

News story: IHAT to close at the end of June

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon today announced that the Iraq Historic Allegations Team (IHAT) will officially close on 30 June 2017. This follows his decision in February to bring IHAT to an end by the summer, enabled by the striking off of Mr Phil Shiner.

The remaining cases, expected to number around 20, will then be dealt with by the Service Police – a combination of Royal Navy Police and Royal Air Force Police, led by a senior Royal Navy Police officer. All investigations are expected to be completed by the end of next year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We took the unprecedented step of submitting evidence which saw Phil Shiner struck off and allowed IHAT to dispose of many false allegations he made. Now I can confirm that IHAT will close in June and the Service Police should complete investigations into the small number of remaining cases a year earlier than planned.

We are taking steps to make sure the reputation of our Armed Forces cannot be attacked in this dishonest way again.

In 2015 the Defence Secretary directed the MOD to submit evidence of wrongdoing by Phil Shiner which led to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal striking Mr Shiner off in February.

The exposure of the dishonesty of Mr Shiner meant that many of the allegations that his now defunct firm, Public Interest Lawyers, had brought forward were discredited and enabled the Defence Secretary to decide to close IHAT. IHAT's caseload is expected to reduce from a peak of over 3,000 allegations to around 20 investigations by the time it closes.

Chief of the General Staff General Sir Nick Carter said:

The Army's Leadership Code requires the highest values and standards. It is right therefore that on the occasions that there are credible allegations of unacceptable behaviour they should be investigated.

However, a significant number of claims made against our soldiers have not been credible. The recent exposure of unscrupulous law firms and vexatious claims has clearly shown this to be the case; it is right therefore that the Defence Secretary has decided to close IHAT and hand over the remaining investigations to the Service Police, a process the Army supports.

Mutual trust is at the heart of the Army Leadership Code as is the care of soldiers and their families. We therefore welcome the Government's commitment to ensuring we have the Nation's confidence and the tools to do our jobs effectively on operations, free from the burden of unjust litigation.

The Service Police will be supported by a minimum level of essential contractor support for specialist back office functions, such as the operation of the Forensic Data Handling computer, in order to complete its investigations. Contractors will have no contact with UK witnesses or suspects.

News story: Defence Minister unveils new £83 million state-of-the-art logistics site

The Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin, has today formally opened a huge state-of-the-art £83 million MOD logistics centre in Shropshire, which will streamline distribution and storage, delivering savings of around £500 million by 2028.

The 80,000 square metre Defence Fulfilment Centre (DFC) is the size of ten football pitches and will revolutionise the way we support our Armed Forces across the world. It will be a central hub for the storage and distribution of Defence's £30 billion inventory, including spare parts, food, clothing, and medical supplies.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

The Defence Fulfilment Centre in Donnington will transform the way we store and distribute essential supplies to the Armed Forces who keep us safe. Supported by our rising defence budget, this £83 million investment and partnership with leading logistics specialists is concrete evidence of our determination to give our personnel the very best support wherever they are in the world.

The DFC has been delivered to time and on budget and consists of two warehouses and a support building. The facility, based in Donnington and managed by Kuehne + Nagel on behalf of Team Leidos, will use new warehouse management systems to maximise value for money and manage the complex supply chains of the 21st Century seamlessly. Alongside special environmental storage, the DFC's automated storage and retrieval system will be capable of

picking more than 1000 items an hour.

Chief of Material (Land) at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Lieutenant General Paul Jaques said:

The Defence Fulfilment Centre will transform the way we support our servicemen and servicewomen. Contribution to Operational Readiness through the provision of supplies and commodities to our Armed Forces will be on a par with industry best practice as a result of this investment in state-of-the art facilities.

The opening of this centre on time and on budget is testament to the close and positive collaboration between Defence Equipment and Support, and Team Leidos. I very much look forward to seeing this fabulous facility fully operational in 2019.

The site has been opened as part of the Logistic Commodities and Services Transformation (LCST) programme, which aims to deliver our Armed Forces what they want, when and where they want it as efficiently as possible. The programme is being delivered collaboratively by the MOD and Team Leidos and will build an efficient and agile support network with the ability to support current and future military operations.

Leidos Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Roger Krone said:

The completion of the Defence Fulfilment Centre is an important milestone in our strategic plan to deliver enhanced information technology and logistics services to the Armed Forces.

This state-of-the-art facility is a conduit to ensuring front-line troops can get what they need, when they need it, by offering a more efficient and effective processes across the supply chain.

[News story: British troops continue support to UN South Sudan mission](#)

Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning yesterday visited Bentiu and Malakal, where UK military personnel are deployed, and met those carrying out engineering tasks in support of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

With around 100 already in country, Royal Engineers are carrying out building tasks in preparation for the main deployment of nearly 400 troops over the coming months – making this one of the UK's largest operational deployments

across the globe.

UK personnel are carrying out engineering tasks at the UN's camps in both Malakal and Bentiu to enhance UNMISS's efforts, and as more British troops arrive in South Sudan, focus will move to Bentiu where a temporary field hospital will be set up, followed by a permanent hospital.

Minister of State for the Armed Forces Mike Penning said:

The UN is working hard to protect civilians and promote stability in South Sudan, and the UK continues to support this important effort.

This will be the UK's single largest deployment to a UN mission with almost 400 of our troops carrying out vital engineering tasks on the ground and a number of key roles within the UN headquarters.

This permanent field hospital will support over 1,000 UN peacekeepers and staff, enabling them to continue working to improve conditions in South Sudan.



Armed Forces Minister Mike Penning arrives in South Sudan

Engineering tasks carried out by UK personnel could include a helicopter landing site in Malakal, facilities to improve water supply, drainage to prevent flooding. In addition to engineering and medical support, the UK also has a small number of staff officers in UNMISS's headquarters in Juba.

Lt Col Jason Ainley, Commanding Officer Royal Engineers said:

We are very proud to be part of UNMISS. We look forward to continued work with our military and civilian colleagues to support the mission, which aims to improve conditions for the people of South Sudan.

My engineers are working in a tough operating environment to ensure our mission will be a success.

As part of his visit the Armed Forces Minister also met Lt Col Ainley in Juba, as well as Defence Minister Kuol Manyang Juuk, and UN Special Representative David Shearer.

British military support in South Sudan follows a commitment made in 2015 by the then Prime Minister to double the UK's commitment to global peacekeeping initiatives, including by deploying troops to South Sudan and Somalia.

Alongside the UK-hosted Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in London in September, these contributions underline the UK's leading role in support to peacekeeping operations.



Mike Penning visits UK personnel in South Sudan

More widely, the UK Government has committed life-saving support to tackle the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan, including matching pound for pound public donations up to £10 million to the Disaster Emergency Committee's East

Africa Crisis Appeal.

The Government also recently announcement that £100m will be spent on life-saving support in South Sudan in 2017/18, including:

- Food for over 500,000 people;
- Life-saving nutritional support to more than 27,500 children;
- Safe drinking water for over 300,000 people;
- Emergency health services for over 100,000 people;
- Livelihood support for over 650,000 people;
- Vaccinations for over 200,000 livestock.

News story: Royal Fleet Auxiliary's new tanker arrives in UK for customisation work sustaining 300 jobs

The 39,000-tonne tanker, which can carry up to 19,000 cubic metres of fuel and 1,300 cubic metres of fresh water, will join the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, a civilian-manned fleet which provides support for warships, helping the Royal Navy to maintain its operations 24/7, 365 days a year, around the world.

Tidespring is the first of a fleet of four Tide Class tankers which will all be taken through customisation in Falmouth. She will now undergo an intense programme of work at the A&P shipyard, and is expected to enter service before the end of the year. The new Tide Class tankers will provide key support to the Queen Elizabeth Class carriers when they come into service, alongside the wider fleet.

The arrival is a significant milestone in the 'Year of the Navy' which will also see the debut in Portsmouth of the first of the Queen Elizabeth-Class aircraft carriers, the start of construction for the fleet of new Type 26 Frigates and the opening of the first permanent Royal Navy base east of Suez in more than half a century.

RFA Tidespring

15

Speed:
15+ knots

New support ship for the Royal Navy. Global range to supply fuel and fresh water to UK warships worldwide.

2017

Entering
service



201 meters long:
as long as
three jumbo jets



8,000

Range: 8,000+
nautical miles

109
People make
up the ship's
complement



Hangar for
Merlin
helicopter

Flight deck
for Chinook
helicopter

19,000

Can carry
19,000m³ fuel
and 1,300m³
fresh water

39,000

Displacement:
39,000 tonnes

The first of the newest support ships for the Royal Navy, RFA Tidespring.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

RFA Tidespring's UK arrival is a key milestone in 2017, the Year of the Royal Navy, which will also see the MOD develop world-class ships and submarines in support of Britain's role as a leading naval power.

Backed by a rising Defence budget, the delivery of the Tide Class tankers is a crucial element of the Government's £178 billion plan to ensure our armed forces have the equipment they need.

The customisation work is helping to support around 300 jobs at A&P Falmouth. The UK work content in the wider Tide Class programme is worth around £150 million, sustaining further jobs at 27 UK-based companies. The project is being delivered well within budget by the MOD.

Systems to be installed in Falmouth include the communications equipment, self-defence weapons and armour needed to allow the ship to operate in the most challenging environments.



RFA Tidespring. Crown Copyright.

Vice Admiral Simon Lister, who led procurement of the Tide Class at Defence Equipment and Support, said:

RFA Tidespring will be a familiar and reassuring presence for Royal Navy ships as they undertake missions in defence of the UK's interest.

The continued successful delivery of the Tide Class programme, meeting all requirements and under budget stands as a testament to the excellent working relationships which DE&S has built with suppliers in the UK and around the world.

The Tide Class has a flight deck able to accommodate the large Chinook helicopter and offer significant improvements over previous RFA tankers such as double hulls and greater environmental protection measures.

[News story: Headley Court partners](#)

with Loughborough University for research study

The Biomechanical Associations and Efficacy of Injectable Therapies in Tendinopathy (BEFIT) study is funded with a grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and brings together university academics and MOD collaborators to investigate risk factors and treatment of tendon pain in our regular armed forces.

The main focus of the project is a randomised controlled trial investigating the effect of high volume injection therapy in Achilles and patellar tendinopathy. There have been some encouraging results from other centres but currently there is no controlled study to provide evidence for the use of these injections in military personnel.

Commenting on the importance of this programme the Director of Defence Rehabilitation, Col John Etherington, said:

Reducing musculoskeletal injuries (MSKI) remains our main effort in improving the health and operational readiness of our personnel. We know that approximately 60% of medical downgradings and 60% of medical discharges are associated with MSKI. Getting the very best treatment at the right place and at the right time is key to us helping our personnel fulfil their potential. I am delighted that we have been able to pool resources in this type of project to drive forward best practice.

The research has made good use of the Help for Heroes motion tracking laboratory at Headley Court together with Loughborough University biomechanics. Factors which may predict tendon pain and its response to treatment are also being analysed.



BEFIT study clinic. Crown Copyright. All rights reserved

Gp Capt Alex Bennett the Head of Research at Headley Court and Defence Professor for Rehabilitation described the need for this research within defence:

This well designed clinical trial has been approved not only by the MOD Research Ethics Committee but also the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and gives us the best opportunity to test fully whether these injections can benefit our patients.

Professor Mark Lewis, Dean of the School of Sport Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University said:

The relationship between Loughborough University and the Academic Department of Military Rehabilitation at Headley Court via the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine is of critical importance to the university. This project not only cements that relationship but, more importantly, has the potential to deliver huge benefits to tendinopathy sufferers in the UK military and more widely to the general public. We are grateful to the HEFCE for supporting this project through a Catalyst fund.

A dedicated BEFIT study clinic has been established at DMRC Headley Court. Anyone with questions about the research programme should email Sqn Ldr

Robert Barker-Davies at DMRC-SEM3@mod.uk or phone 95238 ext 7497 or 01372371310.