



Ministry
of Defence

de&s

www.des.mod.uk

desiderer

Issue 142
June 2020

*the magazine for
defence equipment
and support*

**From ship to shore:
significant battlefield
upgrade for Merlin**



RBS15

The power
to prevail



Dominate the naval battlespace with our RBS15 anti-ship missile family. RBS15 neutralizes naval threats and ground targets at long range and in contested settings, delivering mission-critical performance in any weather condition.



For more information, visit saab.com/rbs15-family or scan the QR code.

Foreword

We are starting to see a glimpse of our “new normal”, and the way the organisation is adapting

"I am very grateful to you all for your professionalism, commitment and resilience"



By Sir Simon Bollom, CEO

to it speaks volumes about the character of DE&S. The ethos of continuing to deliver against Defence critical outputs, provide ongoing support to the government’s response to the pandemic whilst being affected by the crisis itself is admirable.

As we move into the next stage of the UK’s response to COVID-19, the ongoing safety of our workforce is of utmost priority. We continue to work on our recovery plans, looking at adapting our workplaces and working practices to enable a gradual return to some onsite activity while always ensuring the health and safety of our people.

At the beginning of May, I visited Bristol Nightingale Hospital and I was delighted to see first-hand the hard work and motivation of all those involved, not least the 17 DE&S staff picked from among our many volunteers to help create this life-saving facility. I am very grateful to you all for your professionalism, commitment and resilience.

Our Human Resources team has responded extremely well to the crisis by working proactively and at pace, addressing issues, revising policies and guidance when they are needed. You can read more about the team’s work in this edition.

The ability to be agile and adapt quickly to the current challenges has been key to DE&S being able to continue to deliver support to our front-line commands. Just last week, there was a successful Martlet test firing from a Wildcat HMA Mk2 for the first time, marking a significant milestone in the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapons programme. The Land Concept and Assessment team is continuing to take key steps forward with the Boxer support partnership.

We have continued our

engagement with industry via the Defence Suppliers Forum to help co-operation, especially during COVID-19. By sharing information and aligning our objectives, we continue to work together to optimise the contribution both Defence and Industry make to defence capability.

Elsewhere, we have made changes to our organisational structure to enable us to continue increasing our effectiveness, resilience and responsiveness – both now, and into the future. We have also made these changes to better reflect our strategic relationships with the front-line commands and align with other Civil Service departments.

Effective from the beginning of June, the title Chief of Materiel, across all four domains will change to become Director General. The name of the Joint Enablers domain will become the Strategic Enablers domain, to reflect the new shape of the domain and the relationship with its primary customer, UK Strategic Command, as well as its increasing importance in ensuring future integration of defence capabilities.

Additionally, the Future Capabilities Group will be expanded to include future novel, cross cutting and innovative areas of growth, including Space.

We have some senior staff changes this month as well as organisational, and I’m really pleased to welcome Krishna Dhanak to the role of Director Strategy and Corporate Operations, taking up the post from 1 June 2020. Adrian Baguley takes on the mantle of Deputy Chief Executive from the same date, in addition to his role as Director General Strategic Enablers.

And finally, I would like to say a fond farewell to the current Deputy Chief Executive & Director General Commercial, Nick Elliott. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank him for his hard work and dedication to Defence over this time. His presence will be missed, and the positive impact he’s had on the organisation will continue to be felt long into the future.

Contents

www.gov.uk/government/publications/desider-2020

Twitter: @DefenceES

Facebook: @DefenceES

LinkedIn: Defence Equipment & Support

YouTube: DE&S

Editor: Louisa Keefe

Louisa Keefe - 07981 013054
louisa.keefe101@mod.gov.uk

Contributors:

Tom Morris, Louise Allford, Daniel Evans, Lowri Jones, Paul McLennan, Hannah Swingler, and Tom Knight

Photography and Design:

Katherine Williams, Jack Eckersley, Charlie Perham, Mark Hawke, and Andrew Linnett

Distribution Manager:

Dick Naughton - 0117 9134342
Dick.Naughton501@mod.gov.uk

Advertising Manager:

Edwin Rodrigues
edwin.rodrigues@noahsarkmedia.co.uk
+44 (0) 20 3411 1008



Printing

desider is distributed free to DE&S employees and the equipment capability organisations. Copies may be sent to readers outside MOD, including in the defence industries and is published on the world wide web via GOV.UK and www.des.mod.uk. While the editor takes care to ensure all material produced is accurate, no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. Views expressed in *desider*, and products and services advertised, are not necessarily endorsed by DE&S or the MOD. All editorial submissions must be cleared by the relevant MOD authorities.

© Crown Copyright

This magazine is printed on Novatech Matt FS 100gsm which is Forest Stewardship Council certified material from well-managed forests and elemental chlorine free.



On the cover

A Merlin Mk4 of 845 NAS with specially fitted test instrumentation conducts trials on the HMS Queen Elizabeth by the Air Test and Evaluation Centre

Photo by LPhot Kyle Heller



6

Senior Leader Comment
Simon Dakin, Director
ISTAR

8

Wildcat
Successful test firing for
Martlet weapons system



11

VE Day
DE&S staff take part in VE day commemorations



12

Cover story

Merlin
Significant upgrade marks long-term achievement



14

Boxer
One step closer to Boxer
support partnership



16

First Person
Deputy Director Weapons,
Phil Game



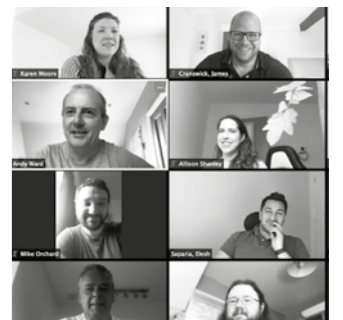
18

DE&S HR Team
Stepping up to the
challenge: Katie Sloggett
speaks to Desider



20

BFPO
Defence postal services
continue to deliver



24

**DE&S project managers
step up** to support
Department of Health and
Social Care

Simon Dakin, Director ISTAR, on his role, the fight against COVID-19 and his hopes for the future



I've been at DE&S and its predecessor organisations for over 25 years. I was attracted by the incredible breadth of the business and the chance to develop a range of skills beyond my scientific background, as well as the opportunity to contribute to delivering vital capability for frontline users.

While our business has changed during this time, the importance of our operations, the flexibility of our capabilities and the unfaltering dedication shown by our staff has remained.

I've witnessed this behaviour and attitude repeatedly throughout my career, and the situation we've encountered through the COVID-19 pandemic has reiterated this once more.

Over the past months, I've been working with the Cabinet Office on the UK Ventilator Challenge Initiative, sourcing and delivering greater numbers of ventilators to meet the forecast demand in the UK.

Within just 24 hours of asking for help, a team of around 20 people had formed from across DE&S, drawing on a range of skills and experience. I've been so impressed with people's willingness and enthusiasm,

going beyond what's expected to help tackle the pandemic. It's very humbling to be part of such a fantastic team and they've received outstanding feedback from colleagues across central Government.

Internally, as a result of the pandemic, my team has changed the way we operate. We've adopted remote working by default and people have adapted very quickly to such a dramatic change. This is a reflection of the professionalism of our people who strive to continue to deliver for our customers.

Away from COVID-19, I want to share one of my highlights from the past year, which was congratulating four military members of my Operating Centre, Warrant Officer Barry McConnell, Warrant Officer Robert Edwards, Warrant Officer Robert Jones and Chief Petty Officer Andrew Shaw, who were awarded the Meritorious Service Medal after being recognised in the New Year Honours list. Not only did the individuals deserve the awards for many years of distinguished service, they had each made a far wider contribution to society. I'm very proud to have them within the team.

I am confident that DE&S will succeed in our endeavours no matter what challenges and circumstances we face

Looking ahead, as we begin returning to business as usual, I have three priorities. First is the wellbeing and development of our people. Beyond my core role, I devote time to nurturing talent. It's a real pleasure and privilege to work with people who have such great potential and to help them realise their ambitions, both for themselves and the business.

My other two priorities are delivering on our commitments for customers and leading improvement. I'm keen to ensure that DE&S plays a leading role in digitising and integrating the battlespace. This includes big data analytics, machine learning, software enabled technology, robotic process automation, information exploitation and integration of capabilities.

From my past and recent experience, I am confident DE&S will succeed in our endeavours no matter what challenges and circumstances we face. I am determined we learn from recent experience and harness our individual and collective energy to tackle improvements with a positive mindset, and celebrate our considerable successes.



CORONAVIRUS STAY ALERT TO THE SYMPTOMS

**HIGH TEMPERATURE
OR NEW CONTINUOUS COUGH
OR LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL?**

No one in your household should leave home if any one person has symptoms.

Find out how to get a test, and how long to isolate, at [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

Wildcat helicopters bare their teeth with successful Martlet test firing

Wildcat helicopter crews have proved a new missile's ability to protect the UK's aircraft carriers.

Fired live from Wildcat HMA Mk2 for the first time, the Martlet weapons system procured by Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) has been successfully tested at MOD Aberporth off the Welsh coast.

Launched from the platform in 0.3secs, the telemetry missile accelerated to one-and-a-half times the speed of sound (992 nautical mph).

This marks a significant milestone in the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapons (FASGW) programme, which will arm the helicopters that deploy as part of HMS Queen Elizabeth's Strike Group on its maiden operational voyage next year.

Captain Mark Langrill, DE&S' Wildcat Delivery Team leader, said: "These firings mark a vital step forward in the integration of the uniquely flexible Martlet missile into what is already an outstanding helicopter to provide the Royal Navy with a world-class capability."

"I am grateful to all those across industry and the Ministry of Defence who have worked so hard to achieve this milestone."

Managed by the Lightweight & Medium Attack Systems (LMAS) and Wildcat delivery teams, Martlet incorporates the versatile lightweight multirole missile (LMM) – developed by Thales in Belfast – soon to enter service with the Navy and Army in the short-range air defence role.

Preparation for the series of test firings was conducted in

line with current Government social distancing rules due to coronavirus, adding an extra hurdle for the teams involved to overcome.

Wildcat Maritime Force Commander, Matthew Boulind, said: "The successful test firing shows the Wildcat helicopter will be ready to help defend our Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers and their strike groups for years to come."

"The Royal Navy and Army introduced Wildcat helicopters into service five years ago. The firing of the Martlet today is a very significant milestone and represents a huge success for the joint industry and MOD team."

The firing was captured with high-resolution cameras so the teams from Thales and Leonardo Helicopters – which manufactures the Wildcat in Yeovil, Somerset – can analyse the system trials in minute detail.

Martlet has already been successfully launched from the frigate HMS Sutherland, but its primary role will be on-board Wildcat.

Philip McBride, general manager of Integrated Airspace-protection Systems at Thales UK, said: "Martlet will ensure the Wildcat has the best-in-class offensive capability to protect the Carrier Strike Group."

"With each helicopter capable of carrying up to 20 missiles, the Wildcats deployed will be a significant deterrent to anyone wishing to interfere with UK interests."



DE&S team helps prepare Spitfire for Captain Tom Moore's 100th birthday

To celebrate the 100th birthday of Captain Tom Moore and his fundraising achievements for the NHS, an iconic flypast was organised by the RAF Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Captain Tom organised a fundraiser for the NHS, to raise money in aid of COVID-19 relief. Originally aiming to raise £1,000 by walking 100 laps of his garden, his astounding efforts raised more than £30 million.

To celebrate this achievement alongside his 100th birthday,

a flypast of a Hurricane and a Spitfire over his home in Bedfordshire was organised in recognition of his efforts.

Supported by the team in Bristol, DE&S staff from RAF Coningsby helped prepare the aircraft for the flight and fitted three GoPro cameras to the Spitfire to capture aerial footage that was later used by BBC Breakfast.

DE&S staff are honoured to have supported the iconic flypast with these two WW2 aircraft.

RAF Typhoons intercept Russian maritime patrol aircraft

A RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA) Typhoon aircraft recently scrambled from RAF Lossiemouth to monitor two Russian maritime patrol aircraft while they operated in a UK area of interest. Approaching from the North East, the Russian aircraft flew in international airspace over the Norwegian and North Seas.

QRA aircraft are launched to intercept unidentified aircraft because the aircraft cannot be identified by any other means, for example the aircraft is not talking to civilian or military Air Traffic Control, has not filed a flight plan and is not transmitting a recognisable secondary surveillance radar code.

QRA procedures entail RAF aircraft and crews being held at continuous high readiness at all times, so they can take off within minutes to protect UK sovereign airspace. During this scramble, additional air-to-air refuelling support was provided by an RAF Voyager aircraft from RAF Brize Norton, alongside comms and radar support from the National Air and Space Operations Centre in High Wycombe and Air Surveillance and Control System at RAF Boulmer. All of these elements remain on constant vigil to provide the RAF's contribution to the defence of the UK.



HMS Kent concludes cold-weather operations in the Arctic

HMS Kent recently departed the Barents Sea after seven days of cold-weather operations in the icy waters of the Arctic Circle.

Working as part of a combined US and UK task group, HMS Kent practised further integration with the UK's allies and proved her ability to operate at sea in sub-zero temperatures hundreds of miles inside the Arctic Circle.

More than 1,200 military personnel from the UK and US have been involved – conducting key training in support of the UK's defence.

HMS Kent has operated around the world and seen the full spectrum of challenging conditions in the past year, having operated in the high temperatures of the Gulf before taking up her tasking in the North Atlantic and High North.

The ship's activity plays a key role in the defence of the United Kingdom, continuing to conduct essential operations around the world ensuring the defence of the UK's global interests now and in the future.

RAF Chinooks pass 2,000 hours milestone

Royal Air Force Chinooks have recently passed a significant milestone in the UK mission to support French led counter-insurgency operations in Mali, West Africa.

The Chinooks began operating in Mali during July 2018 and have

now completed 2,000 hours of flying in support of the French military. Since arriving, the Chinooks have moved more than 1,000 tonnes of freight and more than 12,000 passengers.

The current detachment this year, from 18(B) Squadron RAF,

has flown 340 hours, lifted 247 tonnes of freight and transported 1,150 passengers since arriving in January. During this time, the detachment has operated in temperatures up to 47°C, which have been accompanied by frequent dust storms.

DE&S take part in VE Day commemorations



May saw the armed forces lead the nation in commemorating the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe day. Across the country defence personnel paid tribute to the enormous sacrifices of those who served in World War II and came together to celebrate 75 years since VE Day. Pictured clockwise from top: DE&S staff from the COVID-19 operations team in Abbey Wood Bristol paid tribute to all our veterans to mark VE day. Typhoons from RAF Coningsby joined the Red

Arrows and performed a flypast over Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast as part of the celebrations. Bottom: The crew of RFA Argus marked out '75' on the flight deck whilst in the Caribbean Sea conducting air operations and, finally, the flight deck team on board HMS Queen Elizabeth used glow sticks to spell out their message while off the south coast of the UK where they have been conducting warfare training and mission rehearsals.



£395 million upgrade for Merlin Mark 3

Pictured: Merlin Mk4, operated by Commando Helicopter Force during a Loughborough liaison visit (Picture by PO Phot Des Wade)



The Merlin Life Sustainment Programme (MLSP) has upgraded 25 Mark 3 and 3a Merlin helicopters to Mark 4 and 4a variant, impacting almost every major system on the aircraft, integrating modern and legacy technology and demonstrating the aircraft is safe and airworthy.

The £395 million upgrade has extended the life of the platform to at least 2030 and provides the Royal Navy Commando Helicopter Force (CHF) with a medium lift ship-optimised helicopter capability for littoral manoeuvre – meaning the Merlin aircraft have the ability to transition ready-to-fight combat forces from the sea to the shore to achieve a position of advantage over the enemy.

Merlin delivery team leader, Captain Kieran O'Brien, said: "This is an outstanding achievement and represents a fantastic demonstration of long-term and focused effort. Everyone working on this project in DE&S, the frontline command and Leonardo Helicopters are very proud of their collective role in delivering this important milestone in the MLSP.

"Building on this success, every effort will now be focused to

Commando Helicopter Force can now generate, sustain and field a modernised global contingent aviation capability

Colonel Del Stafford,
Commanding Officer
of CHF

ensure that the Commando Merlin is fully supported and available for global deployment."

This strategic milestone was achieved on time and represents a significant and long-term achievement for DE&S and the Merlin delivery team, enabling Merlin to be a more effective component in the future conduct of littoral manoeuvre operations.

Nick Whitney, managing director of Leonardo Helicopters UK, said: "The MLSP has seen industry and government collaborate closely, working together to develop ideas and overcome challenges. The collective efforts of all stakeholders will provide the CHF with a high-end Merlin helicopter with new cockpit avionics and ship optimisation to support its missions from ships for littoral manoeuvre."

The modifications to the aircraft include new cockpit avionics, a folding main rotor head and folding tail to allow their use from ships for littoral manoeuvre.

Alongside this success, the programme has also delivered a new Commando Merlin training facility at RNAS Yeovilton, along with a suite of synthetic training devices.

Colonel Del Stafford, Commanding Officer of CHF, said: "As Commanding Officer of CHF and the business change manager for MLSP, I am delighted that we have been able to declare the capability milestone for Littoral Manoeuvre Initial Operating Capability.

"That this has been achieved as planned is testament to the exceptional work and perseverance of everyone involved in the programme. CHF can now generate, sustain and field a modernised global contingent aviation capability aligned to 3 Commando Brigade and the Carrier Strike Group."

Through declaration of the milestone, the Royal Navy have declared to UK Defence that they are held at high readiness and are able to field a modernised aviation capability, aligned to required defence outputs.

Success as AJAX completes acceptance testing



Progress with AJAX testing has continued despite the challenging circumstances brought by COVID-19.

The first two Ares platforms that will provide reconnaissance support have recently passed general acceptance testing and will shortly be delivered to the Household Cavalry Regiment.

This is a great achievement for the MOD,

General Dynamics Land Systems UK (GDLS) and all those involved, in overcoming the challenges and delivering within safe ways of working during the COVID-19 restrictions.

The platforms in the Ajax family, which are built at GDLS' Merthyr Tydfil facility in Wales, are complex, fully digitised and provide a step-change in capability to the British Army, and mark the start of a journey in delivering transformational change to the Army's armoured fleet.

This accomplishment was witnessed by DE&S Director of Land Equipment, Major General Darren Crook, and the head of vehicle demonstration and manufacture, Mike Holstead, as they visited the Army's acceptance and testing team and GDLS.

Maj Gen Darren Crook said: "It was great to visit GDUK to touch base on Ajax. The team is working in difficult circumstances, observing social distancing and spending time away from their families to ensure that we are on track to deliver this next generation armoured vehicle to the British Army."

Boxer multi-role armoured vehicle support partnership moves forward

Pictured: Boxer at the 2019 Army Combat Power Demonstration at the Army's primary urban combat training facility on Salisbury Plain (Picture by Jack Eckersley)



The Land Concept and Assessment (LCA) team has recently moved one step closer to joining the Boxer support partnership. After receiving approval from other Boxer partnership member nations, they can now proceed to the next stage of fully joining the partnership.

This next stage will see the team work alongside NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) staff to determine and refine the UK's support requirements, which will enable negotiations of the UK's entry into the support partnership contract starting later this year.

By joining the partnership, the team will be able to take advantage of the joint logistics support and economies of scale offered by this unique mechanism.

David Russell, Boxer team leader, said: "This is a significant step forward for the UK Boxer programme and I am delighted that we are developing our enduring support solution by building on our existing international partnerships."

"The long-term support benefits of collaborating through NSPA with the other Boxer users include sharing of

I am delighted that we are developing our enduring support solution by building on our existing international partnerships

David Russell,
Boxer team leader

knowledge and experience, cost sharing, development of support strategies and exploitation of the commonalities and economies of scale.

This allows the UK to build upon the existing collaborative nature of all Boxer vehicles we are experiencing through the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)."

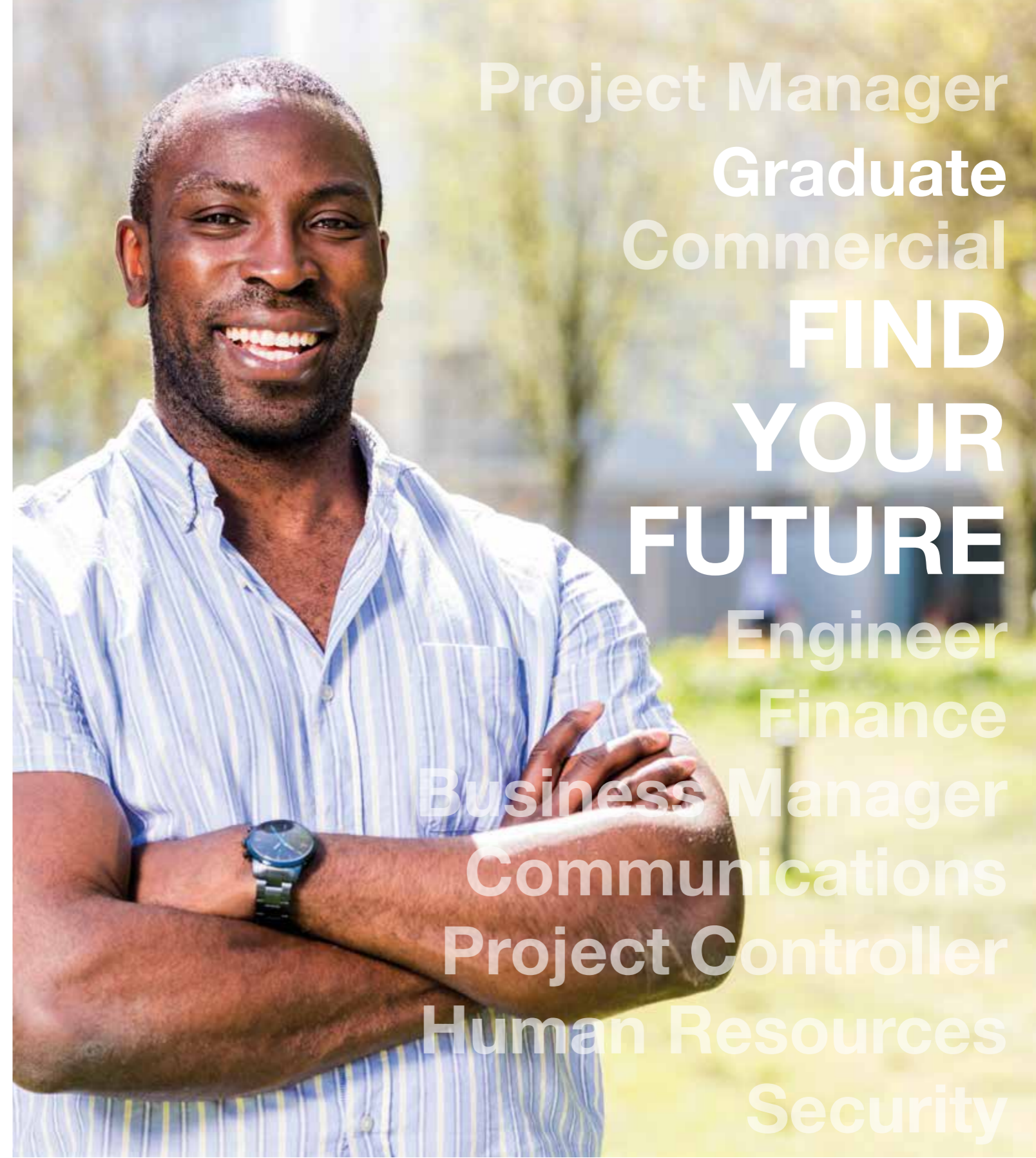
Boxer integrated logistics support manager, Ella Litherland, said: "This is an exciting development in our journey to delivering the Mechanised Infantry Vehicle (MIV) support solution. I am looking forward to working with NSPA and our international partners to exploit our shared goal of maintaining the Boxer vehicle as a leader in its field through this support solution."

The British Boxer armoured vehicles are currently under the production phase, managed by the OCCAR. Subject to successful negotiations, the UK will benefit from the existing experience and support network that NSPA has put in place over several years to provide a solid life cycle foundation for their Boxer MIV. This structure will be in place by the time the first vehicles

enter into service and will be gradually adapted and increased in conjunction with the delivery of different vehicle variants.

The support partnership structure is a unique feature of NSPA's services, providing a proven legal framework that allows two or more nations to organise common logistics support for a given weapon system. Nations provide governance and guidance whereas NSPA manages the support requested by the nations. This reduces costs, the logistics footprint and provides a common and efficient logistics support structure. The concept has proven its effectiveness for more than 60 years as it improves the availability and interoperability of supported systems.

NSPA currently manages 32 support partnerships covering more than 90 weapons systems, of which Boxer is the newest.



Project Manager

Graduate

Commercial

FIND

YOUR

FUTURE

Engineer

Finance

Business Manager

Communications

Project Controller

Human Resources

Security

des.mod.uk

A new home for careers at DE&S

On team success, the value of perspective and swapping identities

Phil Game is the deputy director of weapons in the Weapons Operating Centre, providing test and evaluation services and world-class ordnance safety expertise



What does your role involve?

As deputy director, I'm 'second in command' of the Weapons Operating Centre (WOC), providing senior leadership and support to help govern and direct delivery operations. This includes aligning our resources with the output required by our customers and interfacing with industry. Additionally, I ensure that our business delivery is underpinned by effective skills, processes and tools by embedding a culture of continuous improvement. That's quite a mouthful and, much of the time, I'm supporting the director and WOC senior leadership with strategic direction, while also supporting teams in solving problems and dealing with issues.

What about your role is exciting, rewarding or interesting?

I'm passionate about what we do in the WOC, where I believe we deliver the 'tip of the spear'. Without the weapons systems and munitions there would be no 'armed forces'. We provide strategic test and evaluation services and world-class ordnance safety expertise and advice. This brings with it complexity and challenge, where we are (I think) the only OC that delivers to all five MOD customers (Royal Navy, Army, RAF, Strategic Command, Strategic Programmes) and interface technically and organisationally with almost all platforms and operating centres in DE&S and the Submarine Delivery Agency.

How important to you is teamwork?

Very early in my Naval career I learned that everyone on board

a warship has a vital role in contributing to the success of the mission. From the Captain to the most junior logistician, chef, engineer, seaman or warfare specialist, we all live and fight together. Apart from the last bit, I'm convinced that the same applies to DE&S, where all functions are essential to the success of our mission in equipping and supporting the UK armed forces.

How are you helping embed change in your area?

I believe that to successfully embed enduring change, benefits must be clear to individuals professionally and personally and pass the 'what's in it for me' test. Based on my experience working 'up the ranks' in the frontline and within DE&S, I seek to understand and communicate the perspective and benefits of change across all levels of the WOC and generate a shared commitment to make us better at what we do. I believe it's also important to encourage feedback and adapt the change to more successfully achieve the objective.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in DE&S?

When I'm not delivering combat and weapon systems availability at sea, then I'm keen to be delivering and supporting these systems ashore throughout the project lifecycle and that's what we do in DE&S. I have been fortunate that the Royal Navy has assigned me to a series of rewarding jobs and I've held at least one per rank in the WOC. We have a hugely challenging job to meet the ambitions of our customers in performance, cost and time,

working closely with industry often at the cutting-edge of technology, all within the context of operating within a Department of State. Throughout my career, I've been impressed by our people in DE&S rising to this challenge.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

Sharing my passion for great project delivery to the frontline with great people. I get most professional satisfaction being part of and leading teams, fostering an output-based, inclusive working environment, ensuring everyone is treated with decency. We have all had to adapt to the current national effort to combat COVID-19 and, as leaders, we have to make sure our people are still connected, productive and safe.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In usual times, I enjoy sailing (given fair weather), skiing when I get the chance, but mostly walking in the open Wiltshire countryside with my wife, Sian, and cocker spaniel, Talisker. I'm also Chair of the local parish council which is far less *West Wing* and far more *Vicar of Dibley*.

What might surprise people about you?

I have an identical twin brother who is a senior consultant in Guy's Hospital in London. We often speculate on who would be found out first if we swapped jobs without telling anyone, or maybe we already have?

DE&S HR team play vital role supporting set-up of new NHS Nightingale Hospital

The DE&S HR team, like many other HR teams across the country, has had to take on new challenges in recent weeks amidst COVID-19. In parallel, DE&S has committed itself to supporting the national response to the pandemic and welcomed the opportunity to help set up the NHS Nightingale Hospital in Bristol. Deputy director of HR, Katie Sloggett, speaks to Desider about responding effectively to an ever-evolving situation.



Pictured: DE&S CEO Sir Simon Bollom visited the Nightingale Hospital with HR director Danny Griffiths, HR deputy director Katie Sloggett and Jacqui Marshall, the CEO of North Bristol NHS Trust (Pictures by Charlie Perham)



Alongside dealing with the changes and consequent challenges of making sure thousands of our employees are supported to work remotely, the DE&S HR team has also been supporting Bristol's NHS Nightingale Hospital, close to the Abbey Wood site.

Since the DE&S COVID-19 operations team was established, the HR team has been embedded in the crisis response, working alongside the COVID-19 operation cell.

Deputy director of HR, Katie Sloggett, said: "The HR team has stood up and been willing to be counted every step of the way and our reputation has increased as we've been able to react quickly to what our people need, as well as offer support externally.

"HR tends to be thought of for the hygiene or transactional things we do – but we've shown our ability to stand up in a crisis, give clarity as far as possible, ask the questions that needed to be raised and drive a lot of the 'new normal' agenda. I believe DE&S' response to COVID-19 is well aligned to the Defence purpose of protecting UK people, territories, values and interests."

Katie explained: "We were approached to help with project management, recruitment and onboarding as opening the hospital has involved a massive HR mobilisation."

There have been 17 DE&S employees supporting the Nightingale set-up since Easter – nine from HR and eight from the corporate solutions team.

Proud of how DE&S employees across the board have stepped up, Katie said: "We asked for volunteers across the workforce who would be happy to work on the COVID-19 response. Any requests for support are triaged to see if we can help and whether we can deliver against our defence priorities.

"In addition, teams have been covering the work of those deployed supporting Nightingale, other Government departments and our DE&S COVID-19

response. It's been an amazing DE&S team effort."

Julie Jordan, deputy HR director for the Nightingale based at the University of the West of England (UWE) is extremely pleased with the support from DE&S and said: "We are delighted to have been working in partnership with the volunteers from DE&S at Abbey Wood, who have supported us in our Human Resources and administration teams to deliver the Nightingale Hospital in Bristol."

The response to the crisis has been challenging for every part of the organisation but the DE&S HR team has been able to demonstrate the impact HR can have, including identifying some great future talent across the organisation.

Katie, added: "We've really seen some of our people shine, showing personal resilience and capacity to deal with ambiguity. I've been very impressed."

These aren't the only challenges the DE&S team has risen to. There are a number of key things the team has done to ensure the business is able to continue working effectively.

In 2017, DE&S had set up a smarter working initiative to enable employees to be flexible and work from home if needed. This had to be ramped up in only a matter of days, with the IT department sorting out additional secure communications lines into the organisation and HR, CIO and infrastructure teams ensuring those with existing reasonable adjustments and workplace adaptations had what they needed.

Director HR Danny Griffiths concluded: "I'm really proud of our HR team and the whole of DE&S. These are unprecedented times with high levels of anxiety, and I want to say thank you for your professionalism, resilience and your willingness to learn and adapt."



Pictured: Defence mail being organised, categorised and delivered to servicemen and women around the globe. Top right, a Llandudno postman is pictured after taking time out from his job delivering Royal Mail to his local community by volunteering his services with 871 Postal Courier Squadron. Pictured centre, senior medical nurse Lieutenant Lauren Hodges opens her mail, which has arrived from the UK for British service personnel and their families who are deployed to Gibraltar (Pictures by Ed Low, Cpl Jon Bevan RLC and Cpl Tim Hammond)

Defence postal services exceed Christmas peak levels

Forming part of the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) the Defence Postal Service (DPS) delivers mail to UK service personnel deployed overseas, to foreign and commonwealth offices across the globe, and also manages deliveries from business and retailers in contract with BFPO. During COVID-19, there has been an increased demand for DPS' services. Head of DPS Mails, Mr Andrew Wright MBE, talks to Desider about how DPS has stepped up to the challenge and continued to deliver an efficient service

How many letters and parcels go through the sorting office daily?

DPS work in support of the Defence Welfare Package and dispatch official and private mail to all UK armed forces personnel, their dependants and other entitled users deployed in more than 140 locations worldwide, whether on operation, remote training exercise, at sea or at permanent operating bases. Typically, DPS handles approximately 2,700 letters and 3,500 packets and parcels per day however, during COVID-19, our volumes on some days have exceeded Christmas peak levels – circumstances way beyond our own expectations.

How did the lockdown affect you and your team initially?

At first, the implications of COVID-19 were not fully appreciated. Erratic and unpredictable mail flows from external suppliers and the inability to get mail delivered due to local and national lockdown measures at many of our worldwide locations added to the initial operational challenges and our need to continually adapt.

How have you been keeping staff safe during this time?

The safety of our people is paramount. Due to the nature of our work, most of our people cannot work from home, so it was important to quickly demonstrate a collective resolve in assuring that any measures or actions taken were safe, secure and supportive, alongside balancing the needs of the business and those of our staff. Daily briefings, handouts and large screens in the workplace provided consistent and effective communication and guidelines as well as an open-door policy helping to provide answers and more personalised support where needed. Practical measures included introducing flexible working hours and attendance patterns, weekly replenishment of PPE and work area separation and work flow adjustments in the sorting floor and offices.

What's been the most challenging element of working during COVID-19?

It's been greatly challenging to manage the worldwide mail pipeline while trying to meet the expectations of our customers during this period. Lockdown has severely impacted on our ability to get mail moved around the world and communications with external parties – most of whom are working from home or unavailable – created additional demands in trying to repatriate mail, source alternative routes or adapt some of our procedures.

What have you and your team learnt from the experience?

We've learnt the importance of effective communication and to appreciate others for their support and efforts, despite the barriers and problems they faced. The heightened sense of purpose, teamwork and unity was really pleasing to witness. No stone was left unturned in finding ways or means of getting mail to our customers – the collective resolve of the team to find solutions was exemplary.

What would you say to your team?

I am immensely proud of our people and what they have achieved throughout these challenging times. Faced with unfamiliar and sometimes extremely demanding situations, their commitment and passion to overcome problems and get the best out of every situation – to provide that vital link to home for all our sailors, soldiers and airmen located elsewhere around the world – has been truly remarkable.

60 second spotlight

"When you need a bit of a boost, practice self-motivation"

Barry Gibson

Job:

Defence Munitions Beith apprentice training manager

Your route into DE&S?

I started working for the MOD in August 1997 as an electronic engineering apprentice. During this role, I gained experience on many systems and complex weapons processes in the depot. After my apprenticeship, I worked as an engineer on various sonar and weapons systems. In 2004, I progressed to production manager then, in 2013, I went full circle and back to apprentice training. Now, I have the pleasure of managing our apprentice training scheme, which is equally challenging and rewarding.

Your claim to fame?

DM Beith's apprenticeship scheme was reintroduced in 2013 – four years on, all 24 students who began the apprenticeship enjoyed a 100% pass rate alongside six engineering awards. Additionally, in 2017 Defence Munitions presented me with an award for "Delivering Apprentice Training Excellence." This led to me and some of our apprentices meeting The Prince of Wales, who commended our achievements.

Your advice to anyone?

My apprentices won't be surprised by this... when you need a bit of a boost, practise a bit of self-motivation. In other words, shout: "Let's go champ." You can do it in your head, but it's far more effective out loud. If you are in my workshop, you will have heard it.

What do you do when you're away from work?

I spend a lot of time with my family, but I do play darts and I have played guitar for 25 years, so I try to keep playing. I also train in Taekwon-do to keep fit and let off a bit of steam.

What are you most proud of?

I started Taekwon-do with my kids in 2017 and it has become my biggest past time. It's great for fitness and to spend time with my kids but I have also enjoyed some success winning the Ayrshire intra-club full-contact sparring, the competitor of the year and a bronze in the Scottish championships for both full-contact sparring and non-contact patterns.

If you were sent to a desert island, what three things would you take with you?

Family, but I would probably find it hard to pick three of them. Definitely a guitar and my Taekwon-do books, so I can get plenty of practice, and a good supply of Jack Daniels.

What irritates you the most?

I'm getting annoyed thinking about it. People who quote facts that are not facts really gets me. It's like people who say "literally" all the time when it clearly isn't literal at all.

What is your favourite place in the world?

The Isle of Arran. This is a small island of the west coast of Scotland and has become my regular holiday destination, where I have been taking the family for nearly 15 years. It's known as "Scotland in miniature" and has some fantastic scenery and places for outdoor activities.



What would surprise people about you?

Anyone who knows me will already know this, but everyone is always surprised to find out that my wife and I have 10 (soon to be 11) children. However, home schooling during lockdown has been a challenge with a five-year-old, seven-year-old, eight-year-old, 10-year-old, 12-year-old, 14-year-old, 15-year-old, 17-year-old and an 18-year-old university student.

Do you or someone you know deserve their 60 seconds in the spotlight?

Email
Louisa.Keefe101@mod.gov.uk

Project Manager
Engineer
Commercial
Finance
Graduate
FIND YOUR FUTURE
Business Manager
Communications
Project Controller
Human Resources
Security

des.mod.uk

A new home for careers at DE&S

Being agile and dynamic while supporting one another



A team of DE&S staff from Project Management, Project Controls, iLog and Corporate Services functions have been deployed from across four DE&S Domains (Land, Air, Ships & Joint Enablers) to support the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of the COVID-19 response.

The DE&S staff have joined with staff deployed from other agencies to form the Hard to Source Items (HTSI) 'SWAT' team led by Andy Ward, NHS England improvement project manager. The HTSI team have been set up to support the DHSC and NHS clinical experts identify and procure items that are in high demand but with short-term supply risks for NHS Trusts and NHS Nightingale centres.

Project Manager for MAMBA mid life extension, Phoebe Hall, recently co-ordinated the delivery of Government-furnished equipment, (SX 44 MAN truck) to SAAB, Sweden.

The delivery of the vehicle to Sweden was crucial as SAAB needed the vehicle to progress their design for system integration. If this vehicle wasn't delivered on time, the design progress would have been impacted, resulting in a delay to the preliminary design review.

After being told that goods would not be entering or leaving the UK and therefore this transport request couldn't be completed, Phoebe worked with Defence Supply Chain Operations and

The agile and dynamic team was established in a very short timeframe and was given a remit to examine a wide range of supply solutions to ensure the NHS has the equipment and consumables it needs to cope with the COVID-19 Intensive Care surge.

Andy Ward said: "It's amazing to see a team of around 25 professionals come together from such diverse backgrounds and start functioning and sourcing goods from unconventional channels, and delivering them safely into the NHS, all within a matter of days. Everyone, especially the DE&S colleagues, should be very proud of their work and ways of working."

Movement and monitored the status of imports and exports. As soon as restrictions on movement were lifted, Phoebe had to act quickly to arrange collection from 5th Regiment Royal Artillery for delivery to Sweden to still meet timeframes.

Phoebe said: "Through working on this project I've learnt that regular communication is key in strong stakeholder management and to successfully progress tasks."

Naval Ships Support recently deployed Lieutenant Tom Harris from the Frigates Strategic Class Authority in his military planning role to work in the Local Resilience Forum as part of the EU exit planning for the Port of Liverpool.

Lt Harris worked alongside personnel from other vital services including the Police, NHS, fire brigade and local councils. In his role, Tom focused on mitigating potential risks to the Port of Liverpool, monitoring changes to the UK border control, dealing with transport infrastructure and essential documentation for cargo management. The role involved writing the strategic plan to ensure the port remains fully operational as the UK leaves the EU.

Commenting on his detachment, Tom said: "It was a unique experience going from strategic engineering planning for frigates to EU exit planning for the Port of Liverpool. Drawing on my military experience, I was able to apply my command and control experience within the Royal Navy to a non-military environment. It was a valuable experience that I can take away and build on in my military career."



Wellbeing and striking the balance

Looking after our mental health and wellbeing has never been so important. Social distancing and the isolation it imposes can have a significant impact on our wellbeing and the way we feel.

Mental Health Awareness Week took place from 18 to 24 May 2020 and this year's theme was 'kindness'.

DE&S published a set of online resources and encouraged staff to join in the online workshops, virtual courses and mindfulness masterclasses run by the MOD.

January saw the launch of an Employee Assistance Programme that provides 24/7 access to trained counselling professionals and a helpful portal that contains a wealth of information. In February, DE&S marked 'Time to Talk Day' when a number

of DE&S staff delivered powerful presentations on their experience of mental ill-health and the inspiring lessons they learned. Additionally, April saw a Mental Health First Aid Network launched and DE&S have also launched a Men's Mental Health Talking Group to encourage DE&S to proactively challenge the stigma around men's mental health. For more information, please contact DESOHSE-MHFA@mod.gov.uk.

Mental health first aid lead Ian Slade said: "These resources and events were a huge success and received great feedback from attendees. This is another example of the excellent support that HR-Wellbeing, the Time to Change Network and mental health first aiders have been providing."



Like many others, head of market intelligence team, Mike Moate, has been working remotely to support the Land Equipment Operating Centre and the wider Land domain.

Mike's team produce detailed supplier briefs to senior leaders to better inform decisions on the health and strategic direction of our key suppliers.

Mike and his team has also been supporting NHS Gold command, producing market research reports to wider DE&S to support both the Ventilator Challenge and the discovery of potential suppliers of personal protective equipment for the NHS.

Mike said: "Although this period has very much been business as usual in terms of the number of highly complex requests that have been presented to the team, the challenge has very much been in managing to capture the requirements accurately from each

team, and customer while working remotely."

Mike has three children under five years old, so the challenges faced have been especially tough during the COVID-19 pandemic, as he balances trying to home-school his four-year-old son, while trying to keep his three-year-old son occupied, but also helping his wife look after their 11-month old daughter.

Mike added: "It's all about balance, as I have learnt to accept that I can no longer work 8-5pm, I have to take frequent breaks, sometimes to take the children out for an hour to get some much needed fresh air, and take a break from the computer screen."



MOTTO the MOD Lottery January winners

- £10,000 Hugh Brannigan, RAF Lossiemouth
- £2,500 Ryan McKie, Faslane
- £1,000 Mark Wakeford, Waddington
- £500 Glynn Baldwin, Corsham
- £250 Samuel Kane, Bristol
- £100 John Nother, Portsmouth
- Julie Tipping, Telford
- Jeanette Fisher, Plymouth
- John Hughes, Lisburn
- Ailsa Scotland, Faslane
- Sharon Dean, Liverpool
- Hazel Dunscombe, Andover
- Sharon Cady, Upavon
- Emma Taggart, London
- Alan Drewery, Plymouth
- Anne Lockton, London
- Lynda Clements, Shrivenham
- Emily Willard, Camberley
- Pete Aiton, Cheadle Hulme
- Lloyd Ryan, London
- Gina Harper, UKHO
- Sheila Hatton, Brize Norton
- Maggy Spikings, Bristol
- Nicholas Carter, Corsham
- Anna Price, Bristol

Case Study

Christian Davock, project professional apprentice within DE&S, gives his insight into some of the benefits of working for the organisation

Name:
Christian Davock

Job title:
Project professional apprentice

How long have you worked for DE&S?
Two years

Why did you choose to pursue a career in DE&S?
DE&S has offered me the opportunity to develop my project management experiences in a supportive and diverse environment. I knew from the outset that the work I would be undertaking would be unique to this organisation and provide me with a number of exciting and unique placements. As an employee of DE&S, I've found you can experience a great sense of satisfaction and achievement by knowing you are supporting countless others in the UK's armed forces.

What does your role entail?
As an apprentice, I've had the opportunity to experience two roles across DE&S along with countless unique opportunities and challenges. My first role in the organisation was as a project manager to support the Protector programme in the Unmanned Air Systems team. My second role was as a risk manager within the Off-shore Patrol Vessel Batch 2 team within ship acquisition. In both roles, I was able to face new challenges and further develop my skillset as an apprentice.

What are the opportunities to develop and progress within your function?
Within my time at DE&S I've benefitted from the

project professional apprenticeship scheme which is a part of the wider civil service fast track scheme. I've recently completed this and achieved a Level 4 project management qualification. Outside of the direct qualification route, I've been able to develop so many skills through engaging in additional activities – something my scheme and function have supported me with. There are so many opportunities to progress and develop new skills within DE&S that are suitable for all learning styles. You just need to seek them out.

What do you most enjoy about your job?
The people and inclusion within the workplace. When taking this job, I had to relocate 200 miles to Bristol and, without a doubt, I can say the community at DE&S made me feel welcome and comfortable in the new environment. With more than 8,000 staff on site there's so much support available, and so many opportunities that people are willing to share so you can gain new experiences.

What's your ambition?
I've always wanted to progress within the civil service, where I feel everyone can make a difference and feel a sense of accomplishment. My ultimate ambition has always been to be successful on the civil service fast stream where I can continue to develop new skills, be involved in new experiences and face new challenges.

What's your greatest achievement to date?
I was fortunate enough to participate in the national Tom Nevard memorial competition within the MOD this year as part of the group event. This was a big achievement for the team and I, as we won the competition which was judged by CoM Air and the head of engineering at DE&S.

Why would you recommend DE&S to others as a great place to work?
DE&S offers such a wide range of experiences and opportunities to develop, with support always on hand for those who require it. This makes it an ideal opportunity for those wishing to enjoy their career.

What are the social benefits of working for DE&S?
DE&S offers so many sporting teams and social activities throughout the year for everyone to be involved in. In addition, there are also on-site gym facilities with fitness instructors. I've also enjoyed benefitting from the Defence Discount Schemes, which means you can get a range of great deals including cheap cinema tickets, fast food chains and clothing brands.



SIX GREAT REASONS TO WORK FOR DE&S



Bonuses & Recognition



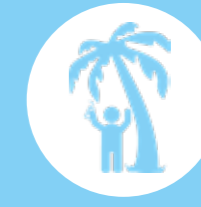
Pension



Flexible Working



Professional Development



Holiday



Facilities

For more info and job opportunities visit:
www.des.mod.uk



To advertise in desider contact

**NOAH'S
ARK** MEDIA

Edwin Rodrigues

T +44 (0) 20 3411 1008 | E edwin.rodrigues@noahsarkmedia.co.uk

Desider is the monthly corporate magazine for DE&S. It is aimed at readers across the wider MOD, armed forces and defence industry. It covers the work of people at DE&S and its partners, and other corporate news and information.



desider

The Magazine for Defence Equipment & Support