



Defence Electronics &
Components Agency

DECA news

The magazine of the Defence Electronics and Components Agency

August 2019



Editor's foreword



Welcome to this fourth edition of DECA news where we take a look at significant successes achieved since the last edition.

In this issue we provide an update on our support to the Maritime Systems Support delivery team and more recently the Submarine Delivery Agency ensuring cost effective capability growth and efficient equipment support. On further pages, we provide details on our developing transformation project which will see DECA evolve significantly over the next five years.

We were honoured to welcome former Minister for Defence Procurement, Stuart Andrew to our Sealand site where he met with apprentices and staff to gain an understanding of our strategic contribution to Defence.

In this issue we also highlight the training facility at our Stafford site and detail the courses available to MOD and wider industry and Fiona Lees has provided an overview of the newly established DECA Mental Health First Aid Team and the services they are offering staff.

Further articles provide an update around the F-35 programme, the development of a second Welsh Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute and the signing of a partnering agreement between DECA and Dstl. In our staff section, Chris Hazlehurst details his shooting victories and Ian Donnelly provides an brief overview of the biodiversity of our Sealand site.

Finally, on page 20 readers have a chance to win a fabulous 128GB 6th Generation iPad kindly donated by our sponsors Whistler Technology Ltd.

This newsletter provides an important insight into our work and I thank everyone for their contributions.

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Front page photograph; UK F-35 B Lightning II at Marham © Crown Copyright
Pictured right; Husky patrol vehicle in Afghanistan © Crown Copyright

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CE comment



The first half of 2019 has proven to be another successful period for DECA. In collaboration with our industry partners in Sealand Support Services Limited, our successful bid to provide further F-35 component sustainment solutions was a significant boost. This positive decision rewards the dedication of our workforce and underpins DECA's importance to Defence.

The announcement of the proposed development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute on our Sealand site, in collaboration with Welsh Government, and our new partnership with Dstl, will ensure we develop the technologies, support solutions and skills required for the future. I am looking forward to progressing these key strategic partnerships and developing sovereign

capability that will sustain the skills that will support Defence on a regional, national and global scale.

We have also had the pleasure of welcoming some high profile visitors to DECA including Stuart Andrew MP, former Minister for Defence Procurement, and Sir Simon Bollom, CEO DE&S, who were both impressed with the support we provide to UK Armed Forces and the transformation projects undertaken to ensure capability development alongside continued efficiency improvements.

It is an exciting time to work at DECA and I am proud to lead the Agency through this period of significant growth, development and change.



Expanding capability supporting UK ships and submarines

Under direction from our Ministerial Owner and MOD, DECA has been widening its capability offering across maritime and more recently submarine environments. This work began through a number of technical feasibility studies repairing a small number of electronic equipments from a range of platforms including HMS Ocean, HMS Westminster and Vanguard Class submarines.

In our previous edition of DECA News we focussed on the pivotal support DECA played in getting the former HMS Ocean back on operations. Our Test Solutions team subsequently designed and built a self-test box and test procedure to enable on-board repairs to be carried out quickly in the event of a failure.

HMS Westminster Duke Class vessel developed a docking safety indicator fault for which our team also rapidly developed a test, repair and maintenance solution.

Our Test Solutions team also developed and implemented a repair proposal for the depth distribution system on the Vanguard Class submarine series by identifying faults, sourcing functional alternatives and repairing assets deemed beyond repair by the equipment manufacturer.

Confidence in DECA capability is growing and to date we have received over 150 tasks from Marine Systems Support delivery team on a variety of platforms such as Vanguard, together with Astute and Trafalgar class submarines and surface ships such as Type 23 Frigates, Hunt and Sandown Class Mine Hunters, and Albion-class assault ships. All tasking begin with a feasibility study to ascertain if the equipment can be repaired by DECA, the development of capability and finally the authorisation by the Delivery Team to undertake the repair.

During the last year, we have successfully supported the development of feasibility studies for the Submarine Delivery Agency since its formation in April 2018 and are actively contributing to the Submarine Availability Improvement campaign and the UK's Continuous at Sea Deterrent.

Our Cryptographic team have also been supporting the UK's new in service warships before handover to the Royal Navy. They have carried out pre-installation testing and installation of a range of Cryptographic equipment as well as assisting with systems integration and Harbour Acceptance Trials on the QE Class carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, and River Class Off-shore Patrol Vessels, HMS Forth, HMS Medway and HMS Trent.

DECA capability is growing across the Maritime sector and is providing the UK MOD with a cost effective in-house capability that provides best value for defence. If your team would like to know more about how DECA capability can support your equipment, please contact Paul Fitzgerald on 01244 847288 or paul.fitzgerald@deca.mod.uk

HMS vengeance, the fourth Vanguard Class submarine © Crown Copyright



Transforming DECA

Following the Ministry of Defence's strategic retention of DECA in 2015 to provide assured onshore access to DECA capability, MOD has agreed to an ambitious Transformation Programme to enhance, sustain and grow DECA's skills and capabilities and to deliver significant business efficiencies over the next five years.

In order for DECA to maintain and improve business efficiency whilst maintaining high levels of product quality and timely delivery, it has always been vitally important for us to evolve and adapt to the ever-changing Defence landscape. In the first four years of operation we have already developed and delivered a number of business improvement initiatives that have helped ensure delivery of the right goods and services at the right price for our customers.

Given significant developments for our Agency such as F-35 component assignments and the ever-increasing strategic importance of DECA to Defence, we are now building on the initial business improvement initiatives to take forward a dynamic Transformation Programme ensuring we retain our place as a strategic MOD asset, whilst driving delivery of stretching efficiency targets and delivering benchmark support services and capability to Defence. Here Dave McCabe, DECA Business Improvement Manager, highlights the transformation journey we have been on.

Dave says, "Following the tremendous efforts that saw the Electronics and Components Business Unit successfully separate from the Defence Support Group to form DECA in 2015, the business has been continually looking at ways we can improve in terms of both efficiency and delivery.

"This resulted in the formation of the Business Improvement Group (BIG), one of the catalysts for initial transformation, which has supported the transformation from a business providing support for largely legacy Air platforms to one that competes on a global scale, alongside industry partners, to provide market leading solutions to a wide range of customers across MOD and wider Defence.

"Following the BIG team work that paved the way for the initial business improvement during the early years of Agency operation, MOD agreed that DECA should continue to mature and implement a more ambitious vision for transformation that drives enterprise efficiencies and develops our capability and workforce to meet the strategic challenges that lie ahead.

"In developing and implementing this Transformation Programme, we have looked at the strategic environment and MOD's future requirements to make sure we can make DECA ever more agile and responsive, and deliver efficient and effective services through project activities focussed on areas such as:

- improved performance, efficiency, processes and governance
- greater agility and responsiveness
- diversity and inclusion
- learning and development
- employee engagement
- Trades Unions and management working together.

"Delivery of the programme will drive increased customer focus, support wider MOD, government and industry transformation and deliver continuing business efficiency improvement, to ensure we have an Agency that is match fit to deliver our F-35 commitments and positions us to secure strategic opportunities that are in the pipeline such as:

- development of further innovative partnering arrangements and solutions
- deepening DECA's innovative repair by repair technologies
- capability and managed service development and insertion
- expansion of DECA capability and support across Land, Maritime, Joint Enabler and Defence export environments
- vertical integration of supply chain opportunities to roll out this methodology across Defence.

"Through Transformation we will implement the process changes required to facilitate a simpler and more effective commercial arrangement, enabling all MOD teams to capitalise on the enterprise value DECA offers to Defence.

"The Transformation Programme model and vision is bespoke to DECA and based around three concepts; Leading, Delivering and Enabling. This has been coupled with a cradle to grave approach through alignment of MOD's current and future requirements for DECA with the CADMID (Concept, Acquire, Deliver, Maintain, Implement and Disposal) cycle principles. The CADMID cycle is used within MOD to look after MOD equipments from component level up. We have used the Deliver, Maintain, Implement and Disposal elements as enablers of the Transformation Programme to help develop a programme that will ensure our people are accountable, engaged, agile, challenged, rewarded, efficient and diverse. This will also ensure processes are flexible, aligned, integrated, compliant, codified, simple, lean and fast to develop technologies and services that are modern, secure, versatile, enabling and create competitive advantage, all key elements of the business to deliver DECA's Purpose and Aim."

Dave continued by giving a brief overview of the next steps. "Developing on the work undertaken through the Business Improvement Group, we are continuing to develop a Transformation Programme Management Office and an organisational structure review that will help to identify the work breakdown structure for the whole of the Transformation Programme and identify how each strategic

programme will integrate to deliver our transformation vision."

Dave concluded by saying, "Transformation is about growing the businesses capability efficiently and effectively in line with the changing needs of our customers. Transformation will bring about positive change and benefits for both us and Defence as a whole."

PROVIDING MANAGED SERVICE SUPPORT TO LIFE SAVING EQUIPMENT

The Special Projects Communications and Force Protection Delivery Team is pleased to announce it has placed a £4.8M task with DECA for the support of life saving equipment used by the Armed Services.

We will provide managed services and undertake the maintenance, repairs and operation of the Delivery Team's Electronic Countermeasure equipment until 2023, securing a range of specialist technical skills in the region, and saving the taxpayer £3.2M in the overall cost of support.

This was the first task of this magnitude placed under the new DECA Tasking Agreement, enabling us to manage the extensive supply chain on behalf of DE&S, which in turn will provide greater confidence to their military customers in the provision of this vital equipment. Geraint Spearing, DECA Chief Executive stated, "We are delighted that we are

able to deliver critical support to our military colleagues on this life saving equipment, whilst demonstrating our value to Defence. The solution we have agreed is testament to the excellent joint working between the Delivery Team and DECA teams."

The Delivery Team visited DECA for a review meeting regarding progress with the implementation of the Electronic Counter Measure core support solution and a site familiarisation tour for key Armed Forces personnel representing the end user. They also met with key members of the DECA Executive Management Board including Geraint Spearing, Ian Cole, Business Development Director and Keith Pavett, Commercial Director.

Damien Warren, Head of Managed Services provided an update saying, "Following our success at securing this tasking, I am pleased to announce that

our first milestone titled 'Equipment Availability Date One' has been met by the team.

"This was confirmed by Army HQ and reflects on the efforts of our people stocking the warehouse with equipment, undertaking maintenance, placing support contracts, and implementing fleet management of equipment via the JAMES information system.

"The next milestone, 'Equipment Availability Date Two', will see a doubling in stock levels and number of other significant developments, including fully operational inventory forecasting. May I pass on heartfelt thanks to all involved in this success, the first of many such endeavours."



Members of the Special Projects Communications and Force Protection Team during a visit to DECA

Former Minister for Defence Procurement visits DECA

The last year has seen a number of important visits to DECA as news has spread across Defence of the strategic importance of our agency. Former Minister for Defence Procurement, Stuart Andrew, visited DECA's Sealand site for a hands-on tour of our facilities, and a briefing on the developing global F-35 component hub providing maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade capabilities.

Following an introductory presentation the Minister was invited to see first-hand the range of repair and maintenance work that takes place at our Sealand site. He spoke at length with a number of our technicians to gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

In addition to the work carried out to support equipment for the British Armed Forces, Mr Andrew noted that our highly skilled team of engineers and technicians also repair items for Defence industry customers.

Mr Andrew said, "I was hugely impressed with what I saw at DECA Sealand, and delighted to see the work that our talented people are carrying out at this fantastic facility. DECA's ability to repair all manner of electronics and components means that we avoid the need to purchase new equipment, which saves the taxpayer millions of pounds.

"It was also rewarding to see how DECA, DE&S, Dstl and the Submarine Delivery Agency are working together to keep our Armed Forces safe through equipment procurement and repair."

Speaking at an engagement lunch, Ian Doughty, our Support Services Director, told the Minister, "Because DECA is an executive agency wholly owned by the MOD, all our staff are civil servants, though we operate like a commercial entity, and therefore provide the best of public sector values alongside the best of private sector efficiencies.

"We support land, maritime, air and new areas of business, and we deploy our people where required. We work as a partner to DE&S, with F-35 being a key part of our long-term strategy; we are also broadening our support across agencies such as Dstl.

"Repairing components rather than replacing them saves the MOD money, and our focus on rapid turnaround times means that repair is quicker than re-provision. The more support work we are tasked to carry out, the better value we offer."

During the tour, Mr Andrew engaged with our apprentices who were training on future technologies. He noted that we also host DE&S graduates at our Sealand and Stafford sites to gain valuable hands-on engineering experience that better prepares them to take up positions in senior engineering and airworthiness management.

Mr Andrew was shown various pieces of equipment from helicopters, tanks and ships that were being worked on by our technicians. This included repair work being carried out to headsets that had been damaged while being used to support military operations; a thermal imaging system from a Challenger 2 tank; fibre optic cables from the Typhoon platform; a generator control unit from a Chinook; air winches; a hydraulic servicing trolley and more.

Wayne Baker, Operations Director, demonstrated an array of engineering apparatus to Mr Andrew. Wayne explained, "Our people are skilled at solving problems, and have an in-depth understanding of the tools they require to meet the demands our customers."

Rear Admiral Rick Thompson, Managing Director of Sealand Support Services Ltd, then gave the Minister an update on the F-35 programme. This joint venture between MOD and industry has been established to head up the UK's F-35 component maintenance, repair, overhaul, upgrade and sustainment services.

Concluding his visit, Mr Andrew said, "I was particularly interested to find out more about the UK's developing F-35 support capabilities. Clearly, we offer best value, least risk, proven capability and a long-term commitment to the F-35 programme. This has clearly been bolstered by the skilled workforce and secure environment at DECA Sealand."

Pictured is Stuart Andrew MP, Minister for Defence Procurement, engaging with DECA apprentices during his visit





Cryogenics and Gas Maintenance Training School

The Cryogenics and Gas Maintenance Training School is one of the MOD's hidden jewels. Here Paul Moores, one of DECA's Instructional Officers, explains how this invaluable capability supports UK Defence.

Paul said, "You could be forgiven for thinking from its title that the Cryogenics and Gas Maintenance School (CGMS) was tasked with researching the preservation of life to be revived at a later date. However, that is purely the work of fiction! Instead, our purpose built facility provides a range of training courses to service personnel from the RAF and Navy, DECA employees and wider industry. The school also trains the ever increasing number of DECA apprentices during their two-year training programme.

"Originally based at RAF St Athan, the school relocated to Stafford in 2002. The facility has three classrooms where the theoretical training is provided to deliver a solid understanding of the subject. It also has:

- a dedicated oxygen bay cleanroom which houses B2 test stands and Tornado test panels;
- an Air Separation Unit training bay
- an enclosed yard for carrying out practical course work such as liquid oxygen handling, tank transfers, cryogenic sampling, and a nitrogen concentration trolley practical training area.

For our DECA apprentices, we now also have a newly constructed apprentice training area in the main Ground Equipment Workshop to ensure that our students have access to appropriate facilities to enhance their learning experience.

"The school runs approximately 34 courses per year and due to the nature of the training class sizes are limited to

a maximum of four students per course. This ensures that each student gets the maximum benefit from the learning experience, with plenty of hands on experience and individual guidance from the tutors.

"Health, safety and hazard awareness and first aid measures are a fundamental and essential aspect to any training, and all of our courses include these aspects as standard.

"The school currently has four instructors with a combined 25 years training experience, consistently delivering a 100% pass rate against a targeted 97%."

The main training courses we offer are:

- Air Separation Unit (ASU)
- Oxygen Bay Maintenance Course (OBMC)
- Oxygen Servicing Unit (OSU Zwick)
- Liquid Oxygen (Lox) Handling Course
- Nitrogen Concentration Trolley (NCT) Operator & Maintainer.

In house training includes:

- Manual handling
- Hand Arm Vibration (HAV's)
- Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP's)
- 2nd year apprentices.

If you would like further information about the courses the DECA Training School can provide, please contact Paul Bloor on 01785 785124 or at paul.bloor@deca.mod.uk

Leading the way in mental health awareness

The Defence Electronics & Components Agency is leading the way in mental health awareness by launching its newly established team of Mental Health first aiders. The introduction of this new service to all staff is a significant step towards creating an open culture around an issue felt across the whole of the UK.

Fiona Lees, DECA Learning and Development Manager, explains the roots to the introduction of this service.

“The subject of mental health awareness first came through to us from comments and ideas put forward by DECA staff in some of our Trades Unions, ACAS, health & safety and stress management engagements. We quickly recognised that the issue of mental health was something that DECA staff felt was very important.

“With this in mind we organised a Stress Management course and developed a team of advisors from across the business. The aim was to create a safe, open culture within DECA where discussion of mental health issues is encouraged and where support is available to those who need it from understanding individuals who are able to offer assistance.”

Angela Lloyd, one of DECA's Mental Health first aid team, tells us about the service and what it offers, “The team, named ‘Connections’, is made up of volunteers trained to spot early signs of mental health issues, to provide an empathetic ear at a time of need and to help signpost colleagues to other support services. While we are not professional counsellors, we all understand the importance of listening to people to help them work through their own issues.

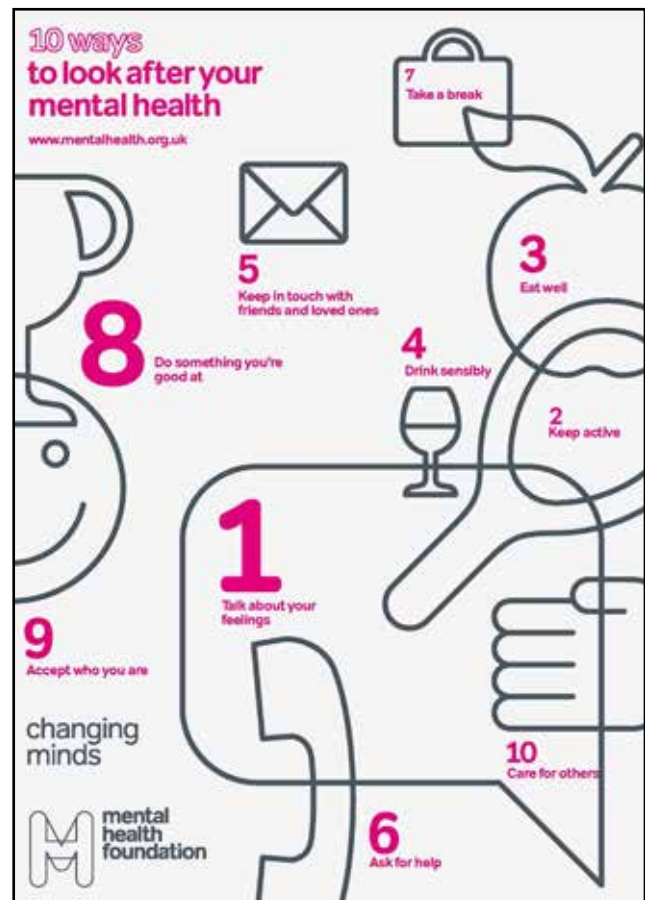
“The service launched to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Month and the team held ‘Tea and Talk’ events at the Sealand and Stafford sites aimed at introducing the service and promote the value of talking. These events were informal drop-in sessions, where employees were invited to come and meet members of the Connections team for some refreshments and a friendly chat about mental health and wellbeing. The events were well attended and attracted some very positive feedback.”

Angela added, “Talking about mental health can seem daunting but the Connections team are here to provide support and to promote and maintain a workplace culture where people are able to speak openly about mental health concerns in an environment free from discrimination.

“Mental health issues are a normal part of life. Current figures provided by the Mental Health Foundation show that one-in-six people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem, including anxiety and depression.

“Right now, mental health problems are having a profound impact on the lives of tens of millions of people. Studies show that in the past year 74% of people have felt so stressed that they have been overwhelmed or unable to cope. 51% of adults who felt stressed reported feeling depressed, and 61% reported feeling anxious.

“If DECA staff feel that their mental or emotional strength is deteriorating or are worried about a colleague, support is available by talking to the Connections team. Sharing a problem is often the first step towards recovery. The team are available to chat to colleagues throughout the working day.”



UK F-35 capabilities continue to mature and grow

The UK's role as a leading partner on the global F-35 programme continues, with the first operational deployment of UK F-35 aircraft to Cyprus immediately following the successful assignment of the second tier of work by the US Department of Defense.

The UK MOD continues to demonstrate its investment in the F-35 Program with the continued development of RAF Marham, home to the UK Lightning Force Headquarters, successful flight trials on HMS Queen Elizabeth and its continued commitment together with its industry partners, to deliver world class maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade services for components assigned to the UK.

Sealand Support Services Ltd (SSSL), an innovative joint venture formed between the MOD (DECA), BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman is gearing up to deliver support work and component repair services for the first two F-35 component assignments, with product delivery scheduled to commence from late 2020.

These first two assignments will support hundreds of additional F-35 jobs in the UK - many of them at the Defence & Electronics Components Agency at MOD Sealand, the global repair hub for assigned UK F-35 components where the majority of the work will be carried out.

Investment in facilities and test equipment has commenced with orders now placed by SSSL for the purchase of Automated Test Equipment (ATE), with deliveries scheduled to coincide with facility improvements. This investment is just the start of an intense period of preparation necessary to implement repair capability for the wider range of complex F-35 avionic components assigned to the UK.

During a recent visit to MOD Sealand supporting a recent SSSL industry briefing day, F-35 Joint Program Office representatives informed the audience that there would be a further competition for the third tier assignment of F-35 components, expected to be released later this year. Another international competition, it will provide a further opportunity for the UK MOD and its industry partners to demonstrate their appetite for success and ambition to succeed.

Geraint Spearing, DECA Chief Executive said, "DECA, together with our industry partners in SSSL are forging ahead with our preparations for the delivery of F-35 support at Sealand. The addition of another competition for F-35 components provides another opportunity for the UK to once again demonstrate our technical excellence and commitment to F-35 by exploiting our previous successes to bring additional value to the wider program.

"These assignments have energised our workforce and the local community by providing a very real future for DECA, and the foundation for our participation in further cutting edge technology development."



Welsh Government and MOD working together to develop plans for second Welsh Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute

Mr Ken Skates, Economy Secretary has announced that plans to establish a second Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute (AMRI) in North Wales have significantly progressed.

Welsh Government declared its intention to work with the Enterprise Zone Board and the Ministry of Defence led by the Defence Electronics and Components Agency (DECA), to develop a proposal that could potentially see Wales' second AMRI situated on MOD land adjacent to the Deeside Industrial Park Interchange.

Mr Skates said, "News that DECA are keen to work with us to develop an AMRI on Deeside is incredibly positive and exciting, particularly given DECA's prominence as a world leader in the test and repair of avionics and electronic component support services.

"Both I and the Deeside Enterprise Zone are hugely encouraged that the MOD supports, in principle, the use of such a prominent and accessible piece of land at the gateway to North Wales for this exciting project."

Former Minister for Defence Procurement, Guto Bebb, said, "The development of a second AMRI in Wales will provide a real boost to industry and demonstrates how Defence delivers for Wales. This announcement follows the publication of the Dunne Review that highlights defence investment of £945 million in Welsh industry and supports over 6,000 industry jobs."

Geraint Spearing, DECA Chief Executive added, "Following the announcement in November 2016 that DECA and its industry partners BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman would become the global hub for F-35 component repair, I am delighted to be able to support Welsh Government, in principle on behalf of MOD, in taking forward their proposed plans for a second AMRI at DECA.

"I am also tremendously proud that, should this proposal proceed, we will be able to continue DECA's commitment to growing apprenticeships and high-end manufacturing skills now and in the future supporting local, regional and national job sustainment, Welsh Government's advanced manufacturing and skills strategies and the UK Government's Prosperity Agenda.

"This landmark announcement by Welsh Government and the level of approval this initiative has received across MOD

and wider government up to Ministerial level underlines the important role DECA plays nationally and regionally in support of the Government's prosperity and skills agenda."

Since these announcements, work has continued within MOD to secure and confirm land availability at Sealand. This has enabled Welsh Government to confirm selection of Sealand as the preferred location for a second Advanced Manufacturing and Research Institute (AMRI2) in March this year. DECA, MOD and both UK and Welsh Government officials continue to work together on developing the outline concept and potential options for AMRI2 including the potential for this new facility to focus on emerging technologies and sovereign capability generation in defence electronics and systems.

The aspiration of Welsh Government in underpinning the AMRI concept is to build innovation capacity in North Wales and the wider region to drive sustainable economic growth and prosperity. This will focus on a number of core areas aligned to existing and emerging priorities including; developing high quality skills and employment opportunities, supporting a thriving SME base, leveraging increased R&D spend to drive innovation and developing Wales as a destination for world leading research in areas such as (but not limited to) automation and digitalisation.

Wales' thriving Aerospace Sector is home to significant operations for Airbus, General Dynamics, GE Aviation, Raytheon, BAE Systems and Safran (who have acquired Zodiac). Together these companies represent six of the top ten global aerospace companies.

It is also home to over 150 companies that serve the sector, cumulatively employing over 20,000 people in design and manufacturing of structures and interiors, systems and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul with strategic Aerospace Enterprise Zones in North, Mid and South Wales.



Sir Simon Bollom goes back to the bench



Sir Simon Bollom, CEO DE&S (left) with Geraint Spearing (right) and Phil Moulton (centre) who demonstrates generator soldering

Sir Simon Bollom, CEO of DE&S, visited DECA to congratulate the DECA workforce and Sealand Support Services Limited (SSSL) on their second successful F-35 assignment.

Sir Simon met with DECA Chief Executive, Geraint Spearing, for a tour of the facilities and a capability demonstration, and with SSSL Managing Director, Rear Admiral Rick Thompson, for an update on the F-35 programme.

During the tour, Sir Simon engaged with members of the DECA workforce who demonstrated the capabilities utilised by DECA to support a range of Defence customers. Sir Simon was also shown the unique work being undertaken to develop innovative solutions to provide cost effective support.

Following the tour, Sir Simon addressed the DECA workforce saying, "I am delighted to visit DECA today to congratulate you on your successful F-35 assignment.

"This success is a fitting recognition of the hard work and dedication demonstrated by DECA and the SSSL collaboration, and clearly demonstrates that UK Defence has cemented a place in the global Defence support arena. Well done!"

Geraint Spearing added, "It has been a great honour to welcome Sir Simon to DECA, and I have been extremely proud to demonstrate how we are transforming DECA. I would also like to take to opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your continued commitment to the F-35 campaign, culminating in a significant global achievement we can all be extremely proud of."

DECA AND DSTL SIGN PARTNERING AGREEMENT

DECA and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), two of the UK's leading scientific and engineering organisations, have signed a strategic partnering principles document, setting in motion plans to create a hotbed of military innovation in North Wales.

The two MOD executive agencies have agreed to look at various new, innovative ways in which they can work together across a range of science, technology and engineering areas to make MOD equipment programmes more cost effective, more resilient for longer, and better suited to the operational needs of the UK Armed Forces, in particular.

Dstl, who develop cutting-edge science and technology to keep the UK safe from harm, has set up a 'pathfinder' function within DECA Sealand to begin planning for the establishment of a joint Dstl/DECA collaboration team during 2019/20.

This will see staff from both organisations taking part in exchanges, apprenticeship opportunities, education, continuing professional development, 'best practice' benchmarking visits and inter-agency networking.

DECA has already supplied calibration services and on-site engineering assistance to Dstl reducing down time and improving availability. DECA are also updating some of its existing facilities to allow more sensitive work to be undertaken on site across a wider range of Dstl products, and conducting ongoing work to identify and expand capability areas.

Over time, we intend to find new ways of working to support the UK Government's Prosperity Agenda through collaboration

with industry, wider government and the devolved governments of the UK, as well as allied and partner nations.

Gary Aitkenhead, Dstl Chief Executive commented, "This is an exciting venture and will further enable Dstl to optimise and expand its capacity and capability through working with our strategic partners. It also provides Dstl with a firm presence in North Wales with significant opportunities for our employees and those seeking a science and technology career in the region. We will also be looking to grow our supply chain network in the North West and in Wales, and look forward to developing relationships with high quality business there."

Geraint Spearing, DECA Chief Executive said, "This initiative provides both agencies with a fantastic opportunity to collaborate in supporting UK MOD and deliver effective, sustainable solutions into the future. We are looking forward to working closely with Dstl through this partnership, focussing not only on technologies and support solutions, but also importantly on skills development which is high on our agenda both regionally and nationally."

Dstl is also an executive agency of the Ministry of Defence, run along commercial lines. It is one of the principal government organisations dedicated to science and technology in the Defence and security field, with six sites: at Porton Down, near Salisbury; Portsmouth West, near Portsmouth; Fort Halstead, near Sevenoaks; Sandridge, near St Albans; Langhurst, near Horsham; and Alverstoke, near Gosport. Dstl works with a wide range of partners and suppliers in industry, in academia and overseas.





Pictured L-R are Gary Aitkenhead, Dstl CE and Geraint Spearing, DECA CE

Chris shoots his way to victory

Chris Hazlehurst, Cryogenics Gas Systems Inspector based at Stafford, fired his way to victory at the National Small-bore Rifle Association meeting held at Bisley, the Devon open held at Moretonhampstead, the European Championships and the Long Range Rim Fire Club competitions.

Chris, who began shooting in 1973, is a long-standing champion and his most recent wins add to his extensive collection of trophies. During his shooting career Chris set the British record with a .303 in 1978, was selected to represent the Great Britain Rifle Team travelling to compete in Canada in 1979 and won the China Cup; the world's largest silver cup in 1980. During his military career, Chris continued to shoot at Bisley winning many prestigious cups and represented Great Britain over 82 times.

Chris entered the Bisley meeting with a .22 rifle and picked up the following placing in the individual cups;

- Ventura Perpetual Challenge Trophy 50 metre prone - first place
- The Dunlop Challenge Trophy 100 metre prone - first place
- Grand Aggregate - third place overall, second place National
- Help for Heroes - first place
- Junior Development Aggregate - first place
- Any Sights Prone 100 yards - first in class
- Prince William of Wales Aggregate - second place
- News of the World Aggregate - first place
- Eley Winter Postal Final - seventh place in a field of over 1200 entrants

Chris describes the ins and outs of the competition, telling us, "The meeting ran for a week with an aggregate over the first weekend, six competitions shot over 50 meters and 100 yards throughout the week and culminating in the Lord Roberts competition held over the last weekend.

"The first Sunday afternoon is the Eley Postal final. The first two rounds are shot at individual clubs with the top 10% qualifying for Bisley. I gained seventh place overall from an initial field of over 1200 entrants.

"The Lord Robert's knock-out competition over the last weekend was completed in stages with the top 10% making it through each stage. I made it through to the second stage missing out by just two points for the final stage."

After such a fantastic set of shooting results, Chris was selected to shoot for Staffordshire in the Counties Sextet. Earlier on in the year, Chris visited Budleigh Farm Shooting

Centre for a weekend to compete in the Devon Open gaining first place in:

- The Double Dewar, 40 rounds at 50 metres and 100 yards
- The Single Dewar, 20 rounds at 50 metres and 100 yards
- The English Match, 60 rounds at 50 metres
- The Scottish Match, 60 rounds at 100 yards
- The Open Prone Aggregate
- The Benchrest

Chris was back in action during September representing Great Britain once more at the F-class European Championships at Bisley, shooting .308 at 800 to 1000 yards and placed 103 out of a European field of 274 entrants.

Chris gained first place in the London and Middlesex Rifle Association open shoot in F-class and gained third place in the Long Range Rim Fire Club Autumn meeting also held at Bisley shooting at 200, 300 and 400 yards with a .22 rifle.

Chris received a nice surprise of gold and silver medals in the post for the Eley/National Small-bore Rifle Association one hundredth Dewar match, a postal competition from earlier on in 2018.

He has many competitions scheduled before the end of the year and hopes to increase his medal tally further. He has recently qualified as a Range Conducting Officer to enable him to progress to become a Club Instructor, Club Coach and hopefully Regional Coach for the National Small-bore Rifle Association.

Chris is also a qualified as a Course Director and Scuba Diving instructor with the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) and has recently been awarded his 20-years' service glass trophy.

Well done Chris!



Chris with some of his trophies

Biodiversity on the Sealand site



Pictured top left to right: Bee Orchid, Northern Marsh Hybrid, Self Heal and bottom right, Yellow Rattle

The beginnings of a wildlife meadow area has been established on the DECA Sealand site. Here Ian Donnelly, champion for the meadow explains how this area was designated and how it has started to create a thriving area of biodiversity.

Ian said, "I first spotted some unusual looking plants popping up in the grassed area amongst the picnic benches situated behind what we call the Old Armoury building. I researched these plants and to my surprise I found them to be Bee Orchids.

"This orchid gets its name from its main pollinator - a species of bee. A small orchid, it has a rosette of leaves at ground level and two leaves that grow up the stem as a sheath. The stem displays a number of relatively large flowers with pink sepals that look like wings, and furry, brown lips that have yellow markings on, just like a bee. As the bee lands on the velvet-textured flower, the pollen is transferred. Sadly, the right species of bee doesn't occur in the UK, so Bee Orchids are self-pollinated here.

"I investigated through our facilities department if it was possible to leave this area uncut to allow these tiny, relatively rare plants to grow and flower. They thrived and the following year more orchids appeared such as the Common Spotted Orchid and what looks like a hybrid of the Marsh Orchid which gave us the opportunity to widen the area left uncut from spring through

to autumn allowing the orchids to grow and seed throughout the summer months.

"Orchids rely on a symbiotic relationship with unique types of fungi known as Orchid Mycorrhiza. The fungi join with the orchid providing the seed with enough energy and nutrients to germinate and grow and I believe that our site began with some of these fungi, but now has enough to support a thriving population that this year now also includes Purple Pyramid Orchids.

"The site now covers approximately 200 square meters and supports other wild flowers too. I have spotted Birds Foot Trefoil, Yarrow and Self Heal which attract a variety of insects especially hover flies and butterflies such as Common Blue, Comma, Gatekeeper and Red Admirals."

Ian, who is a wildlife volunteer in the Deeside area, finished by saying, "I have attempted to introduce some native wild flower seeds at various spots along the cycleway between Chester and Deeside as part of my wildlife volunteer role for the cycle path charity, Sustrans. With experience I've found that although some species of wild flowers can be introduced by raking and sowing, the most successful non-intensive method is to clear some of the vegetation and let nature take its course. The seeds of plant species which suit the conditions will over time be brought in by the wind or by birds, and will flourish better than many that

are sown by hand. This is the general approach I'm taking to the area behind the Armoury.

"However, there is one exception with which I'll persevere, and that is the introduction of Yellow Rattle. This native wild flower has parasitic roots which attach to and feed off grass roots, thus weakening the normally vigorous growth that crowds out other plants.

"The establishment of Yellow Rattle enables other wild flower species to get a foothold and thrive.

"I'll be sowing some Yellow Rattle seeds this autumn in a few spots amongst the Orchids. This is done now as the short lived Yellow Rattle seeds need a few frosts to trigger their propagation in the spring, so fingers crossed they'll pop up next year. This rather delicate but important little plant will help increase the biodiversity in the area for us all to enjoy."



Competition

This issue's competition focuses on general knowledge and Whistler Technology Ltd has kindly donated a fantastic 128GB, 6th Generation iPad as the prize. For a chance to win, correctly answer the following questions. Good luck!

1. Where in the world would you expect to find a car with the vehicle registration code 'V'?

2. In which children's book did a spider called Charlotte and a pig called Wilbur appear?

3. How many sides has a heptadecagon?

4. Which was the first James Bond film to feature Roger Moore in the title role?

5. 'Suncrisp', 'Golden Russet' and 'Braeburn' are all varieties of which fruit?

6. The letters of the word 'allergy' can be rearranged to form three other seven-letter words. Can you find all three of them?

The closing date for this competition is Friday 4 October 2019

Please send your entries to Hannah Jukes-Jones by
Friday 4 October 2019

hannah.jukes-jones@deca.mod.uk

95551 5123

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MOD Beacon Barracks, No 6 Site Building 2, Within Lane, Nr
Hopton, Stafford. ST18 0AQ

Name

Department

Telephone number

One entry per person

The winner of the competition printed in the last edition and winning the Super Break vouchers is Andy Brough from DECA Stafford.

The correct answers were:

1. Winston Churchill

2. Clement Attlee

3. Margaret Thatcher

4. William Ewart Gladstone

5. James Callaghan

6. Tony Blair



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