

News story: Daz beats bullies to lead England's boxers at Commonwealth Games

Sick of unpleasant comments and the threat of violence hanging over him, 10-year-old Daz Chapple took up the contact sport at his local gym in Saltash, Cornwall so he could look after himself.

Now, almost 40 years later, Daz, who is based at Defence, Equipment and Support (DE&S), the government's procurement agency based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol, has been selected as Team Leader of Team England.

At the Gold Coast next April he will lead out 12 of the country's most talented amateur boxers, fully expecting them to bring back a haul of medals.

Daz, who lives in Bristol, said:

I came from a tough background, was bullied at school and decided I needed to protect myself.

I saw an advert at my school, which happened to have a national schoolboy champion at the time, and I decided there was no reason I couldn't follow in his footsteps.



Daz recently met the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson

As soon as he started training, Daz fell in love with the sport and went on to make several national semi-finals in the 51kg division.

At 18 he joined the RAF as an aerial erector and walked straight into the RAF boxing team.

After being posted to Germany for four years he returned to the UK and to the ring but, such was his love for the sport, soon found himself juggling being a boxer, coach and team manager as well as having to fulfil all his commitments in his role with the Armed Forces.

Daz, who recently met the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson during a visit to DE&S, said:

The military has been very good to me. I put in a lot of extra hours but there are not many places you can work that would allow you the time or flexibility to be able to do this role.

In 2007 Daz applied successfully for a role of England Boxing Team Manager and is now Director England Boxing, (Director of Talent and Performance and GB Talent Commission).

Over the years Daz has witnessed hundreds of bouts – one of which he particularly remembers.

He said:

I actually managed Tyson Fury's first fight as an amateur which took place in the Officers' mess hall at RAF Wyton in Cambridgeshire. He was so tall and had such a long reach the other guy could not get near him. He was fast too which singled him out. He has done well for himself.



Daz Chapple (left) in a boxing match in his youth

For Daz the single moment that stands out is being given the prestigious appointment of Team Leader and being asked to lead out Team England Boxing at the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

He said:

It is an absolute honour for me. I have dedicated my life to boxing and to be asked to lead the team out in Australia is incredible. It just doesn't get any better.

We have an incredibly strong team and I believe we will be very successful.

Speech: Salisbury nerve agent attack: UK OSCE Permanent Council statement

Mr Chairman,

It is with great regret that I take the floor today to inform the Permanent

Council of deeply concerning events that have taken place in the UK over the past days.

On the afternoon of Sunday 4 March, in the beautiful cathedral city of Salisbury in Wiltshire, a father and his daughter, Sergey and Julia Skripal, were taken gravely ill whilst walking through the city centre. Both remain critically ill. A British police officer who was among members of the emergency services responding to the incident also fell seriously ill and has spent the past days in hospital in intensive care. More than 30 other people have also sought medical treatment. As the nature of the Skripals' illness became clear, a major police-led operation sought to identify the poison, locate its source and decontaminate the affected locations and ensure the safety of the public. That operation, and those investigations are ongoing.

As the Prime Minister told the British Parliament, it is clear that Mr Skripal and his daughter had been poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent. I repeat, a military-grade nerve agent.

This agent has been identified by our experts at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Porton Down, as a type developed in Russia, part of a group of agents known as Novichok. [On Monday, my Prime Minister told Parliament](#) that it was highly likely that Russia, a participating State of the OSCE, was responsible.

Either as a direct act – or because Russia had lost control of a catastrophically damaging military-grade nerve agent.

This assessment was based not only on the positive identification of the nerve agent and our knowledge that the Russian Federation has previously produced this agent and still has the capability to do so, but also on the Russian state's record of state sponsored assassinations, and indeed, public statements indicating that defectors may be seen as legitimate targets.

The British government sought an urgent explanation from Russia, asking Moscow for immediate and full disclosure of the Novichok programme to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Russia's response so far has demonstrated complete disdain for the gravity of these events. There has been no explanation of how this nerve agent came to be used in the UK. And no explanation as to why Russia, a participating State of the OSCE, has an undeclared Chemical Weapon programme – in clear contravention of international law. There is no alternative conclusion other than that the Russian state was culpable for this heinous act. This represents an unlawful use of force by the Russian Federation in the UK.

Mr Chairman, I need hardly remind the Permanent Council that no state party which has committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention should in any way be linked to, or responsible for, the use of Chemical Weapons. Indeed, only 1 week ago, Russia reported in the FSC the destruction of historic Chemical Weapon stocks. Events of the last week cast significant doubt on that statement.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is not the only international commitment

brought into question by this attack, the first offensive use of nerve agent of any sort on European Territory since the Second World War.

This was a grotesque crime, that not only targeted individuals in a particularly barbaric way, but which was perpetrated without regard to the safety of the British emergency services or indeed to local residents and visitors going about their ordinary lives on a Sunday afternoon.

I repeat Mr Chairman, this was an unlawful use of force against the UK.

But it is not simply a bilateral matter. This crime violates the letter and spirit of the Helsinki Final Act. It damages the concept of confidence building this organisation strives to develop. And it undermines the principles on which this organisation is founded.

No participating State of the OSCE should feel comfortable with what happened on the streets of Salisbury. No participating State.

Mr Chairman, police investigations are ongoing, decontamination operations are ongoing and medical care for the victims of this attack is ongoing.

For now, allow me to express my thanks for the many messages of support from friends, allies and partners around this table and for the strong expressions of solidarity from many capitals represented here.

I will close echoing [the words of my Prime Minister](#). This is an affront to the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. And an affront to the rules-based system on which we depend. We will work with our allies and partners to confront such actions wherever they threaten our security, at home and abroad.

Mr Chairman, please attach this statement to the journal of the day.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

Find out [more about the UK government response to the Salisbury attack](#).

[**News story: Durham Light Infantry and Bedfordshire Regiment Soldiers who fought in world war 1 are laid to rest a century later**](#)

The remains of 2 unknown British soldiers were given a dignified burial service earlier today (Thursday 15 March), over 100 years after their deaths.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by The Reverend John Swanston CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Rifles.



The Reverend John Swanston CF, 1st Battalion, The Rifles, leads the service for the two unknown British soldiers, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Both of these men were laid to rest today in a ceremonial burial with full military honours at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Orchard Dump Cemetery in France.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment standing by the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It is always a source of great personal sadness when we have to accept that we have been unable to identify a soldier who made the greatest sacrifice and paid the ultimate price.

We might not know who they are, but they were loved by somebody. It is fitting that members of their military family from the Royal Anglian Regiment and The Rifles are here today to pay tribute and to see them laid to rest with honour and dignity.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment prepare to lower the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The 2 soldiers were both found at Gavrelle near Arras. The first was found in July 2016. Based on the artefacts also found at the time which included a Durham Light Infantry shoulder title and cap badge, plus a T7 (7th Battalion) badge, it was thought that he died in September 1918 from when only 2 soldiers from the 7th Battalion are still missing. DNA testing has proved that it is neither of these soldiers.



Members of the 3 Rifles Regiment lower the coffin of the unknown Durham Light Infantry soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

The second soldier was found in September 2016. In his uniform pocket was a Bedfordshire Regiment cap badge. It is thought that he died in the Battle of Gavrelle in April 1917, but there are still too many Bedfordshire soldiers missing from that time for an identification to be made.



Royal Anglians Regiment folding the flag for the unknown Bedfordshire soldier, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Brigadier Rob Thomson, Defence Attaché, Paris said:

It is a privilege as both a serving Rifleman and UK Defence Attaché to France to participate in this solemn ceremony, as we rebury with full honours these courageous men who paid the ultimate price whilst serving their country alongside their comrades in arms to protect the liberty of Europe 100 years ago.

Mel Donnelly, CWGC said:

Today these soldiers, unknown but not forgotten, will be laid to rest alongside their comrades at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Orchard Dump Cemetery. They have been buried with the honour and dignity their sacrifice deserves and the CWGC will care for their grave, and the graves and memorials to all those who died, with that same honour and dignity forever. We will remember them all.

Captain Patrick Keating, Adjutant 3 Rifles, successor regiment to the Durham Light Infantry, said:

It is an immense honour for Riflemen of 3 RIFLES to be involved in the burial of this unknown soldier of the Durham Light, who faithfully served his country over 100 years ago. It is humbling to think of this sacrifice and the debt which the country owes him and we are proud that we in the RIFLES carry on the traditions of the Durham Light Infantry and our other antecedents to this day.

Headstones for the unknown soldiers have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

Press release: Defence Secretary announces innovative threat detection system for the Army's newest armoured vehicle

Updated: Tagged Defence Equipment and Support as a supporting organisation.

The Defence Secretary has today announced a £3.7 million deal to equip the Army's next generation armoured vehicle with the latest in automated threat warning systems.

Thales UK has signed a contract with General Dynamics Land Systems-UK for the installation of its Acusonic sensor, a vehicle-mounted acoustic shot detection system, on the £4.5 billion Ajax family of armoured fighting vehicles.

The Ajax Shot Detection System will be manufactured at Thales in Templecombe in Somerset, which employs more than 700 people in highly-skilled manufacturing and technical roles.

Designed to accurately sense and report the direction of incoming enemy fire, the system will give the vehicle's crew the critical situational awareness to react to the threat. Its innovative sensing system is based on Thales's world-class sonar technology that provides the 'ears' for ships and submarines around the world.

Each Ajax will be fitted with three Acusonic sensors, giving the crew a 360-degree threat-detection capability.

Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson, said:

> I am pleased to announce today that we will be spending almost £4million with Thales and General Dynamics Land Systems-UK to deliver the Ajax Shot

Detection System, which can sense enemy gunfire and protect troops using our next generation armoured vehicles.

Under the terms of the contract, 735 Acusonic systems are now on order for integration onto Ajax. Thales is already on contract to supply the primary and secondary sighting systems on the vehicle.

The six variants in the Ajax programme – Athena, Ajax, Ares, Apollo, Atlas and Argus – are due to come into service in 2020, providing a full suite of medium armoured vehicles and capabilities.

They will be the ‘eyes and ears’ of the British Army on the battlefields of the future.

The new vehicle will give the army enhanced intelligence, surveillance, protection, target acquisition and reconnaissance capabilities.

Major General Colin McLean, Director Land Equipment for Defence, Equipment and Support, the government’s procurement agency, said:

Ajax will deliver a step-change in versatility, agility and protection for our soldiers. Integrating this new sensor on to our family of Ajax vehicles, which will provide critical situational awareness, is another innovation we are investing in to ensure that British soldiers have the very best equipment to maintain their competitive advantage on the battlefields of today and the future.

Ends

Notes for editors

- General Dynamics Land Systems–UK, as the prime contractor for Ajax, was awarded the contract to provide the Ajax family of armoured vehicles in 2014.
- Thales UK has already been selected by General Dynamics Land Systems–UK to supply the primary sighting system for Ajax, and by Lockheed Martin UK, the sub-contractor responsible for the design and manufacture of Ajax turret, for the secondary sighting system.
- For more information contact the MOD News Desk on 0207 218 7907 or the Defence Equipment & Support Press Office on 01179130537.
- For the latest news follow us on Twitter at [@DefenceES](#) and [@DefenceHQ](#).

[News story: Defence Secretary boosts](#)

Britain's chemical capability as threat intensifies

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has announced measures to maintain the UK's world-leading chemical analysis and defence capability, as he warned of the intensifying threats the country faces in his first keynote speech in the role.

Whilst outlining his vision for the ongoing Modernising Defence Programme on a Policy Exchange platform at Rolls-Royce's Bristol factory, the Defence Secretary claimed that the 'reckless attack in Salisbury' should leave the country in no doubt of the threat which Russia poses to our citizens, in addition to other dangers from across the globe.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The choice before us as a nation is simple – to sit back and let events overtake us or step forward. Our Modernising Defence Programme will make sure our country can respond to the changing nature of warfare and the new threats we face to British interests. Russia, in particular, is ripping up the rulebook – we only have to look at the reckless attack in Salisbury.

Today I can announce we are investing £48 million in a new Chemical Weapons Defence Centre to maintain our cutting-edge in chemical analysis and defence. I've also made the decision to offer the anthrax vaccine to our forces at the highest readiness, providing them with vital protection against a deadly danger. By using all our power, hard and soft, Britain will continue bringing light to a darkening world.

The Defence Secretary praised the bravery and professionalism of the Armed Forces in their role supporting the police in their investigation into the poisoning of Sergei Skripal, as well as commending the expertise of Britain's world-renowned scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) at Porton Down.

In light of the response to the attempted murder, he has announced that DSTL will receive £48 million of extra funding to invest in a brand new 'Chemical Weapons Defence Centre' at Porton Down to ensure the UK retains its world leading capability in chemical analysis and defence.

With main construction on the Centre set to begin next month, it will go on to contain cutting-edge chemical analysis laboratories with the capability to identify any chemical agent through forensic analysis.

With the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threat growing from a range of state actors, the Defence Secretary also announced that

thousands of troops held at high readiness will be vaccinated against anthrax. This will ensure that troops are both protected and are ready to deploy to areas where the risk of an anthrax attack exists.

In the face of intensifying global threats, the Defence Secretary launched the Modernising Defence Programme earlier this year, which will ensure the UK Armed Forces can meet the complex and evolving challenges that Britain and its allies are confronted with.

With headline conclusions expected in the Summer, the Defence Secretary today outlined how the programme will see 'a more productive, harder-hitting Joint Force able to counter conventional threats and deal with new challenges'.

He spoke about 'taking our intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability to the next level' and further developing the ability to 'create and counter the narratives so central to modern conflict', adding that investment will be needed in the likes of 'autonomous systems', 'game-changing technology' and 'more advanced and more capable armoured vehicles, more drones as well as stealth fighters and state-of-the-art anti-submarine ships.'

Ahead of the speech he also toured the Rolls-Royce factory meeting workers and apprentices. The site supports engines for the likes of the Typhoon and A400M aircraft, the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers and the Type 26 frigate programme, and makes the lift system for the F-35 fighters jets which will allow them to vertically take-off from the carriers.

The Defence Secretary used the opportunity to praise the role of Rolls-Royce and emphasised that working with industry and boosting and protecting jobs in the defence sector would also be a key part of the Modernising Defence Programme.

He also announced that the department will be spending almost £4million with Thales and General Dynamics Land Systems-UK to deliver a Shot Detection System for the new Ajax armoured vehicles, which can sense enemy gunfire and protect troops.

You can read the full speech here [Link](#)