get a fair deal and the best possible support on offer for their sacrifice and service to protecting our country.

Military charities such as Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion play a vital role and we work closely with them to deliver the care and opportunities our service personnel deserve.

Tedworth House is an excellent example of the Defence Recovery Capability initiative in action.

Tedworth House, based just outside the garrison town of Tidworth, is part of the Defence Recovery Capability initiative.

The Defence Recovery Capability is a MOD and Third Sector Partnership, providing the framework within which all injured service personnel are provided with the right support to enable a return to duty or effective transition to civilian life.

The MOD has a deep and longstanding partnership Help for Heroes. As well as the Tedworth House facility, the MOD, Help for Heroes and the Royal British Legion partner on delivering the UK's Delegation to the Invictus Games, for which the Government provides £350,000 in LIBOR funding.

UK Team Trials for the Invictus Games were recently held at the University of Bath, with a record number of hopefuls trying out to see if they can make the team for Sydney.

With a renewed focus on mental health the Defence Secretary last month launched the 24/7 Military Mental Health Helpline alongside over £200 million of dedicated funding. This is delivered through Combat Stress who are the leading specialists in mental health services.