

DESIDER

AN INSIDE LOOK INTO LIFE AT DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT



THIS IS ME | THIS IS MY COMMUNITY | WE ARE DE&S

Proudly delivering for the UK's Armed Forces

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Cover: EMMA – DE&S Marine Engineer on Type 23 programme

Foreword

BY SIR SIMON BOLLON



Most successes in Defence can be attributed to having great people at the heart of the organisation. The talent, commitment and professionalism of our people will continue to drive the change required to deliver a battle-winning edge for the UK Armed Forces.

We know that diverse organisations spark more ideas, innovation and employee engagement, as well as improved decision-making and the achievement of better business results. DE&S continues to work hard to maintain a workforce that reflects the richness and diversity of society – because difference really does make a difference.

Nurturing the range of talent and experience that we have and attracting others is what we need to deal with our toughest challenges. Building on solid foundations, we are investing in our people and delivering on equality, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing. We recently celebrated Black History Month and National Inclusion Week, and this provided us with the opportunity to reflect, discuss and celebrate our diverse community. You can read more about these events in this edition of Desider.

We recognise that our long-term success will be dependent on diversity of thought and capability, and we continue to support our employees' learning as we foster a collective growth mindset. I am committed to ensuring we cultivate an inclusive culture which enables everyone to reach their potential. Only by embracing innovation and technology, investing in our people, and evolving as an organisation will we meet the challenges that defence places on us. This in turn will ensure we play our part in delivering an integrated and effective UK Armed Forces that can protect us all for decades to come.

DE&S continues to promote a culture that enables people with the right skills and behaviours to thrive and excel. Culture involves everyone – let us all continue to develop a diverse and inclusive culture and be a part of the change that we want to see.

Indeed, collaborative acquisition with our allies – where our needs align – can help us achieve more affordable, interoperable and technologically-advanced capabilities. Our relationships with Industry and international partners

are critical to our success and delivering the very best for our service men and women. Just this month, I met many of our NATO counterparts in my role as the UK's National Armaments Director. It is strong partnerships like these that are invaluable to achieving success. Alongside our allies we can foster the collaborative, progressive culture we have built that supports our future success both as an organisation and as individuals.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

Min Rodriguez, DE&S Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Lead

Talks to Desider about the organisation’s diversity and inclusion journey, maintaining momentum and listening to people’s lived experiences.

We properly started our journey into diversity and inclusion over 18 months ago, and the term ‘journey’ is the right one to use in this context.

Whether this be by land, sea or air, throughout this time we have been exploring who we are, what we want to be, the routes available and the terrain we need to cover during that expedition.

It hasn’t been a straight path and we have gone down a few cul-de-sacs, which has meant backtracking, deconstructing and then reconstructing our vision. This may be frustrating at times, but they are valuable lessons to learn from these distractions because it does allow for reflection, particularly in terms of collectively agreeing an organisational purpose and articulating clearly how we can measure progress.

Of course, things are never straightforward in the development and implementation of strategies and plans in the world of diversity and inclusion. There are competing priorities, particularly where these forces are external to the organisation, and which need to be considered. This field, with its multiple and complex considerations is often ambiguous. Then add into that mix that not everyone in the organisation will be sold on the benefits of a diverse and inclusive working environment, which can interrupt, or in some cases halt, progress in any given area.

DE&S is not unique in the journey it is taking. We are looking carefully within

to understand what makes us tick.

At times we must face the uncomfortable realisation that things are not ticking for everyone at the same rate or even to the same quality.

The events of last year have inevitably set us on a path where there is no looking back, and for some this might be terrifying and for others, much welcomed. However, it is important for us to keep up momentum, because individuals and organisations can have short memories, and this can lead to a tendency to sneak back to old ways. We recognise and openly acknowledge that as an organisation there is still much for us to do. But we are better informed and more evidence-based than we have ever been before. This means that we can understand how our workforce is represented, and crucially, to identify where barriers might exist for different groups of people. Transparency with our evidence is vital because we want to be better as an organisation and we want our DE&S community to contribute to the path ahead, and of course to ensure that our workforce can share equitable outcomes.

We are listening and hearing better because people’s lived experiences at work are important to us. We want to ensure that everyone can have equality of opportunity and equality of experience. There is little point in diversifying our workforce if people do not want to stay. Being honest as an organisation about the challenges we face can facilitate open conversations across the workforce. Part

of that challenge is to ensure that people feel psychologically safe to speak out without prejudice or fear of repercussions. We will continue to have difficult conversations so that everyone can be confident about bringing their whole selves to work and that our people should expect equal treatment. We want everyone to feel like they belong at DE&S.

None of this would be any good if we weren’t responding better – I think that we are, and I think that people are noticing. Being responsive without prejudice is key in moving forward to ensure inclusion and equitable outcomes in the workplace. We have realised in this short, but fast-paced phase of our journey, that transparency, showing vulnerability, being proactive and responding accordingly is what builds and maintains trust within our community.

We hope that these qualities will set us up for the next phase of our journey and look forward to sharing these with you as we mature our work. We also hope that you will be willing to support us with our continuing journey, that you remain engaged with these conversations and that you hold us to account with our path of continuous improvement.



Being honest as an organisation about the challenges we face, can facilitate open conversations across the workforce.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

FEATURE

Councillor Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor of Bristol and Cabinet Member for Children Services, Education and Equalities speaks to Desider about her views on promoting diverse and inclusive cultures

DE&S have a powerful leadership role as a major local employer and a pillar of the UK's infrastructure of state.

Supporting the development of diverse and inclusive workplace cultures across the city has been a key feature of our ambition for Bristol since coming into office in 2016. As a city, and a country, we've seen progress during this period but remain well short of unlocking the full potential of a society that sees equal representation across all sectors and all levels. This is something we must work together to achieve as it's only by sharing our experiences and pooling our resources will we be able to create the environment where diverse talent can thrive.

DE&S have a powerful leadership role as a major local employer and a pillar of the UK's infrastructure of state. We share the desire to deliver opportunity and it's welcoming to see the work already underway to create platforms for diverse voices to be heard across the organisation.

Social mobility can be advanced by DE&S, particularly through positive action in supporting people from across communities to have access to valuable opportunities and experiences of work. Reaching out to schools and education settings is vital. DE&S have shown an ability to do so in a creative and inviting way which is critical to inspiring people to look beyond the traditional limits put in place by closed institutions.

This is an area where Bristol is taking leaps forward by working across sectors to deliver the Bristol WORKS programme – a Learning City partnership project, which aims to make quality experiences of work and apprenticeships available to every young person in the city – and our award winning Stepping Up talent development programme that you can read more about on page 8. Initiatives such as these are aimed at providing visible pathways for people, often from under-represented groups, to gain knowledge, skills and access to opportunities.



NEWS

DE&S recognised for championing diversity



DE&S has been recognised by Bristol City Council for its commitment to championing diversity and inclusion.

The *Stepping Up Diversity Champion Excellence Award* was presented to DE&S during DE&S' first Race Conference, which took place on 19 October during Black History Month.

The award is given to organisations who have played a vital role in supporting the Council's Diversity Leadership programme since it began in 2018.

Councillor Asher Craig, Cabinet Member for Children Services, Education and Equalities, said:

"I'm delighted to acknowledge the support DE&S has given to Stepping Up and establishing an eco-system of employers who are committed to diversity and inclusion. To be able to honour them with an award for outstanding contribution to diversity and inclusion is an acknowledgement of the importance they have played from the very beginning of Stepping Up way back in 2018"

It was presented by Professor Christine Bamford, Stepping Up Programme Director and Kevin Millwood, Chair of the Stepping Up Stakeholder Board, to Krishna Dhanak, Director Strategy and Corporate Operations and Race Champion.

Stepping Up aims to unlock potential and develop talent while ensuring a fair representation of Black, Asian, ethnic minority, disabled people, LGBTQ+ and women in positions of leadership. The architect of programme, Professor Christine Bamford commented on the award: "DE&S has supported Stepping Up's Diversity Leadership programme since the very start, back in 2018. Stepping Up would not have happened without their unstinting support and commitment and that is why this recognition is so well deserved."

Support of the Stepping Up programme is one of

a number of actions DE&S is undertaking to build and maintain an inclusive working environment that attracts, develops and advances diverse talent.

Krishna Dhanak, said: "We are committed to improving diversity and inclusion in DE&S and it is championed at the highest level of our organisation. We are charged with delivering some of the most complex projects in Government. Our success is dependent on our people's diversity of thought, perspectives and experiences.

"The Stepping Up programme has proved to be highly successful in investing in current and future talent. It has provided invaluable support in helping people from underrepresented communities, from across the region, to reach their full potential. I am delighted to see first-hand the impact it has had on our employees who have taken part in the Stepping Up scheme."

In the last four years DE&S and its sister agency, the SDA, have supported 12 employees to take part in the Stepping Up scheme. DE&S has also provided mentors for Stepping Up participants, venues for leadership modules, worked in collaboration with Bristol City Council on reverse mentoring initiatives, and offered short-term project placements for participants to come and work at the organisation.

Former Stepping Up participant and programme manager in FCG, Buhe Ncube, said: "Taking part in the Stepping Up programme has really helped me learn a lot about my leadership style and how to communicate effectively with others and with clarity. Since completing it I've definitely become more confident and am better able to consider the wider strategic context in which I am operating to effectively lead my teams."

DECISIVENESS THROUGH DATA



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THIS IS ME

DE&S recognises that all the individuals that make up our workforce bring with them valuable skills, experience and competencies whoever they are and regardless of their background or identity.

We are committed to creating an inclusive working environment where everyone can contribute to their full potential.

This month we celebrated the diversity of backgrounds under the banner of 'This is me' championing the talent and diversity of DE&S both inside and outside of work.



THIS IS CHRIS

Future Combat Air System Head

Chris is also a band leader and a trombone teacher.



THIS IS EBI

Strategy and Innovation manager in the Future Capabilities Group

Ebi also likes to perform with her local choirs.



THIS IS EMMA

Marine Engineer on Type 23 programme

Emily is also part of the Longtown Mountain Rescue Team as a swift water rescue technician. She is also a trainee search dog handler.



THIS IS JANE

Safety and Environmental approval authority for Type 26

Jane is also a HM coast guard, coast guard rescue officer.



THIS IS INDY

Engineering Manager for Artillery Systems

Indy is also a competitive powerlifter.



THIS IS MAVIS

Talent Acquisition Specialist

Mavis is also a personal stylist who works with renowned Ghanaian designers.



THIS IS MIKE

Portfolio Project Controls manager for Ship Acquisition

Mike has been practising sleight of hand with cards for the last 20-years.



THIS IS SMITA

Digital application services team

Organiser of religious festivals and events in Bristol to bring the Indian community together.

NEWS

Race conference

DE&S were extremely proud to have hosted its very first Race Conference this October.

Striving to make sure that we represent the wider society and the diverse communities we serve, we recently held our first 'Race Conference' where DE&S people celebrated the workforce they are part of.

Krishna Dhanak, DE&S Race Champion and Director Strategy and Corporate Operations opened the conference with her personal story and spoke about community and a sense of belonging.

Reflecting on her own lived experiences, Krishna, said: "History doesn't define us, but it does shape us, and we can learn from that – when not to repeat the mistakes of the past, when to strive for better. Understanding our history provides the chance for self-reflection."

Following Krishna's presentation, guest speakers Cephas Williams, the founder and photographer behind the ground-breaking 56 Black Men campaign and Drummer Boy Studios, and Professor Olivette Otele, an expert in the history of

slavery and memory of enslavement at the University of Bristol, gave presentations and engaged in discussions about making DE&S an inclusive place to work for all.

Attendees were later joined by Professor Christine Bamford, Programme Director, Stepping Up, who presented DE&S with the prestigious Stepping Up Excellence in Diversity Award. The award recognises DE&S's vital role in supporting the Diversity Leadership programme since it began in 2018 and you can read more about this on page 8.

To celebrate the theme of race, culture and community, live singing from Britain's Got Talent semi-finalists, the BIG gospel choir, and music from the Bristol Reggae Orchestra was also enjoyed at Abbey Wood as well as food from local Gujarati, Jamaican and Nigerian caterers.

In the afternoon, as well as the Race and Culture Network giving a presentation, breakout sessions were held. In these sessions, groups discussed how to create an ethnically diverse DE&S for the future and how to ensure equitable outcomes for ethnic minority employees.

Reflecting on the conference, Krishna, said: "I feel that this last 18 months has been a watershed moment. It's provoked conversations among friends and families and colleagues that I previously couldn't envisage. But there's conversations that must be had, and must be heard if we are to understand each other, and move forward."

"As an organisation, we are making huge steps. Since we launched our first Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy a year ago, we have made substantial progress in delivering the outcomes we aspire to. Our DE&S Strategy 2025 now clearly lays out our values – excellence, inclusivity, collaboration, and integrity. These values, woven through everything we do, will create the best conditions to create an inclusive working environment where everyone can contribute to their full potential."

Pictured: Professor Olivette Otele



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NEWS

Future Maritime Support Programme contracts awarded

Billion-pound contracts to support Royal Navy will sustain over 9,400 highly-skilled jobs at UK Naval Bases.

The delivery of FMSP, the largest and most complex MOD support contract ever attempted, is a brilliant achievement. Collaborative working between DE&S and SDA teams, the Royal Navy and industry encouraged fresh ideas and concepts, and it was this agile approach that has resulted in a programme that has transformed the wider maritime sector.



A full set of contracts worth £5.2-billion over the next five years have now been signed with industry to deliver a complete package of maritime support to the Royal Navy.

The move sees 1,600 jobs supported at HMNB Clyde in Scotland, 5,600 at HMNB Devonport in Plymouth and 2,050 at HMNB Portsmouth.

In addition, 150 roles at DE&S and its sister organisation, the Submarine Delivery Agency, will be sustained at their Head Quarters in Bristol.

The contracts have been awarded under the Future Maritime Support Programme (FMSP), a project designed to drive major improvements in performance and efficiency through an ambitious commercial and procurement strategy.

The contracts have been awarded to a number of companies: Sodexo, Kuehne & Nagel, KBS Maritime, ESS, Leidos, BAE Systems and Babcock – widening the number of suppliers that provide support to the Royal Navy.

The increase of suppliers attracted to this traditionally niche market means that Defence can drive through improved performance and value for money.

FMSP delivers a contractual framework for the operation of the three Naval Bases and the upkeep and maintenance of the Navy's complex warships and submarines. This includes all frigates, destroyers, the two Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers as well as all classes of submarines.

It also includes responsibility for Naval Base services including along-side engineering and maintenance services, management of warehousing and distribution, personnel accommodation, catering and recreational

facilities such as gyms and football pitches.

The all-encompassing programme should mean Navy personnel benefit from enhanced services and facilities and enjoy a better life experience while stationed on base or while operating at sea.

DE&S FMSP Head, John Farrow, said: "The delivery of FMSP, the largest and most complex MOD support contract ever attempted, is a brilliant achievement. Collaborative working between DE&S and SDA teams, the Royal Navy and industry encouraged fresh ideas and concepts, and it was this agile approach that has resulted in a programme that has transformed the wider maritime sector."

FMSP replaces the Maritime Support Delivery Framework (MSDF) and Submarine Deep Maintenance Period (SDMP) contracts.

Under the terms of the new FMSP contract a new operating model has been implemented alongside a new management information and reporting system.

This will ensure the MOD can easily monitor the contract, accurately assess supplier performance and ensure delivery of real benefits to Defence.

DE&S CEO Sir Simon Bollom, said: "FMSP represents four years of hard work from DE&S, the Royal Navy and industry to transform the dockyard enterprise. The scope is broad, from mess catering, warehousing through to complex engineering. These new contracts are a huge step forward, will improve service delivery and drive increased value for money for the taxpayer."



From left top right HMS Albion RFA Fort Rosalie and HMS Ocean

Royal Navy ships sold to Egypt

In a landmark deal, the UK has sold military vessels to Egypt for the first time in more than 30 years.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships, Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie, were sold by the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA) – part of DE&S' logistics and support operating centre that is responsible for managing the sale and transfer of surplus Armed Forces military equipment.

Both Royal Navy Solid Support Ships were released from service earlier this year and their new lease of life could also support UK jobs, with negotiations under way for refurbishment work on the vessels before they are exported.

Clive Walker, the Head of DESA, said: "DESA is exceptionally happy to be working with the Egyptian Navy on the regeneration of two former Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships. This represents a tangible demonstration of the strengthening relationship between the two navies and the importance of the strategic relationship between the UK and Egypt."

Backed by the £24-billion investment announced last year, developing defence exports and investments is a key element to advancing Global Britain and asserting

UK defence in the face of evolving threats. The recent Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper aids these ambitions by providing a strategic backbone for such commercial activity.

Vice Admiral Chris Gardner, DE&S Director General Ships, said: "Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie have both served the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Royal Navy and many of our allies with distinction, across the globe both at peacetime and during conflict."

"Their sale to the Egyptian Navy – the first sale of UK military vessels to this partner in more than 30 years – represents both an investment in a UK partner nation and an opportunity to continue supporting our industry partners who will prepare these vessels to hand over, which is central to the successful National Shipbuilding Strategy."

Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie have helped to ensure Navy personnel all over the world have the food, ammunition and explosives they need to carry out vital operations.

The sister ships have two flight decks, which means as well as traditional replenishment at sea they are also able to

use helicopters to offload supplies.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said: "Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie played an important role in sustaining our naval fleet for decades and I thank all involved in their essential work."

"As we nod to the past service of these ships, we can also look forward to the exciting future of welcoming our new Fleet Solid Support ships."

"Both the UK and Egyptian navies continue to strengthen relations to maintain peace and security in the region."

Fort Austin and Fort Rosalie will be replaced by the Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships, which will form part of the UK's Carrier Strike Group.

At the end of August, four consortia successful at the pre-qualifying stage for the FSS build were awarded Competitive Procurement Phase contracts to enable designs to be matured.

The consortia are Larsen & Toubro, which includes UK company Leidos Innovations; Serco/Damen, which includes UK company Serco; Team Resolute, which includes UK companies Harland & Wolff and BMT; and Team UK, which includes UK companies Babcock and BAE Systems.

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NEWS

News in Brief



Prime Minister meets DE&S apprentices

DE&S apprentices recently took part in a visit to Rolls Royce where they had the opportunity to network with other apprentices in the South West and meet Boris Johnson.

While at Rolls Royce's Filton site, DE&S apprentices from the cyber security, maritime and aerospace domains met with Secretary of State for Education Nadhim Zahawi, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Theresa Coffey, Minister of State for Business, Energy and Clean Growth Greg Hands, and Minister for Higher Education Michelle Donelan.

Our apprentices from both the degree apprenticeship and higher level apprenticeship programmes spoke with Ministers about the importance of apprenticeships and their routes into DE&S. Ministers were interested to find out about the programmes they were working on as well as their views on how apprenticeships can be encouraged.

The apprentices also met with Prime Minister Boris Johnson who was keen to hear about the work that the DE&S apprentices do.

Catherine Wrigley, DE&S Aerospace degree apprentice, said: "The event was a brilliant opportunity to network with other apprentices from the South West as well as talk to ministers about the projects we're all working on. When I was at school, apprenticeships weren't spoken about widely enough so I was pleased to talk to the education ministers about encouraging more apprenticeships in the UK."

To find out more about DE&S apprenticeships, visit: des.mod.uk/careers/graduate-schemes-and-apprenticeships/

Secretary of State visits Abbey Wood

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace recently visited MOD Abbey Wood where he discussed acquisition reform and improvement challenges with DE&S CEO Sir Simon Bollom and members of his Executive Committee.

While visiting, Mr Wallace learned about the latest equipment DE&S is sourcing for the UK's Armed Forces and discussed multiple transformation projects within Future Capabilities Group, Special Projects, CSG21, Future Maritime Support Programme and FCAS.

Sir Simon Bollom, said: "It was a pleasure to welcome the Secretary of State to Abbey Wood and spend time talking through some of the challenges we face. It was also a great opportunity for some of our transformation projects to demonstrate how they are innovating to deliver for our customers."

Vikash Patel Head of Special Projects, Integrated Battlespace Operating Centre, also met with Secretary of State.

Vikash, said: "It was great to have the opportunity to show Mr Wallace some of the amazing technologies that we are delivering to our customers and talk to him about some of the procurement and commercial approaches we are taking to ensure we provide them with the best service possible."



Women in Defence UK Awards 2021

Holli Kimble and Dr Eluned Lewis, both DE&S Specialist Fellows based in the Weapons Operating Centre, are finalists in the Women in Defence UK Awards 2021.

Selected from over 400 nominations in 10 categories, the prestigious Women in Defence UK Awards celebrate incredible work, provide inspiration and promote the value of women in the Defence sector.

Holli, the Chief Engineer and Specialist Fellow in Directed Energy Weapons was nominated in the Inspirational Award Category for her visionary approach to prepare Defence for the adoption of Directed Energy Weapons, while simultaneously developing and inspiring others through her humanitarian and STEM endeavours.

Eluned, the Senior Specialist Fellow in Personal Ballistic Protection was nominated in the Outstanding Contribution Award category for her continued efforts to improve personal protection for our Armed Forces, particularly for women, and for leading and instigating a new tri-service anthropometric survey that measures the size and proportions of the human body.

At the recent Women in Defence UK Awards shortlisting ceremony at The Guildhall in London, another special award was presented. Mrs Barbara Clarke, formerly of the Dismounted Close Combat Survivability team, was awarded a special posthumous outstanding contribution award for her 30-year contribution to Defence after her tragic and unexpected death in January 2021. Barbara's husband John and son Adam were invited by Women in Defence UK to collect her award and to celebrate her achievements with all the other women and teams shortlisted for the 2021 awards.

Holli, said: "It's great to see the Women in Defence UK Awards growing year on year, and to be selected as a finalist among such amazing women is really an honour. Hopefully the word spreads about these awards and more people from DE&S will nominate the remarkable women from across the business as a great way to recognise and motivate."



Photo from Women in Defence UK

Eluned, said: "It's fantastic to be part of the Women in Defence community and to be able to celebrate the collective achievements of so many women. It was particularly poignant this year after I nominated Barbara for an award that she should have collected in person. I encourage people to look around them to recognise those who are doing remarkable things in Defence. Tell them! Encourage them! Nominate them!"

Angela Owen OBE, Founder of Women in Defence UK, said: "On our 10th Anniversary it is more important than ever to reflect on the progress we have made as women in the Defence enterprise; recognising and championing the amazing women, men, individuals and teams that have made this possible. We are really looking forward to celebrating the incredible achievements of all our nominees with the wider defence community on 23rd November."

Airseeker Support Secured to 2035

DE&S CEO Sir Simon Bollom recently signed an amendment to the Rivet Joint Sustainment & Follow-on Development Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the US Department of Defense. This secures support to the UK Airseeker programme up to 2035.

The initial support deal with the US had been due to expire in 2025. Following approval of a further £1.2-billion of programme funding, DE&S signed the MoU amendment and extended the support arrangement to December 2035.

Entering service with the RAF in 2014, the RC-135W Rivet Joint is a dedicated electronic surveillance aircraft that deploys in all theatres on strategic and tactical missions. The new agreement ensures the UK will continue to benefit from support from the USAF. This covers depth maintenance, spare parts,

engineering support, technical data and access to capability updates.

Airseeker works by using its sensors to detect, identify and geolocate signals throughout the electromagnetic spectrum. The mission crew can then forward gathered information in a variety of formats to a wide range of consumers via Rivet Joint's extensive communications suite and ground exploitation systems.

Signing the MOU on behalf of the UK, Sir Simon Bollom, said: "Extending Airseeker support reaffirms the continuing cooperation between the UK and US in this important Defence capability area. I am delighted that Airseeker will continue to receive world-class sustainment and follow-on development support right up until the current UK out of service date in 2035."

NEWS

Army Warfighting Experiment 2021

The Army Warfighting Experiment (AWE) is a novel way of engaging with both industry and the Army's Trials and Development Units to help them understand what industry is working on to benefit them in the future.

Now firmly established as a series of annual events which deliver high quality evidence for the Army, AWE pushes the boundaries of technology and military capability, testing a range of prototype systems by placing them in the hands of the user while giving invaluable military feedback to suppliers.

This year the main theme focused on harnessing technology to prepare for complex future warfare. Industry were tasked with five 'Challenges'.

1. Synthetic Wrap – provide a common, immersive and credible synthetic wrap that seamlessly supports training across the live, virtual and constructive environments.

2. Urban Training - transform the quality of, and replicate scale within, the urban training environment.

3. Complex Human Terrain - Provide an immersive, complex and multifaceted ecosystem that challenges the training audience across the human, physical and information domains.

4. Data Exploitation - Improve the capture, access, feedback and exploitation of data across all training systems.

5. Connectivity - Demonstrate a single, deployable and scalable connectivity solution.

There were a range of companies on site, demonstrating synthetic alternative approaches to training. From software and deployable training infrastructures to management of biometrics and virtual reality, all of which may be able help battle-train the Army in the future.

DE&S's Future Capability Group (FCG) was involved in this project as a central enabler to the wide variety of stakeholders included within the AWE portfolio.

Samantha Officer, DE&S AWE Programme Manager, said: "We worked really closely with the Capability Directorate within Army Headquarters in delivery of AWE21. One of the outcomes of AWE21 was to inform future procurement requirements under CTPP (Collective Training Transformation Programme.) We held responsibility to ensure that our industry partners had the correct contracts in place to enable the experiment in a safe and inclusive manner.

"Last year, FCG played an integral role of facilitating the requirement set and procurement of a digital backbone 'MANNA' on behalf of the Army Customer, putting a game-changing and sustained capability in place enabling experimentation activities in the future.

"FCG are now looking forward to the AWE Urban Series, which will see AWE established on a programmatic four-year cycle, with each year layering a new challenge hypothesis, culminating in a capstone event in 2024 with all aspects brought together.

"Focussing on all aspects of urban operations, and conducted within the context of Multi Domain Integration, findings from AWE will inform future reviews and it's decisions about urban capability requirements."



PEOPLE

Martin Foster

Job title

Change Advocate Network business support in the Corporate Communications team

What does your role involve?

My role involves providing business support to my delivery manager and other Change Advocate Network (CAN) team members, as well as assisting other Corporate Comms team staff. I am involved in the registration process of CAN members, as well as helping manage and update CAN membership databases. I take minutes at team meetings, proof-read documents and undertake research tasks.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I enjoy communicating with CAN members at CAN awareness/ focus group meetings and being responsible for registering new members to the CAN network. I also enjoy undertaking research tasks and proof-reading where this is needed by the corporate communications team.

What is your greatest accomplishment to date?

I think this will be having my article “Being Neuro-Divergent” published on the DE&S and Defence intranet as part of the recent National Inclusion Week. This article has hopefully raised awareness and increased understanding about neuro-diverse conditions such as Autism.

What keeps you energised about working at DE&S?

One of the most positive areas I have seen improvement in DE&S/MOD is the approach to diversity and equality, especially in terms of disabled staff and those including myself with neuro-diverse conditions, such as Autism. Although I was welcomed positively into the organisation, when I joined 20 years ago, I can see a more positive and pro-active attitude towards diversity, through the existence of disability and other networks, supporting neuro-diverse staff.

Who or what has shaped who you are?

During my career in DE&S/MOD, I have received significant and valuable help and support, from many delivery managers, as well as extra input from my current and previous FDO’s and a long standing mentor, who have all helped guide my career over the years. I have also found support and encouragement for my neurodiversity and autistic condition, from being a member of the Disability Network (served as Governance Secretary at one time), as well as recently being a member of the DE&S Neuro-Diversity network. This support has enabled me to develop, improve and expand my work and personal horizons. I believe I am a more rounded and capable, than when I first started in DE&S.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

I enjoy watching sport and regularly watch Somerset County Cricket club during the summer, as the ground is near my home. On occasions, I watch my local non-league football team, Taunton Town, and sometimes watch Bristol City when I have the opportunity, although I am not a season ticket holder.

Apart from sport, I enjoy visiting the cinema watching films, and am a member of Taunton Film Society, an art house film group, and also enjoy photography as an amateur, art and reading. Whenever possible, I also enjoy walking weekends in the countryside with friends, visiting Exmoor, Dartmoor, Dorset and other locations.

What might surprise people about you?

Outside work, my hope and aspirations are to travel more in the future. I hope to visit more of Europe, especially Eastern Europe and Scandinavia on holiday, and would like to visit the United States of America and Canada for the first time. I would also like to continue visiting parts of the UK, such as the Highlands, Lake District and the Peak District, which I have enjoyed visiting in the past.

What’s the best advice you’ve ever been given?

There is no such thing as a silly question.

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