

DESIDER

AN INSIDE LOOK INTO LIFE AT DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT



COLLABORATING GLOBALLY TO MAINTAIN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Proudly delivering for the UK's Armed Forces

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START Talking



I am delighted and honoured to be the new CEO of DE&S. DE&S has a vital role in keeping our nation safe and secure, and there can be few more interesting, more meaningful, or more exciting leadership opportunities out there. With a culmination of more than 25 years working in the defence industry, leading DE&S will be a real career highlight and I'm massively looking forward to this challenge. This role builds on my experience and career to date – if you'd like to learn a little more about me, visit our website.

We live in a world where some of our adversaries have conscript armies much larger than ours. It is the equipment and support we provide that helps make the difference in terms of our total military capability. And that has a really profound impact on keeping the world safe. What could be a more important mission? And how could I not be excited about becoming part of DE&S? In my first month as CEO, I will be going out and really getting to know and understand you and what's important. I want to understand the good, the bad and the ugly. What we do well, what we could improve and what needs to change. I want to get to know your perceptions of DE&S and learn more about your priorities.

This Autumn is going to be a critical time for UK Defence. We will see the dawn of a new era with Liz Truss appointed as the UK Prime Minister. This will bring new direction and new challenges at a time when our country is already facing a very difficult series of obstacles. Our environment and outside world are forever evolving and concurrent threats are getting more serious. This puts significant demands on us. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been a defining moment for Europe, NATO, and for global security. Impacting us as a business, and personally. The growing cyber threat and our digital dependencies pose an increasing risk to our safety. There's the economic hangover from the pandemic that may continue to disrupt supply chains. Also, the race to accelerate action against climate change is an additional pressure we are strongly committed to.

DE&S has faced numerous challenges over the years. The most recent included the COVID-19 pandemic and, in real time, the ongoing support to Ukraine, where we have been able to get crucial equipment orders out to them in as little as 48 hours. Our ability to respond is staggeringly quick when political, military and financial will is aligned. And alongside our partners and suppliers

we continue to provide essential support to Defence operations with great pride. This is all on top of the day job. Our teams deserve to be rightly proud that they are making a real difference to protecting democracy and the international rule of law.

It makes me extremely proud to know just how committed and resilient DE&S is, as we continue to deliver for Defence during these difficult times. It also instils a great deal of confidence in me. I'm confident we will continue to deliver and we are best placed to maximise operational advantage for our servicemen and women around the globe.

And what makes this possible is the people who are at the core of DE&S. They are key to the success of our organisation. They are the driving force behind the equipment and support we deliver. What I notice about DE&S is just how energised our people are around our mission. When I talk to the young people in the organisation – our graduates and our apprentices – they're brimming with passion about the impact we're having. This is very important to me, and something I hope we can build on. We've got to continue to create an inclusive environment where skilled people are engaged, empowered and inspired to be the best they can be. This will make DE&S a truly great organisation, in which we can all be proud to belong.

DE&S is becoming a genuinely world-class delivery organisation. I want to move us into a place where we can be that really agile, exciting, responsive organisation our customers want us to be. Every day. The organisation is brimming with ideas on how to do more, more quickly. We need to look for marginal gains to improve performance everywhere - in our use of digital tools, simplifying processes, partnering better with industry and collaborating with our allies. We need to harness the passion and commitment of the whole of the organisation and wider defence complex to ensure we maintain an advantage. As one team, I'm sure we can deliver collectively on our mission.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

Laura Farhall, DE&S Head International Relations Group

reflects on DE&S' work with international partners and the benefits of hybrid working.

Over the past year I've had further opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of leading an international team during the COVID pandemic, including how we adapt to a new way of working in the international space going forward.

Hybrid working now feels very much the norm and alongside our international colleagues we have sought to harness the opportunities this brings. From my perspective this has enabled us to strengthen communications. The return to in person engagement has highlighted the value of face-to-face engagement that cannot be replicated by video calls and emails. However, we shouldn't underestimate the value of collaborating through hybrid means as it allows for greater inclusivity, and more efficient ways to communicate with partners which I hope we continue to evolve.

For me, the return this year of the Royal International Air Tattoo and the Farnborough International Air Show encapsulated this value. Despite the extreme temperatures making it a much warmer event than usual, it was fantastic to see so many of our partners, allies, and colleagues from industry getting together over the course of a week in July. At these events, the Typhoon ECRS Mk2 radar investment was announced as well as the £60-million contract DE&S awarded to develop an uncrewed aircraft demonstrator. Both prime examples of successful collaborations with our industry partners. It was brilliant to see so many of our teams, including many of our graduates and apprentices, get the chance to go to these events and see some of the cutting-edge technology we deliver with our partners. For many this was the first opportunity to do this in their MOD careers so far - hopefully the first of many to come.

In my article last year, I talked about our Integrated Review, Defence Command Plan, and Defence and Security Industrial Strategy which all pivoted us towards ever increasing international collaboration. The current security context has shone a light on how critical it is to work closely with partners and allies, and we continue in DE&S to closely support this. You can read more about this and our support to Ukraine on page 14 in this edition of Desider. Over the past year we have seen many successes

in the international space where DE&S has been directly involved. Examples of these include DE&S negotiating foreign military sales with the US Government to upgrade Tomahawk missiles, working with MBDA and the French Government to develop the Future-Cruise Anti-Ship weapons for the Royal Navy as well as the autonomous mine-hunting systems contract DE&S placed that created jobs across Europe including the UK. In DE&S we continue to play an active role across a range of international activity, from negotiating international agreements, to delivering multilateral programmes, and supporting successful UK exports and the prosperity agenda.

This July we also saw the celebration of the 20th anniversary of OCCAR - the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation - which was attended by our Minister for Defence Procurement Jeremy Quin, in Germany. He was joined by a number of OCCAR Member State Ministers and senior officials to talk about the value of cooperation in delivery of our capability and promote the organisation to our allies across Europe. OCCAR continues to be vital to the UK and our allies in delivering leading technology and collaborative programmes such as Boxer that DE&S secured 100 extra vehicles for earlier this year and the A400M - read about its recent operational aerial refuelling on page 21.

We also continue to work closely with MOD teams and wider Government on the NATO agenda to demonstrate UK leadership and insight across the Alliance, including via the Conference of National Armaments Directors, to further support capability development, and to identify opportunities for UK industry. This has included close working with organisations such as the NATO Support and Procurement Agency. I look forward to joining their UK industry day in Luxembourg this month, having hosted NSPA General Manager Stacy Cummings' visit to DE&S in April.

It is also worth noting the fantastic opportunities we have here in DE&S not only to work internationally from Bristol, but also located with our partners overseas. We have successfully deployed DE&S staff into acquisition roles in France and the United States for example, as well as recruiting



into critical delivery roles within organisations such as OCCAR, which one of my team talks a little more about later on. We also hear from Janice Wilson-Pinchin on page 5 about her time as Liaison Officer to NSPA for the UK, and her experience collaborating with partners in Luxembourg.

We continue to work in challenging times, both in terms of the wider security context and the global economic situation. What is clear is that building on collaborative relationships and working together on delivery will continue to be key for us all.

As ever, people are fundamental to this success, and I feel very privileged to be able to work in an organisation with such talented and dedicated individuals who are sure to keep us building towards a stronger future together.

Finally, on another international note, next month sees us celebrate National Coming Out Day on 11th October. As the PRIDE network champion, I look forward to us sharing more on this and other important topics in next month's D&I focused Desider.

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SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

PEOPLE

Janice Wilson-Pinchin

Deputy Head of Support Assurance speaks to Desider about her experience working in the NATO Support and Procurement Agency and working with international partners.

I began my Ministry of Defence career in 2002 as a Personal Assistant. After completing two further MOD roles, I took on a policy secretariat (PolSec) position in Cyprus. Going into PolSec was a change of direction in my career but one for which I am thankful for. I have recently arrived at Abbey Wood as the Deputy Head of Support Assurance within UK StratCom Joint Support, following three years as the UK's Liaison Officer (UKLO) for the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) in Luxembourg - one of my most interesting roles to date with a huge reliance on collaborating with our international allies.

The NSPA was established in 1958 and is NATO's premier procurement agency leading on armaments procurement. The NSPA acquires, operates and maintains everything via links between industry and NATO nations - from weapons systems to fuel delivery, port services, airfield logistics, medical and catering services, and base support services - all over the world. This wide breadth of activities relies on the successful collaboration between the NSPA and its partners.

As the UKLO, I fostered these international relationships. My role was split into three areas of activity: Governing the agreement, Supporting UK Defences wider access to the NSPA and introducing UK Industry to the NSPA.

Working alongside the UK Ambassador to Luxemburg, part of my role as the UKLO was to promote Great Britain and increase the awareness of UK industry. This involved working with the Department for international Trade on the planning and coordination of the UK Industry Day at the NSPA which supports the UK Prosperity Agenda. An important aspect of my role was the ability to work with total autonomy and trust from MOD seniors and stakeholders. It enabled me to be involved with some very high-profile areas that covered all domains within MOD and the NSPA.

The Governing of the agreement saw me giving advice and guidance within MOD, liaising with over 20 country liaison officers and gaining an understanding of the founding principles of the NSPA. When supporting UK Defences wider access to the agency, I often worked closely with a range

of delivery teams and areas across Front Line Commands and DE&S. These relationships were vital for the introduction of new systems or delivery of projects involving the NSPA. For example, during my time working at the NSPA, developments were made with Boxer Mechanised Infantry Vehicle joining the support partnership, Multiple Launch Rocket System Urgent Operational Requirements were acted on, and regular engagement with the Logistic Support Supply Chain Services team on NATO Logistics Stock Exchange took place. The enduring theme throughout was the aim of working together to deliver greater benefit in procurement or support for the UK by collaborating closely with our NATO allies.

Recently, an exciting new opportunity for long-term engagement between NSPA and NATO Nations came to the fore as part of the Next Generation Rotorcraft Capability (NGRC) High Visibility Project (HVP). The NSPA was subsequently selected by the participating nations as the delivery agent in the concept phase. The programme has received a lot of interest from UK Industry and NGRC was a major topic of discussion during the NSPA General Manager's visit to Farnborough International Air Show in July 2022. Another key example of successful collaboration with our global partners.

During 2021, there was a very deliberate plan to increase the engagement and awareness of the NSPA within DE&S. Under the leadership of the DE&S Head International Relations Group, a communications plan was developed between DE&S and Head of Strategic Plans and Operations Defence Support, Support Operations. This has resulted in direct engagements between NSPA and DE&S seniors and strengthened the relations between the two organisations. There was common ground on the need to develop strategies which enable greater agility in development, procurement and acquisition processes, and a willingness to learn from each other on efforts to date in this regard.

As the UK continues to maintain its role in NATO, the importance of the UKLO role is set to endure. I am convinced that the positive stakeholder engagement and collaboration with NSPA, DE&S and across Government will continue to develop in the future.



NEWS

DE&S partners with British Army to test Ghost V60 Robotic Dogs

The DE&S Future Capability Group (FCG) has partnered with the British Army to test the capabilities of the Ghost Robotics V60 Quadruped.



NEWS



The 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment joined forces with experts from DE&S to test the Ghost robotic dog (also known as a quadruped) for the British Army.

Developed by Ghost Robotics, the state-of-the-art system is designed to navigate complex urban and natural terrains. Boasting a top speed of 3 m/s and a max payload of 10kg, the V60 quadruped is an agile and durable all-weather ground drone. It is equipped to deploy by parachute, helicopter, and air landing.

The bio-mechanisms of the robotic dog offer interchangeable legs and arms, with potential add-ons such as Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) imaging systems. This allows the user to map out a 3D image of their environment and assess potential dangers. The robotic dog features cameras on the front, rear and sides, offering 360 views.

The Ghost V60 quadruped is not an autonomous system, instead it is controlled by an operator at all times using a control pad.

FCG are trialling both Boston Dynamics "SPOT" robotic dog and Ghost Robotics V60 robotic dog in several use-case areas for the frontline commands.

Dave Swan, Lead Engineer, FCG Expeditionary Robotics Centre of Expertise said:

"In the modern battlespace, robotics are becoming increasingly important in allowing soldiers to operate faster, for longer. The Ghost V60 quadruped offers increased situational awareness for soldiers on the ground. It has the potential to act as the eyes and ears for military personnel on the frontlines – increasing accuracy in identifying and acquiring targets.

"This offers many potential use cases for the British Army, from delivering mission-critical supplies, scoping out hazardous areas, or performing combat tasks that are deemed too dangerous for humans. Ultimately, the Ghost V60 quadruped is designed to reduce the risk-to-life and the burden on military personnel."



FEATURE

DE&S helps RAF's newest aircraft fleet reach full-service capability



The RAF's newest aircraft fleet has reached full-service capability with the delivery of a second Envoy IV CC Mk1 jet.

Operated in the Command Support Air Transport (CSAT) role, the aircraft procured at pace by DE&S will provide assured, secure, timely and discreet air transport for high-priority military personnel and small items of mission critical freight to, from and within operational areas.

The arrival of the second aircraft at RAF Northolt and declaration of full-service capability comes two months after delivery of the first. Establishing the new CSAT service with Envoy IV on time is the culmination of months of hard work on the part of the RAF, DE&S and industry partners, Bristol-based Centreline AV Ltd. The aircraft will be working similarly hard to deliver UK influence and diplomacy around the world in the coming months and years.

James Evans, DE&S Air Transport Head, said: "Delivery of both Envoy IV aircraft follows hard on the heels of a rapid and agile procurement process to ensure a seamless provision of CSAT for UK Defence. It demonstrates one of the very best examples of smart procurement

that we have seen in recent years. I look forward to working with our RAF and Industry partners to develop Envoy IV further in future."

The Envoy IV aircraft are flown by mixed crews of RAF and civilian pilots with the CSAT service provided by Centreline AV Ltd from RAF Northolt. It replaces the BAe146, which was retired from service in April this year, and provides a step change in range, efficiency and operating costs. From April 2024, the aircraft will be modified with military upgrades and operated solely by RAF crews from 32 (The Royal) Squadron.

Air Commodore John Lyle, the RAF Air Mobility Force Commander, said: "I have been hugely impressed by the way that Envoy IV has entered service. Integrating a new aircraft into the Air Mobility fleet is never an easy task, but our teams have pulled together magnificently to ensure it has been seamless. I would also like to pay tribute to Centreline AV Ltd who have been an exceptional industry partner. We look forward to working with them in the coming years."

The £80-million contract has created 18 new Centreline jobs at Bristol and Northolt, including pilots, engineers, technicians and ground operations operatives. It has also sustained seven existing roles in Bristol and sub-contracts with external training and maintenance organisations have been established as a result.

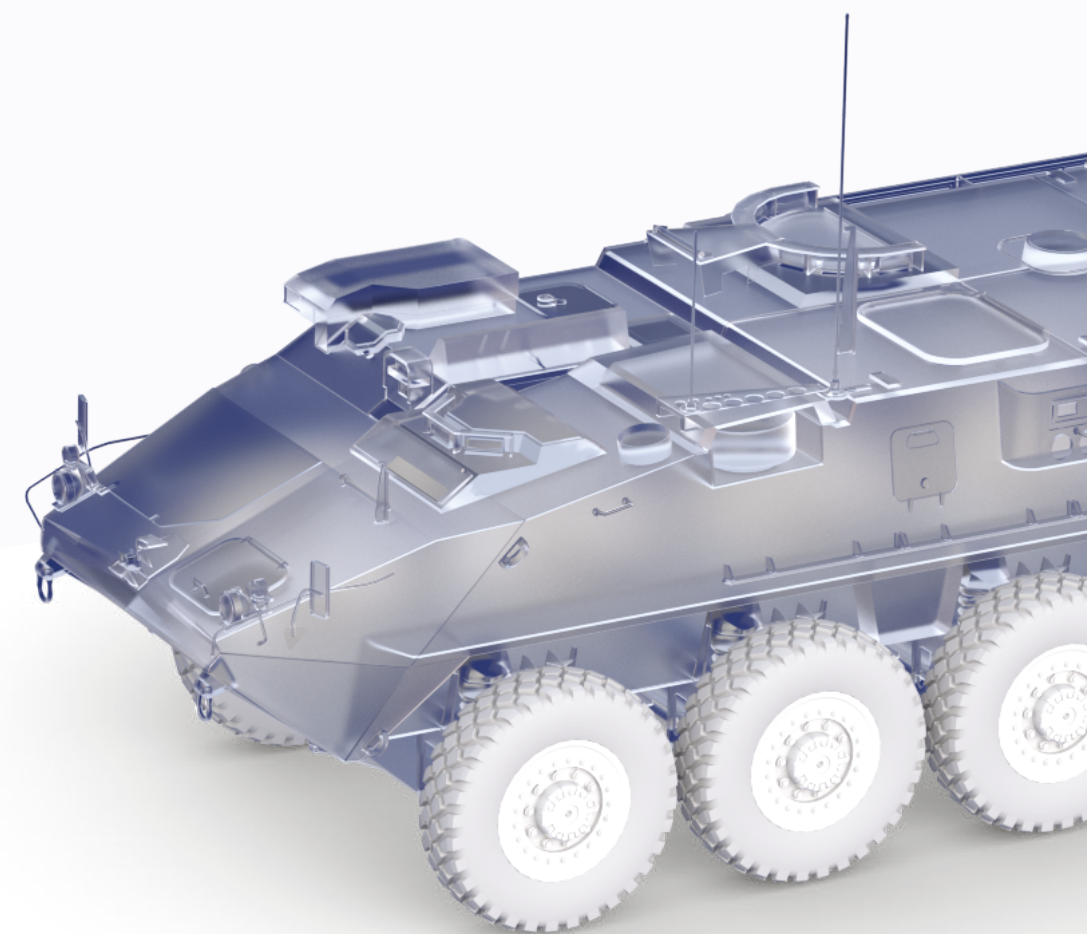
Steve Page, CEO of Pula Aviation Services Ltd, Centreline's parent company, said: "I am delighted that Centreline has successfully delivered full service capability for the CSAT contract on time.

"This is the culmination of a great deal of hard work and excellent collaboration between Centreline, DE&S and the RAF. The CSAT project has demonstrated our ability to deliver on complex contracts and work with partners in defence. As such, it represents a very important milestone as we look to expand and diversify our business."

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NEWS

DE&S apprentices celebrated for support to UK armed forces

The important role apprentices play in driving innovation and keeping the UK safe was recently recognised during a Ministerial visit to key defence sites in Scotland.



Visiting Defence Munitions (DM) in Beith – a DE&S facility which employs around 250 people and can produce, test and store weapons for the UK's Armed Forces - Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin saw the contribution the site is making to current and ongoing operations in Europe and further afield.

DM Beith boasts a sought-after apprenticeship programme, with the latest intake of six apprentices officially starting later this month. The outgoing apprentices had their contributions to UK Defence recognised through an end of apprenticeship ceremony.

During Minister Quin's visit, he handed over the Deeds for the dozen apprentices who have completed training over the previous two years and who have all been offered permanent roles at the facility.

The Minister also awarded the company's Apprentice of the Year award to Calvin, who will now be taking up a technical role within the DM Beith Operations Team.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin, said: "It is always a pleasure to meet apprentices across the country to discuss their exciting and educational journey in Defence and this week to congratulate those who have finished their formal apprenticeships.

"We're pleased to provide these opportunities for technical training and to offer challenging and varied ongoing career opportunities in Ayrshire, while investing in the prosperity of the area."

DE&S Head of Weapons Support, Neil Rixon, said: "I was delighted to congratulate our apprentices who have completed their placements and to welcome the next tranche. I'm very

proud that our Weapons apprenticeship programme enables us to invest in developing crucial mechanical and electrical engineering skills. The work undertaken at Beith is absolutely critical to our armed forces, and the skills our apprentices are learning are invaluable to DE&S."

During the tour of DM Beith, Minister Quin was shown the in-house complex weapons processing, engineering, storage and deployment capabilities.

As part of his two-day visit to Scotland, the Minister also visited the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre (BUTEC) at Applecross, on the north-west coast which tests underwater weapons. He then travelled to the MOD Hebrides range, run by Qinetiq for the MOD, where ground-based air defence weapons are tested and complex weapons trials are run.

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NEWS

News in Brief

DE&S give students valuable interview experience

Since 2019, the Entry Talent Centre of Expertise (ETCoE) has been developing and delivering an outreach programme with Olympus Academy Trust (OAT) Schools in the North Bristol area.

The Mock Interviews project, managed by DE&S Project Professional apprentices Matthew King and Holly Payne, saw volunteers from DE&S and sister organisation the Submarine Delivery Agency attend Bradley Stoke Community School and Abbey Wood Community School to deliver mock interviews.

Natalie Elias, ETCoE Capability Development Manager, said: "After the

pandemic shifting learning to virtual platforms, this was the first time many students had been given the chance to practice their in-person interview skills.

"Our project managers managed an impressive project. This was even more impressive when you consider a whopping 120 students were interviewed in one day at Bradley Stoke Community School.

"These opportunities really are a great chance to give back to our local community and encourage talent to apply for our Apprenticeship and Graduate schemes."

The OAT outreach programme runs four projects each academic year for local Year

12 and 13 students, including mentoring, CV writing and an all-day event showcasing DE&S' entry talent opportunities.

The programme offers not only valuable skills to students, but also gives DE&S learners the chance to build their skills in project management, interviewing and mentoring.

Following the positive feedback ETCoE received from the schools, an exploration activity is currently underway to understand and develop a wider roll out of the Olympus Trust Outreach to other schools around the Bristol area.

One Team, One Programme, One Goal



A key element of a five-year DE&S' Logistics Information Systems (LogIS) support contract has been signed.

Director DE&S Digital Nigel Shaw joined partners from Strategic Command and prime contractor Boeing Defence to sign a behavioural charter aimed at achieving an effective and efficient partnership under

the banner "One Team, One Programme, One Goal."

"Contracts only succeed with the right collective behaviours displayed by both buyer and supplier," said Nigel. "I am therefore delighted to have captured those behaviours in this charter and made them central to the way in which we measure

each other's performance."

The £460-million LogIS agreement announced earlier this year supports vital services including inventory, transport, engineering and general ledger management, ensuring the UK can successfully deploy military personnel and equipment globally.

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FEATURE

Wildcat

Wildcat operates newest missiles.



Successful Ship Helicopter Operating Limitations (SHOL) trials have proven that the Wildcat HMA Mk 2 can operate fully loaded with its newest missile systems in a range of challenging conditions at sea.

DE&S' Wildcat Delivery Team have successfully contracted and overseen the trial, working closely with industry partners QinetiQ and the Air Test and Evaluation Centre, the Wildcat Maritime Force and assurance and safety organisations for the aircraft equipped with both variants of the Future Anti-Surface Guided Weapon (FASGW) – Martlet and Sea Venom.

Operating from RFA Argus in the Atlantic and Mediterranean over a month, a specially instrumented Wildcat HMA was flown on 19 days for a total of 87 hours and conducted 894 deck take-offs and landings, by day and night.

A total of seven weapons configurations were successfully tested including missiles under both "weapon wings", and one at a time, to see how the Wildcat would handle for Navy aircrew.

Loading up one side of the helicopter (asymmetric) leaves the other flank free to enable operation of the heavy calibre machine-gun or winch for transferring

personnel or rescuing personnel, thereby enabling operational flexibility

Various approach and departure paths from the ship were explored and tested in challenging winds, weather and deck motions – the kind of conditions that could affect how a Wildcat behaves while deployed as part of a Carrier Strike Group (CSG). The Wildcat handled them all.

DE&S Wildcat Delivery Team leader Steve Jose said: "The conduct of a SHOL trial gathers the necessary safety information and operating limitations to inform how an aircraft can be operated at sea. To say these trials exceeded our collective expectations would be an understatement."

John Cunningham, the head of Weapons Evaluation and Capability Assurance (WECA) and Senior Responsible Owner for the FASGW programme, said: "The delivery of this trial has been an outstanding success. While luck always plays a part, the dice were loaded in our favour because of the enormous effort made by all contributors."

Managed by QinetiQ on the industry side, the trials involved more than 30 people and achieved a key MOD milestone. They also successfully

factored in the carriage of Stingray torpedoes, which will all be captured in the forthcoming SHOL trial report.

Cdr Joe Dransfield, Commander of the Wildcat Maritime Force, said: "This was a sensational result built on great team working and investment through planning and execution. I would like to say a massive thank you from the front line."

FASGW combines the short-range Martlet, developed by Thales, with the longer-range Sea Venom, developed by MBDA.

Both weapon systems are being integrated by DE&S onto the Leonardo-built Wildcat, with the first successful test firing of Martlet carried out during the maiden deployment of CSG last year.

Travelling at twice the speed of sound, Martlet is intended to take out smaller threats to the fleet such as fast attack craft, motorboats, patrol boats with its small explosive charge. Sea Venom is twice the size, has a greater range and is fitted with a larger warhead suitable for larger targets.

Once analysed, the data from the SHOL trials will guide air and ground crew as they operate FASGW-armed Wildcat from frigates, destroyers, auxiliaries and the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

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FEATURE

Tom Nevard

Tom Nevard memorial competition returns for 70th year.

The Tom Nevard Memorial Competition (TNMC) was enjoyed this summer by MOD apprentices and graduates from all over the UK. The week-long event saw teams work together on some unique challenges from building pop-pop boats to crafting spitfire models.

Coming together to showcase their design, engineering and teamwork skills, almost 60 engineering apprentices from across DE&S sites travelled to Shrivenham Defence Academy to take part in the prestigious Tom Nevard Memorial Competition. They joined apprentices from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA) to participate in the five-day event which has been staged since 1952 in honour of Tom Nevard – an Assistant Secretary in the Labour Branch of the Ministry of Supply – who is credited as being a key member of a committee that introduced apprenticeships to the MOD.

Richard Nevard, Tom's Grandson, explained: "My grandfather was passionate about securing the engineering skills of the future. It makes me extremely proud that this memorial competition is celebrated 70 years on. It always impresses me to see the ingenuity and sheer hard work of the apprentices."

Originally, the purpose of the event was to test the craftsmanship of the MOS engineering apprentices. Now, the memorial competition brings MOD engineering, project professional, finance and accounting, digital technology and corporate service group apprentices together to develop and test a whole range of core and functional competences.

This year, there were five challenges for the team to take part in: the group challenge, mechanical, individual electrical, CEO and non-engineering challenge.

The Vehicle design challenge saw apprentices having to design and build a pulsating water engine or pop-pop boats and was won by Tyler Brunt, Abbey Wood Digital Technology apprentice.

For the group there was one project professional and three or four engineers in each group. Their task was to design and build an 'airborne' folding bike and drop mechanism that was put to the test when dropped from a crane. The teams also had to design and build an evacuation trailer to carry a 'casualty.' The winning group consisted of: Amit Modhwadia, Christina Jasper, Reuben Marriott, Thomas Nelson and Harry Watts.

Christina, said: "Receiving a first-place award in the TMNC was a great way to end my time as an engineering apprentice. I was able to apply my practical skills that I learnt within my apprenticeship qualifications and solve problems effectively, gaining further knowledge and experience each day. I'm looking forward to applying these skills in my future roles within DE&S."

I believe that apprenticeships provide young people with an excellent array of skills and provide vital knowledge

to apply in their future careers. The opportunities that I have taken and challenges I have faced have developed my confidence and skills in a fast-paced environment and I will always endorse apprenticeships throughout the rest of my engineering career."

Apprentices who took part in the electrical challenge had to design and manufacture a robot arm to attach to a radio-controlled vehicle to diffuse a bomb by cutting a control wire. Mitchell Avery and Oliver Geddes were the winners of this challenge and the mechanical engineering challenge was won by Leon Weeks who had to design and manufacture a single handed axe or machete suitable for camping and/or brush cleaning.

Finally, the CEO challenge asked apprentices to manufacture a 1/72 scale model of a spitfire made from brass using hand tools. James Whalley was crowned the winner.



NEWS

News in Brief

DE&S Robotic Dog helps welcome experimental ship into Royal Navy



The Royal Navy have unveiled a new testbed ship – the XV Patrick Blackett – to support trials of autonomous systems at sea.

As part of the traditional naval welcoming ceremony, DE&S' SPOT the robotic dog assisted the unveiling of the new vessel. To do this, SPOT pulled a cord to release a bottle and smash it against the hull of the ship.

Weighing 270-tonnes, the new Damen 4008 Fast Crew Supply ship will enable NavyX to carry out sea trials, enhance

operations, and ensure the UK remains at the leading edge of naval warfare.

James Gavin, Head of the DE&S Future Capability Group, said:

"The XV Patrick Blackett is a fantastic addition to the Royal Navy fleet, and its rapid acquisition by NavyX is a real accomplishment. It is hoped that this advancement will enable closer collaboration with the DE&S Future Capability Group and NavyX.

This impressive vessel has the potential to be upgraded and to work

with autonomous systems – such as the ones the Future Capability Group is exploring right now with the Royal Navy. This includes the Heavy Lift Challenge 2, where we are looking to supplement the use of helicopters with UAS (Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles).

The ship may give us new avenues of exploration, to accelerate the development of the latest military technology and deliver innovation to the frontlines."

A400M operational aerial refuelling

The Royal Air Force have successfully completed the first operational aerial refuelling in an A400M Atlas, receiving fuel from a Voyager tanker.

Air-to-Air Tanking is one of the most difficult manoeuvres for frontline crews and requires intense concentration. This operation is a major milestone for Atlas, increasing the reach of this impressive aircraft.

Atlas A400M is a four-engine turboprop aircraft that can deliver 37 tonnes of cargo over 2,000 nautical miles at an impressive speed. Operated by the RAF, this aircraft can quickly transport as many as 116 fully equipped troops and equipment to where it is needed anywhere in the world. DE&S are proud to deliver both Atlas and Voyager for the RAF, giving the UK a world-leading air support capability.



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PEOPLE

Felix White

Name:

Felix Wright

Job title:

International Relations Specialist

What does your role involve?

My role in the DE&S International Relations Group (IRG) is a real mixed bag – I lead our small business management team, provide general support to our bilateral desk officers, and work in the team that manages our relationship with the European procurement organisation OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'Armement). I currently lead on UK recruitment to OCCAR, ensuring that the organisation is appropriately staffed with MOD and DE&S personnel.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

The best thing about my job and the IRG team is the variety of activities you can take ownership of on a day-to-day basis, the international aspect of those activities, and the subsequent exposure to senior leadership both in the UK and abroad. I also really enjoy the requirement to acquire and distil complex information at pace from across the full scope of DE&S when preparing briefing material.

What is your greatest accomplishment (in your role) to date?

In April this year I was asked to take ownership of arranging several short 'Brush-By' meetings for CEO and his international counterparts at the NATO Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD) in Brussels. This involved reaching out to several other nations, to stakeholders across the MOD and wider government including the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and the Department of International Trade, and to DE&S delivery teams. This was to organise meetings, agree agendas and pull together briefings for our CEO. This was a complicated and wide-reaching task under significant time pressure - but it was incredibly rewarding experience and one which directly contributed to the strengthening of collaboration between DE&S and our international partners.

What keeps you energised about working at DE&S?

One of the best parts about DE&S is the commitment to personal and professional development. I'd really encourage everyone to really take advantage of and support the learning and development opportunities and communities on offer. In late September the DE&S Policy Profession will be hosting the MOD Policy Conference in Bristol and I'd encourage those in DE&S who are interested in policy to sign up!

Who or what has shaped who you are?

Professionally I'd give a lot of credit to IRG as a team where I believe a real culture of empowerment has been created giving staff the skills, confidence and support to really take on the myriad of activities we cover. Outside of work, the only answer is my family, the emphasis they have always placed on listening, learning and 'giving it a go', and the lengths they have gone to make that possible for me.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time I can be found exploring Bristol, hanging around in bookshops, listening to or playing music (as long as a telecaster is involved) and travelling as much of the world as I can.

What might surprise people about you?

While at University I worked as a television and film extra. I have been on a couple of notable shows (and a lot more that were not) and got quite good at turning down roles in blockbusters (including 1917, Dunkirk & Star Wars) because I hadn't heard that they were being shot under codenames.

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

In the words of Henry Ford - "the way to learn to do things is to do things."



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