

[News story: £135M infrastructure contract marks milestone in UK F35 programme](#)

The work will deliver a new aircraft hangar capable of housing 12 of the new fast jet aircraft, from which they will deploy to our Queen Elizabeth Class carriers giving the UK world class carrier strike capability. It will improve existing facilities, including resurfacing two existing runways and taxiways, while the Station remains operational. Vertical Landing Pads will also be added to RAF Marham, accommodating the F-35B's ability to land vertically, a capability previously covered by the Harrier jets.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

Flying from our new Queen Elizabeth Class carriers, the F-35B aircraft will provide the UK with the ability to project our influence globally. This contract will ensure that RAF Marham has the facilities to match this world-class aircraft when it arrives next year.

Throughout the F-35 programme, British firms have won major contracts creating thousands of jobs. The contract to improve the runways and taxiways as well as installing new landing pads will bring local jobs to Marham.

The major investment in RAF Marham is the last of seven projects worth £250m undertaken to ready the Station for the arrival of the aircraft in 2018. The contract has been awarded to a joint venture of Galliford Try and Lagan Construction Ltd, creating local jobs at RAF Marham and across East Anglia.

The F-35 Programme is the world's largest single defence programme and the UK has played a major role from the outset. The F-35B Lightning aircraft is an advanced, 5th generation aircraft that the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy will fly from Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers or from Operating Bases such as RAF Marham.

It will be operated initially by 617 Squadron, Royal Air Force, followed by 809 Naval Air Squadron. Combined, they will transform the UK's ability to project UK influence overseas. Initial flight trials for F-35 jets from HMS Queen Elizabeth Class are on track to begin in 2018, building towards delivering a Carrier Strike capability for the UK from 2020.

News story: Flexible working for Armed Forces

The changes will deliver a career which is as flexible as possible by allowing service personnel to work part time for short periods, as long as the operational effectiveness of the military is maintained.

The measures, which are due to come into effect in 2019, are part of the Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill. They will also limit the amount of time that personnel will need to spend away from their home-base and their families.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

To compete for the best people in society our Armed Forces must offer a career that better reflects the realities of modern life. Allowing greater flexibility over how long and where people work will help attract and keep the talent we need to keep Britain safe.

The Bill will amend parts of the Armed Forces Act 2006, and the new arrangements were developed after a consultation with the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. Personnel said they wanted more choice over the way they serve for when their circumstances change; such as starting a family, or undertaking caring commitments.

Applications for part time working will be assessed against the needs of the individual and the need of the Armed Forces to maintain operational effectiveness. Personnel would still be required to deploy on operations, at any time, should the need arise.

This will lead to more balanced lifestyles with opportunities for Service personnel to serve in a way that better suits their personal aspirations and family circumstances. Reserve personnel will benefit from these changes, as we continue to seek to increase opportunities for them to serve in a greater range of roles alongside Regular personnel.

These reforms are part of the modern offer to personnel and the government's commitment to strengthen the Armed Forces Covenant, which was enshrined in law in 2011 to ensure Service personnel are not disadvantaged through their work.

The government also reaffirmed its NATO commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence in the Queen's speech.

News story: Angelina Jolie visits British military team in Kenya

This specialist instructional course hosted by the IPSTC is funded by the UK's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) and delivered with the support of the British Peace Support Team (East Africa). Ms Jolie's visit to the region has two distinct but complementary purposes: to highlight the continued plight of Africa's refugees, marked yesterday by World Refugee Day; and, to maintain momentum behind the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, with the day before (19 June) being the UN's International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.

Ms Jolie participated in training delivered to military and police personnel involved in African Peacekeeping Missions who are often first responders following acts of sexual violence in conflict. She spoke to peacekeepers, police and civil society experts about their experience in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict settings and in their communities. She participated in discussions about how personnel on the course can lead the way in changing attitudes and improving understanding of sexual and gender based violence in their organisations. The Special Envoy also took part in a roundtable discussion on PSVI chaired by the British High Commissioner, Nic Hailey, before addressing students on the course.

Ms Jolie said:

It meant a lot to hear military gender advisors and officers say what they believe and what they want others to understand, that this is not simply about law and human decency. It is about military effectiveness. If civilians do not have confidence in you as peacekeepers your mission will not succeed. And while this training is clearly only a beginning, it is the only way that we will begin to address the problems: working nation by nation to raise standards and increase effectiveness.



Angelina Jolie visited the International Peace Support Training Centre. Crown Copyright.

During the visit the Special Envoy spoke to two of the UK military's gender experts, Major Cleo Bigwood and Captain Kezia Jukes, who are attending the SGBV training at the IPSTC. Captain Jukes is currently deployed to South Sudan as part of the UK's support to the UN Peacekeeping mission in country, and Maj Bigwood will deploy to the Democratic Republic of Congo in October as the UN Mission's Gender Adviser. Both are an example of MOD efforts to increase military Gender Advisers, gender focal points, and female peacekeepers, as part of international Women, Peace and Security (WPS) commitments.

Maj Bigwood said:

This is a fantastic opportunity to share experiences and develop our knowledge on this vitally important topic that affects all levels of society. The British Army is investing personnel and its global experience into this effort.

In September last year Ms Jolie spoke at the UK-hosted UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial about the need to stamp out acts of sexual abuse by peacekeepers and of the imperative for more female peacekeepers to enhance operational effectiveness and to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable, including women, are met by Peacekeeping Missions. The UK military's Gender Champion and lead for the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Initiative, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger, welcomed the Special

Envoy to London for the event and continues to work with her in the UK's efforts on WPS, PSVI and Gender.

Vice Chief of the Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger said:

I am delighted that Ms Jolie has been able to visit this excellent training for African Peacekeepers and I am proud of the UK's supporting role. I commend the work of all those committed to International Peacekeeping efforts and thank them for their compassion, dedication and bravery in seeking to prevent violence and restore peace in some of the most challenging parts of the world.

The UK continues to lead internationally on ending sexual violence in conflict and Defence is working hard in support of its partners, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development, to refine and strengthen the UK's contribution to this most valuable work.



Angelina Jolie visited the International Peace Support Training Centre. Crown Copyright.

2017 marks five years since Ms Jolie and Lord William Hague founded the PSVI. Since 2012, over 17,000 Military and Police personnel have been trained on sexual violence issues, the PSVI Team of Experts has been deployed more than eight times. £40m in UK funding has been committed so far and we have supported over 70 projects across the world to help end sexual violence in

conflict.

The UK's PSVI priorities for 2017/18 include challenging the stigma survivors of sexual violence experience; delivering justice for survivors, ensuring better access to healthcare, psychosocial support and livelihood programmes; and improving how security forces around the world prevent and respond to these crimes.

British High Commissioner to Kenya Nic Hailey said:

The UK is committed to ending the use of rape as a weapon of war. I was delighted that Ms Jolie was able to experience some of the training we provide through our team in Kenya.

We have trained 17,000 military and police personnel in preventing sexual violence around the world since 2012. But there is more to do. The UK looks forward to working with Kenya and other international partners to put an end to sexual violence in conflict.

In addition to supporting PSVI work, the BPST(EA)'s mission is to coordinate UK military assistance to Armed Forces in Eastern Africa, supporting security and stability in the region.

So far this year the team has already trained more than 500 Armed Forces personnel from African partner nations, and this number is expected to double by the end of 2017. BPST(EA)'s Training and Defence Engagement takes place throughout the region at various locations, primarily at the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya.

Commander BPST(EA), Colonel Richard Leakey said:

Today's event is a clear example of the UK's commitment to the PSVI, and the BPST(EA) is proud to play a part in that.

My team will continue to work shoulder-to-shoulder with our African and international partners to support security and stability in the region. Our training and Defence Engagement activity help make communities here safer.

[News story: Grave of brave Nottingham](#)

born WW2 airman finally rededicated

Flight Sergeant (Flt Sgt) Frank Edward Reed's final resting place has been identified after his aircraft, RAF Stirling Bomber EH945, part of 620 Squadron, was shot down in Germany on 27 September 1943. To honour the bravery and sacrifice of Flt Sgt Reed, a rededication service was held on 20 June 2017 at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Hanover War Cemetery, Germany.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by The Reverend Father (Flight Lieutenant) James Mealy, Station Chaplain RAF Coningsby.



(left to right) Flt Lt Adam Jux, RAF Association; Group Captain Roland Smith, Defence Attaché; Nigel Reed, son of Flt Sgt Reed; and Gary Reed, nephew of Flt Sgt Reed (Crown Copyright) All rights reserved

Flt Sgt Reed was a Flight Engineer and part of a 7 man crew onboard the Bomber aircraft which took off from RAF Chedburgh in Suffolk at 7.55 pm on 27 September 1943. Research undertaken by JCCC and Air Historical Branch showed that Stirling EH975 was shot down and crashed later that evening. Subsequent reports stated that some of the crew were taken as prisoners of war, including Flt Sgt Reed who was badly injured, others were unfortunately killed during the crash. Flt Sgt Reed was taken to a hospital in Hanover where it is unclear how he died but most probably from his wounds.

Flt Sgt Reed was just 1 month short of his 21st birthday when he was killed.

Tracey Bowers, JCCC said:

This has been an incredibly rewarding case to work on and to be able to bring closure after such a long search for answers by Frank's son, Nigel, who has travelled from New Zealand to be with us today, is a real privilege.

Unfortunately we may never know exactly how Flt Sgt Reed died but we know he ultimately lost his life serving his Country. Now finally, his grave can bear his name and we're very lucky to have his son and members of his RAF family here with us today.



Reverend Father (Flt Lt) James Mealy delivers the service of rededication (Crown Copyright) All rights reserved

Rev. Fr (Flt Lt) James Mealy said:

By God's grace it is right and proper that we gathered today in prayer and thanksgiving for the sacrifice of Flt Sgt Reed. It was a privilege for me as an RAF Padre to lead this rededication service for the family and representatives today.

This is the first rededication service I have had the honour of leading and I will remember this day for the rest of my life.



Nigel Reed attending his father's service of rededication (Crown Copyright)
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Flt Sgt Reed's son, Nigel Reed, said:

Today has opened up a new chapter in my relationship with my father whom I now feel a real connection and closeness to. I would like to thank all those who made this ceremony, and the one held in Chedburgh, possible, it has meant so very much to me.

The moving ceremony rededicating the new headstone bearing Flt Sgt Reed's name, as provided by the CWGC, was held in the cemetery in Hanover near to where the crash site was.

To further honour Flt Sgt Reed's memory a simultaneous ceremony was held in Chedburgh, Suffolk (where 620 Squadron was based). It was organised by former members of The Blues and Royals, Nigel's former regiment and attended by his regimental brothers.

News story: Chief Constable Alfred Hitchcock

Alf became the Chief Constable four years ago and during that time he established strong links and working relationships with a wide range of colleagues across the MOD.

Alf committed the whole of his working life to public service having joined Lancashire Constabulary in 1977 and during the past 40 years he had worked in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), the National Policing Improvement Agency, Bedfordshire Police and, since 2013, the MOD as Chief Constable of the MDP.

In 2005, Alf led the Safer Neighbourhoods Programme within the MPS and delivered the successful roll-out of Neighbourhood Policing across the whole of London by the end of 2006. In 2007, he was appointed as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner within the MPS with responsibility for Operational Services, with portfolios including Professional Standards, Command and Control, Diversity and Citizen Focus.

In 2009, Alf was appointed Deputy Chief Constable at the National Policing Improvement Agency at Bramshill to help set up the new National College of Police Leadership and to review its leadership courses.

Alf was the national policing lead for equality and human rights for four years until 2016. He was also the national police spokesman on Knife Crime, and in 2008 he was appointed by the then Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, to develop and lead the National Tackling Knives Action Programme.

Moving to Bedfordshire Police in 2011 as the Chief Constable, Alf led a complete restructuring of the force, which resulted in double the national average levels of crime reduction and similar improvements in detection of crimes across the county, whilst meeting the budgetary challenges during this period. It was these skills and qualities that led to his appointment as the Chief Constable of the MDP in 2013.

Mark Lancaster, Minister for the Armed Forces who until recently had ministerial responsibility for the Ministry of Defence Police, said:

I was deeply saddened to hear about the untimely death of Alf Hitchcock. I knew Alf very well in his capacity as the Chief Constable of the Ministry of Defence Police and held him in the highest possible regard. He was a consummate professional and I echo the sentiments that have been made by others. My sympathies go to Alf's family and friends at this very difficult time."

On Alf Hitchcock's contribution to policing within the UK, Andy Adams Deputy Chief Constable for the MDP said:

there are few in policing who won't recognise the name Alf Hitchcock; his impact upon policing has been felt across many police forces as well as at a national level. The sadness felt within the MDP at his loss is palpable – he will be sorely missed as a cop, as a colleague and as a friend to many.

Julie Taylor, Director General Head Office & Commissioning Services commented:

Alf will be sorely missed. He has been an inspirational leader for the Ministry of Defence Police, modernising the force and ensuring they could rise to the new and demanding challenges they face. He was liked and respected by his officers and by everyone who knew him in the wider MOD. Above all, I will remember him as someone who was passionate about public service, relentless in pursuit of excellence and consistently positive and optimistic. Our thoughts are with his family.

David Riddle, the Chair of the Ministry of Defence Police Committee, said:

Alf Hitchcock's sudden death last week after a very short illness was a great loss for everyone who knew him, for the force and for policing as a whole. We will miss him greatly for his kindness, his approachability, his boundless energy and his sense of fun. We will miss him above all for his belief in the importance of policing, and in the police officers under his command who do amazing things day in and day out to deliver security. All the Members of the Ministry of Defence Police Committee send their condolences to Alf's wife and family, and to all in the force.

Alf was awarded the Queen's Police Medal (QPM) in 2008 for distinguished services to policing. He was subsequently made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2017 New Year's Honours list for services to Defence and Policing. Alf is survived by his wife Helen, his two daughters and two grandchildren.