

[News story: Armed Forces' contribution to the Royal Wedding announced](#)

The Ministry of Defence is pleased to confirm details of the contribution of members of the Armed Forces to the wedding of HRH Prince Henry of Wales and Ms Meghan Markle on 19 May 2018.

Units that hold a special relationship with Prince Harry will provide ceremonial support at the wedding and during the carriage procession at the request of Kensington Palace. More than 250 members of the Armed Forces will perform ceremonial duties at the wedding.

Members of the Household Cavalry will form a staircase party at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle as part of the wedding. The State Trumpeters and a Captain's Escort from the Household Cavalry will also provide ceremonial support.

Prince Harry joined The Blues and Royals in April 2016 and served with the Household Cavalry Regiment, undertaking two tours of Afghanistan and rising to the rank of Captain.

Streets within the precincts of Windsor Castle will be lined by members of the Windsor Castle Guard from 1st Battalion Irish Guards, and by Armed Forces personnel from the following units:

Royal Navy Small Ships and Diving

Prince Harry is Commodore-in-Chief, Small Ships and Diving.

Royal Marines

Prince Harry is Captain General Royal Marines, after succeeding the Duke of Edinburgh in the role in December 2017.

3 Regiment Army Air Corps

Prince Harry served as an Apache Pilot in Helmand Province, Afghanistan with 662 Squadron, 3 Regiment Army Air Corps.

The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Prince Harry served with the 1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles in Afghanistan in 2007.

RAF Honington

Prince Harry is Honorary Air Commandant of RAF Honington.

Musical support to the street liners will be provided by the Band of the Irish Guards.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, Chief of the Defence Staff, said:

I am proud that members of the Armed Forces have been asked to take part in the ceremonial celebrations taking place on the royal couple's wedding day. It is a happy occasion for the whole country and reminds us of the role the Armed Forces play in marking important events in the life of the nation.

I am particularly pleased to hear that members of the Armed Forces who have a close relationship with Prince Harry will be taking part. Servicemen and women from the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force will all be honoured to offer their support.

A Kensington Palace spokesperson said:

Prince Harry and Ms. Meghan Markle are pleased that members of the Armed Forces will play such a special role in their Wedding. The Military, and these units in particular, hold a great significance for Prince Harry and the couple are incredibly grateful for their support.

[News story: General Sir Nick Carter appointed new Chief of the Defence Staff](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I am delighted to offer my congratulations to General Sir Nicholas Carter on his appointment as Chief of the Defence Staff, a post he will take up in June of this year when Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach becomes Chairman of the Military Committee at NATO.

General Carter has been an exceptional Chief of the General Staff, leading the Army at a time of rapid change, with troops deployed to deter Russian aggression and protect our NATO allies in the east. He has also overseen the delivery of vital training to help Iraqi Security Forces defeat Daesh.

At this crucial time for defence, as we look to strengthen our Armed Forces in the face of intensifying global threats, I'm confident General Carter will be an outstanding Chief of the

Defence Staff.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Air Chief Marshal Peach has served the UK with distinction throughout an exemplary career and his advice and professionalism have been invaluable to me and the other members of the National Security Council during his time as Chief of the Defence Staff. He has demonstrated incredible commitment to keeping the UK and its citizens safe and we owe him an enormous debt of gratitude for his service. It is entirely fitting that he is leaving to take up a new role with NATO, which has served as the bedrock of our defence for nearly six decades. He will be the first British Chairman of the NATO Military Committee for more than 20 years.

General Carter is a superb choice as the next Chief of the Defence Staff and will bring vast experience to the role having served as Chief of the General Staff for nearly four years. In that time I have been impressed not only by the reforms he has carried out with the British Army, but by the care he has demonstrated for the men and women under his command. It is also a testament to him that over his period of leadership the Army has become more reflective of the society it serves. I am confident General Carter will bring the same dynamism to his new role and I look forward to working with him.

A biography of Sir Nick can be found [here](#).

[News story: Third Tide-Class Tanker Arrives in UK](#)

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge comes just weeks after her sister ship, RFA Tidespring, met up at sea with aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth for the first time.

The 39,000-tonne tankers can carry up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,400 cubic metres of fresh water in support of Royal Navy operations all over the world.

The detailed customisation work to prepare RFA Tidesurge and her sister ships for operations is being undertaken at the A&P shipyard in Falmouth, sustaining around 300 jobs.

Minister for Defence Procurement Guto Bebb said:

The arrival of RFA Tidesurge in Cornwall marks another key milestone in the Tide Class programme. Tidesurge will soon join her sister ships in providing the integral support which powers our warships and helps our Royal Navy maintain a truly global presence.

While in Falmouth RFA Tidesurge will be fitted with UK specific armour, self-defence weaponry and communications systems, with the total UK work content, including A&P, in the Tide Class programme worth around £150 million and sustaining further jobs at 27 UK-based companies.

The customisation work is expected to take around four months after which RFA Tidesurge will begin final sea trials before entering service in Autumn this year.

Meanwhile, RFA Tidespring, which was preparing to conduct a Replenishment at Sea (RAS) refuelling when it met with HMS Queen Elizabeth in February, is currently acting as the training tanker for the Navy's Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) and will take part in exercise Joint Warrior in the Spring. RFA Tiderace, which is currently docked at A&P Falmouth, is undergoing preparations for her capability trials which are expected to commence in early April.

Sir Simon Bollom, Chief of Materiel (Ships) at Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, said:

I'm proud to say that the delivery of the tanker programme will provide vital support for the Royal Navy, providing it with fuel and fresh water, while also being able to undertake a wide range of maritime operations, including humanitarian relief.

The fourth of the Tide Class vessels – RFA Tideforce – is expected to be delivered later this year.

A&P Group has held the contract to support and maintain RFA ships at home and abroad since 2008. Under the Cluster Support Programme, A&P Group provides maintenance support to groups of MOD vessels, which include RFA Argus and the RFA Bay Class vessels Mounts Bay, Cardigan Bay and Lyme Bay.

[News story: UK side by side with Allies a year on from NATO deterrence](#)

deployment

In his first visit to the Baltic ally, the Defence Secretary reaffirmed to the Estonian President and Defence Minister the UK's unwavering commitment to Euro-Atlantic security, a year after UK forces first arrived in country.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

For nearly 70 years, NATO has been the guarantee of mutual security. The threats and dangers we face are evolving, intensifying and increasingly challenging – our commitment to our Allies has seldom been more important.

I've seen first-hand the vital role our brave Armed Forces are playing on NATO's eastern border, standing shoulder to shoulder with our Allies to deter Russian aggression.

Nearly 2000 British troops, across two rotations, have led a multinational battlegroup in Estonia as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) deployment since it officially began just under a year ago in April 2017.

In an address, alongside his Estonian counterpart, Defence Minister Jüri Luik, to the 800 British troops and their NATO colleagues, stationed there now Mr Williamson said this reflected Britain's global outlook and commitment to the defence of our friends and Allies across the Baltic region.

The 1st Battalion, The Royal Welsh are currently based in Tapa to enhance NATO's deterrence posture and the Defence Secretary confirmed that the 1st Battalion, The Yorkshire Regiment will take over from them in June as the UK's enduring presence in Estonia continues.

The UK's battlegroup forms part of the wider NATO eFP, with four multinational battlegroups deployed across the Baltic States and Poland, led by the UK, US, Canada and Germany. The UK has a further 150 soldiers based in Poland, part of the US led battlegroup, and RAF Typhoons are due to deploy to Romania in May, patrolling the Black Sea skies.

In addition to the 800 personnel, the UK has committed more than 150 vehicles to support Estonia during this deployment, including Warrior infantry fighting vehicles and Challenger 2 tanks.

The Defence Secretary also held meetings in Tallinn with the President Kersti Kaljulaid, Prime Minister Jüri Ratas and Defence Minister Jüri Luik.

[News story: £400m deal signed for battle-winning Brimstone missile for RAF Typhoons](#)

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has signed a £400 million deal to launch battle-winning Brimstone missiles from RAF Typhoon jets, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced.

The ultra-accurate Brimstone already has a successful track record, playing a critical role from Tornado fighter jets in the fight against Daesh in Syria and Iraq, and the deal will now see the missile upgraded to become compatible with Typhoons.

The £400 million Brimstone 2 Capability Sustainment Programme with MBDA UK will also build new equipment to support the capability and develop a stockpile of weapons available for operations, creating around 130 brand new jobs and sustaining hundreds more across the country.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our world-class defence industry is a key foundation on which our great military is built, and the weapons it produces like the pinpoint Brimstone missiles have been crucial in helping our fighter pilots on missions such as driving down Daesh territory in the Middle East. This massive £400m investment is a huge boost to the proud workforce equipping our Armed Forces and will create and protect hundreds of jobs across the country, bolstering both the power of the Typhoon jet and British prosperity.

The new variation is being developed through the Brimstone 2 Capability Sustainment Programme will replace all earlier variants in 2022 and have an upgraded seeker, rocket motor, warhead and guidance system, making it an even more effective weapon.

The new missile will arm Typhoon when it takes over as the RAF's principal ground-attack aircraft in 2019.

The work has created around 130 new jobs and sustains a further 270 existing jobs at MBDA's sites in Stevenage, Bolton and across the company's significant UK supply chain.

Brimstone is currently in use by the UK's Tornado squadrons in Iraq and Syria as part of Operation Shader and has also been used on operations in Afghanistan and Libya.

Chief of Material Land at the MOD's procurement organisation, Lieutenant General Paul Jaques said:

The Brimstone 2 CSP contract enables us to continue to deliver a world class air to surface missile in support of the RAF's Typhoon Squadrons on operations worldwide.

It is excellent news not only for our troops but also for the UK economy, with jobs and skills being sustained across the country.

The programme will also allow the weapon to be further developed for use on future aircraft. Brimstone is among weapons being considered for use by the British Army's new AH-64E Apache attack helicopters and the RAF's next-generation Protector unmanned aerial system.