

DESIDER

AN INSIDE LOOK AT DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT



**PROTECTING OUR NATION, OUR TERRITORIES AND OUR ALLIES
TODAY, TOMORROW, TOGETHER**



In this issue



4
SCOTT
MURRAY, DE&S
DIRECTOR HR



5
CHIEF OF
DEFENCE PEOPLE
VICE ADMIRAL
PHIL HALLY

8
THE MARITIME
COMBAT
SYSTEMS
PROGRAMME
MANAGERS



9
DISPOSALS
SPECIALIST
DAVE
HERSCHELL



12
DM KINETON
TRAFFIC
MANAGER GARY
GRIFFITHS



13
SUPPLY CHAIN
MANAGER AND
RESERVIST
LUCY RUDD



16
CONTRACT
SECURES
SPECIALIST
RADAR
WORKFORCE

18
OPERATIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
SUPPORTS
BRITISH ARMY

21
KING'S BIRTHDAY
HONOURS
RECOGNISES
DEFENCE



START

Talking

Welcome to the July issue of Desider. This month we introduce you to some of the passionate, highly skilled people behind our projects.

This has been a significant month for everyone involved in the defence of our nation and allies, with the publication of Clive Sheldon KC's independent review of the Ajax Armoured Cavalry programme and Rick Haythornthwaite's review of the UK Armed Forces' 'terms and conditions of service'.

The Sheldon review focused on the considerable difficulties the Ajax programme has faced and the lessons that can, and must, be learned and applied across Defence in its wake. The review did not find any evidence of misconduct by individuals. However, it did find important systemic cultural and institutional issues that led to errors in communication and judgement, dismissal of contrary perspectives and optimism-bias in programme reporting.

The review is an opportunity to drive positive change across DE&S and the wider defence enterprise. The MOD has accepted either fully or in-principle all of its recommendations, and either has already or intends to act on them. I'm committed to ensuring that DE&S' work and our relationships with our armed forces and industry partners are built on foundations of transparency, safety and trust.

At the heart of the Sheldon review is a conclusion that we need to listen more fully to the voices of our people and partners, and respect their professional judgement and expertise. Our HR function will be key to that work. As DE&S' Director HR Scott Murray puts it in his senior leader column: "Our people are key to the delivery and success of this organisation." His piece gives us an insight into how we will develop and support them to better deliver our mission.

We follow Scott's column with a piece from the Chief of Defence People, Vice Admiral Phil Hally. The Vice Admiral gives us his thoughts on the Haythornthwaite review, which sought to "understand whether we're providing our people with an

employment offer that meets their expectations and needs". He then sets out a compelling vision for how to triumph in the "war for talent" and ensure the UK Armed Forces attract and retain the best people.

Throughout this issue, we also introduce you to six DE&S people to find out who they are, what they do and how they do it. They are just some of the many people behind our projects, working hard to help protect our nation and ensure it prospers.

I recently gave evidence at a House of Commons Defence Sub-Committee session on defence procurement, supporting the Minister for Defence Procurement James Cartlidge MP and MOD Permanent Secretary David Williams. This was an important opportunity to represent DE&S and our industry partners, and give an honest overview of the challenges confronting the defence enterprise. During the session, the Minister announced that he and the Secretary of State for Defence have commissioned an end-to-end review of the defence operating model. I'm pleased to say DE&S is already involved in this work, which I know will have a positive impact on our ability to deliver the defence mission.

His Majesty King Charles III marked his first official birthday on the throne in mid-June. People from across the defence enterprise were recognised in his Birthday Honours for their services to the UK, including a number of DE&S colleagues.

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a line from Vice Admiral Hally's article that really struck a chord: "what is clear to me is that no matter how technological we become, the heart of Defence will always be its people." In an issue focusing on how we grow and develop our people, I'm glad to have the opportunity to introduce you to some of them.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

Our people are our greatest asset

DE&S Director HR Scott Murray talks to Desider about his team's integral role in delivering the DE&S strategy with a One Defence approach.

It's crucial that our priorities within the HR function underpin our organisation's mission: equipping our armed forces with the edge to protect our nation.

Our key priorities in HR are to: support the delivery of the DE&S strategy; develop and implement our new operating model; and ensure that our core HR processes are lean, user-friendly and fit for purpose.

Today, I'd like to focus on our first priority – supporting the delivery of the DE&S strategy – and share how we've built three workstreams of activities to help us achieve our strategic intention of having the right person, in the right role, at the right time.

The first workstream relates to culture and inclusion. It's our people that are key to the delivery and success of this organisation – we couldn't achieve anything if it wasn't for them. We're driving positive cultural change so we can better support our strategic goals and better align our work to One Defence priorities. We're doing this by becoming more values-led, increasing engagement with our people, diversifying our talent pool and using employee insights to design interventions that deliver measurable impact and help us build an environment where our people thrive.

Our second workstream focuses on leadership, skills and growth. We are continuously professionalising our workforce and recognise that, for this to support success in our mission, we must maintain a focus on training, promoting and growing our people, and strategically deploy their skills and abilities across DE&S. As a key part of this, we are implementing a programme of required learning to develop lean, agile and commercially aware ways of working. We are helping our people grow, so they can fulfil the needs of Defence both now and in the future. We're doing that by elevating our learning and development offer and investing in an online learning campus, as well as supporting clear, transparent career pathways.

The third and final workstream is to deliver a compelling employee value proposition (EVP), which encompasses how we recognise, pay and value our people. It includes a range of elements and highlights the mutually aligned focus areas within the first and second workstreams. For example, aligning our capability growth with reward, celebrating and championing our values, and ensuring our ability to engage and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce are all part of our EVP.

The key to DE&S' success is, without doubt, the dedication and professionalism of people. Our people are our greatest asset. If we want them to deliver our mission, our values, our strategy,



then they've got to be empowered. They've got to be engaged. They've got to be motivated, inspired and feel belonging in our organisation.

Our people are at the core of everything we do, and we continue to invest in their skills and capability to ensure that DE&S delivers the operational advantage our armed forces need. I know DE&S will continue to promote a culture that enables people with the right skills and behaviours to thrive and excel.

FEATURE

“The heart of Defence will always be its people”

Chief of Defence People Vice Admiral Phil Hally CB MBE tells Desider about his role and what we need to do to recruit, train and retain the right people, now and in the future.

The core mission of the Chief of Defence People is to help the MOD and our armed forces attract and retain capable, qualified and motivated people into the right roles, at the right time.

I head up the whole-force Defence People Function, which looks after regulars, reservists and MOD civil servants, and owns the people policies and processes that support them through their employee journey, so we can meet those targets.

The Defence People Strategy sets out four targets: to deliver an adaptable and sustainable workforce; to maximise our use of talent; to develop ‘offers’ that attract and retain the best civil servants and military personnel; and to do so through a stronger and more collaborative people function.

Rick Haythornthwaite recently published his review of the Armed Forces’ ‘terms and conditions of service’. For me, the purpose of the review was to look behind the Services and understand whether we’re providing our people with an employment offer that meets their expectations and needs in a modern, digital world.

It’s about enhancing the employee experience, so we can be the best employer, attract the best people and retain them for longer.

In a competitive employment market, we need to be more agile in our workforce planning; in how we define the skills we need and determine where and when we need them. We need to understand today’s requirements, and how those requirements are changing in an environment that’s evolving faster than ever.

We must recognise that we’re competing for some of the best talent in the country. We’re competing with the best for the best, and the competition is fierce. This is not just a UK challenge – allies and partners are experiencing a similar ‘war for talent’.

We therefore need to be a more flexible employer that enables ‘zig-zag’ portfolio careers for those who want them and takes more of an enterprise approach to skills; where people may choose to work in Defence more than once over the decades of their working life – as a regular, a reservist or a civil servant. In between, they may work elsewhere, in the defence industry or more widely, gathering new skills Defence can later benefit from.

Behind everything we’re trying to do, there’s also a drive to improve and simplify our policies and processes through digitalisation, and create a better culture for our people that empowers them to have greater ownership of their careers.

If I have one message for Desider’s readers, it’s this: AI and autonomy may be highly topical, and I’m quite sure they will become increasingly dominant capabilities, but what is clear to me is that no matter how technological we become, the heart of Defence will always be its people.



It is the people behind the programmes who deliver the capability that delivers the effect. As the technology and skills change, we must continue to upskill our people. We need to seek agility. Be ever more innovative. Be curious. Be disruptive. But, most of all, we need to be flexible and adaptive as an employer at the centre of a national Defence enterprise, which attracts and retains the very best talent in support of our nation.

FEATURE

DE&S explosives safety expert named one of UK's top women engineers

Lauren Jenkins' commitment to safety and passion for inspiring the next generation sees her listed among this year's Top 50 Women in Engineering.

A trail-blazing DE&S engineer has been recognised for her passion and commitment to both her profession and to public safety.

Lauren Jenkins, an engineering capacity manager in the DE&S Weapons Operating Centre, has been selected as one of 2023's Top 50 Women in Engineering by the Women's Engineering Society.

This year's theme was 'safety and security'. Winners had gone beyond what would normally be expected for their career stage and were asked to demonstrate how they are protecting the public through their work. They were also required to show how they advocate for other women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) fields.

Lauren said: "Engineering has always been my passion and, having been the only girl in many a classroom studying engineering degrees, I was determined to succeed.

"I got my first job after university at DE&S as an engineering graduate in 2012. I always had safety at the forefront of my career ambitions. Building on those beginnings as a safety advisor, I broadened my engineering skillset by taking up an environmental protection role, investigating how the weapons domain within DE&S can minimise its impact on the planet and make defence more sustainable. During this time, and aged just 27, I was elected as a member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

"A year later I achieved my goal of becoming a chief engineer, and went on to be the youngest, and only female, engineer in my department to receive a Letter of Safety Authority, giving me legal safety responsibility via the Secretary of State for Defence. I have since gone on to use this authority to deploy troops and other battle-winning capability.

"Since I joined DE&S I have benefited from on-the-job training and development opportunities, which have helped me to continue to progress in my career. Now I hope to inspire the next generation of female engineers through my work as a leader with the Girl Guides."

Stephen Wilcock, Director of Engineering and Safety at DE&S, said: "This is an incredible achievement for Lauren, who is undoubtedly an inspiration to all in our engineering teams. We are extremely proud to have supported her career with DE&S and we look forward to seeing where this next chapter takes her."

Lauren is currently the capacity lead for the Weapons Operating



Centre, responsible for 350 engineers. A technical expert in explosives safety, she was also invited to guest lecture at Cranfield University as part of a master's degree module. Her leadership and innovation skills were also recognised by the MOD Women's Inclusive Network (WIN) when she was nominated in 2022 for a Women in Engineering award.

For the last six years Lauren has been sharing her passion for engineering and STEM with girls through her role as a Girl Guide Leader and her outreach to local schools and colleges. She is an active member of the MOD WIN and supports other female engineers through mentoring.

Lauren was presented with her award from Women in Engineering at the Institution of Civil Engineers in London.

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FEATURE

The people securing the Navy's sword and shield

FEATURE

DE&S Maritime Combat Systems programme managers Linda Winterbottom and Tristan Butterfield give Desider an insight into their work and the people behind their projects.

Linda:

I'm programme manager for the mine neutralisation equipment (MNE) section. MNE provides support to the Royal Navy to mitigate and counter threats from underwater explosives, such as sea mines, acting as a sword and shield against these threats. Within the programme we have two key projects. Seafox is a small, remote-controlled underwater robot that inspects and destroys mines without risking the lives of divers. Ships Protective Systems is a family of equipment which protect the hulls of ships and submarines by preventing corrosion and rusting, and by reducing their magnetic signature to avoid setting off sea mines.

Tristan:

I'm programme manager for the sonar 2087 enhancement programme. We're delivering new kit that will give the Royal Navy an operational edge against sub-surface threats. We want to be able to detect and counter adversarial submarines to protect our fleet and our critical national infrastructure. My team manages the sonar 2087 contract with our prime contractor, Thales UK,

while engaging with wider industry, both in defence and beyond, to bring their capabilities into the fold. We're testing things like AI capabilities that offer us the opportunity to sift and analyse data generated by the sonar's sensors.

Linda:

My team is responsible for making sure the right support is in place so that these massively important capabilities are available to the Royal Navy, and for building and strengthening good relationships with our contractors and Navy Command. I support that by ensuring my team understand what they need to deliver. Then I let them get on with it, making sure their health and wellbeing are looked after, and they've got the tools they need. If I've got a happy, contented team, confident in their abilities, then I know I'll get the best out of them.

Tristan:

My first responsibility is to guide my team, and help develop and empower them. Then, it's to grow and strengthen the relationships between my team, the Royal Navy and Thales, and with the dozen or so companies either already involved or who

want to be involved in the future. Some are nervous about revealing proprietary technology, some are so keen they are banging down the doors, and others have kit we may want in the future.

Linda:

Before DE&S, I worked for a company with an upside-down management system. Their ethos is that the people at the bottom are the ones managing the business and, as you go up, it becomes more of a supporting role. The people at the bottom are given the autonomy and the power to do what they need to do to deliver a top-quality service. That's something I've carried through to DE&S.

Tristan:

I used to be an engineer. Now my work is all about engaging with people. The more people you work with, the more you realise they are all very different, and the things that work for you might not work for someone else. You've got to focus on the basics: building good working relationships and trust. And be willing to listen. If two sides aren't listening to each other about what matters to them, then small details can cause everything to grind to a halt.

FEATURE

When the end is just the beginning



For DE&S disposal specialist Dave Herschell, getting the most out of decommissioned equipment is just as satisfying as developing the latest kit. He tells Desider how our old can become someone else's new.

Most people will associate DE&S with delivering new pieces of kit to our armed forces. Rarely do we tell the story of what happens to the old stuff when it reaches the end of its working life.

There's a lot of equipment that has to go somewhere – and not to landfill. That's where I come in. It's my job to help DE&S delivery teams to get the most out of what the UK military no longer needs.

My particular area of expertise is with aircraft. I have delivered some large-scale deactivation and disposal projects, together with experts from other teams, such as the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA), the Quality, Safety and Environmental Protection team and the International Relations Group (IRG).

I fell into the business of disposal somewhat unexpectedly. It was the polar opposite to what I had done in my career up to that point. I was an aircraft technician by trade and had spent nearly 15 years in the RAF and DE&S keeping Tornados in the air. But when, in 2017, the opportunity came to take control of the Tornado deactivation project, it sparked an interest in understanding how this was done.

I'd never given much thought to the processes that would be involved in removing aircraft from service, so it was a steep learning curve. By the end of the project I had helped take over 80 aircraft out of service, disposed of over £3 billion worth of inventory, closed more than 40 contracts (including a £7 billion support contract) and supported the end of DE&S' part in a tri-national NATO partnership.

Disposing of aircraft brings a lot of challenges. There are many different ways of doing it, from completely stripping down and scrapping, to donating to RAF heritage-approved museums and, of course, selling them on through the experts in DESA. There is some brilliant and innovative work being done across Defence in these areas. For example, with Tornado we developed a process with IRG to remove classified equipment and enable these historic aircraft to be donated to museums across the UK, with one even going to Perth, in Western Australia.

It's very much a team effort and I'd like to mention four of my colleagues who worked on an unusual disposal that really impressed me. Former Military Flying

Training System (UKMFTS) Disposal Project manager John Rich, former UKMFTS team leader Group Captain Carl Peters, and DESA Air Sales project leads Monica Hurtado-Arques and Peter Williamson sold the Grob 109B Vigilant fleet to Aerobility, an organisation that gives disabled people in the UK an opportunity to learn to fly at Hampshire's Blackbushe Airport. It was a brilliant way to give these aircraft a new life.

The objective is always to ensure aircraft that reach the end of their service life are disposed of safely, securely and in as environmentally friendly a way as possible. If we can achieve some return for the taxpayer, or provide pleasure and education equipment for the public, that's icing on the cake.

NEWS

DE&S secures hundreds of advanced anti-UAV weapon sights for UK soldiers



An initial £4.6 million order with Viking Arms on behalf of the British Army will provide soldiers with an advanced new weapon sight.

British Army's close combat soldiers will soon receive a cutting-edge weapon sight that will give them a tactical advantage when countering uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs).

The SmartShooter SMASH Smart Weapon Sight Fire Control System is able to recognise a target, track its movements, and maintain a lock on the target even if it or the user moves. This greatly increases the ability of dismounted soldiers to hit micro- and mini-UAVs.

This counter-small uncrewed air systems (C-sUAS) capability will initially be fitted to the SA80 A3 assault rifle, but it can also be fitted to other in-service individual weapons.

An initial £4.6 million order for SMASH sights has been agreed under a new five-year Framework Agreement, worth up to £20 million, for delivery to front-line Dismounted Close Combat (DCC) units across the British Army, Royal Navy and RAF by the end of this year.

DE&S DCC portfolio leader Colonel Paul Cummings said: "It's great to see the way in which the team has reacted to tackling this emerging threat, through trials and testing achieving contract award in a short time. Delivering this capability into the hands of the user by the end of this year demonstrates the commitment within DCC to keeping the user equipped for current and future tasks."

Wing Commander Mark Bowden, CUAS lead for the Army Programmes Directorate, said: "We are very pleased to announce the arrival of the first dismounted C-sUAS equipment into the core equipment programme. SMASH is a proven capability

already in-service with our allies and partners. As we have seen in Ukraine and other operational areas, the UAS threat is growing significantly and SMASH offers significant enhancement to the war-fighter across all three Services, delivering a tactical edge to the dismounted soldier in the C-sUAS battle."

The contract with Yorkshire-based small-to-medium enterprise Viking Arms will allow further sights to be delivered over the next few years to DCC personnel across the Services, based on operational and readiness commitments. This contract contributes to sustaining the company workforce – supporting the Government's priority to grow the economy.

Viking Arms Managing Director Sam MacArthur said: "We are tremendously proud to have been selected to supply the MOD's C-sUAS Smart Weapon Sight capability. The need for C-sUAS capability is very evident and we feel the SMASH solution is truly game-changing. We are honoured to be supporting our British Armed Forces with technology that will provide significant battlefield advantages, while the contract builds on our continued success as a trusted supplier within the UK defence sector."

James Cartlidge, Minister for Defence Procurement, said: "The importance of uncrewed aerial vehicles on the modern battlefield is undeniable. Alongside procuring, developing and deploying this technology in a range of different ways, we must also be proactive in ensuring our armed forces can protect against their use by adversaries. Adding this capability to our core equipment programme is another example of us procuring the right kit, at the right time for our personnel."

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FEATURE

Getting ammunition where it needs to go



Defence Munitions Kineton is the largest ammunition depot in Western Europe. Traffic manager Gary Griffiths tells Desider about the part his team play supporting UK operations around the world.

Defence Munitions (DM) Kineton, in Warwickshire, is the largest ammunition depot in Western Europe.

As one of eight DM sites throughout the UK and Germany that support operations around the world, we're responsible for storing, inspecting, maintaining and taking receipt of ammunition for the armed forces. Our aim is to get the ammunition in, make sure it's in good condition, and get it back out the door, as quickly and safely as possible.

DM Kineton is split into four areas: an admin area, two large depots holding different types of ammunition, from small arms to guided missiles, and a training site that's separate from our work where the military run Explosive Ordnance disposal and other ammunition-related courses. We have 58 standard explosive storehouses across the two depots, which can hold up to 800 pallets of ammunition, and 185 igloo-type stores, which look like above-ground bunkers with grassy tops.

As one of three traffic managers in the

Marlborough depot, I'm responsible for the 'out', the dispatch. There's a constant operational need for ammunition; there's always something coming around the corner. We work hard to always meet the needs of our military colleagues.

When a request (known as a 'demand signal') comes in, my team gather up the relevant ammunition and ensure it's in good order, ready to be shipped or collected. Every day we load vehicles and containers that take ammunition across the country and all over the world, from Kenya to the Falklands. We send out over a thousand vehicles every year and since last August we've dispatched 230 containers across the globe. We also prepare ammunition for military units to collect and use at firing ranges – it's an important step in keeping them battle-ready.

Our efforts have supported our Ukrainian allies and have played an important part in Operation Shader in Afghanistan and Iraq, and in Operation Pitting, the evacuation of personnel from Kabul. It's a busy place

to be and the most important thing about being busy is being safe. No matter how large or urgent the demand signal, safety isn't ever compromised.

This job is all about the relationships with my team. I've got young guys here that are still developing, still working out where they want their careers to go. I enjoy helping guide them and giving them some direction. I want to make sure they see the bigger picture, to help them find knowledge and confidence. When I see motivation in people that motivates me.

There's something really special about working at DM Kineton. When my team see the results of their hard work, maybe in the papers or on TV, they can go, 'Yeah, I was involved in that; I played a part in that.'

Everyone feels inspired and excited because they know what we are doing here is achieving something special. It's life-saving stuff and it's helping stabilise the world.

FEATURE

Flying full circle with a C17

Supply chain manager and reservist logistic mover Lucy Rudd talks about her two roles.

Tell us about your current role at DE&S

I'm a supply chain manager within the C17 Command Support Airborne Equipment delivery team. My main responsibilities include purchasing new stock for RAF units, inventory account management, disposal of items that have reached the end of their service life, and budget management of over 3,000 line items.

The C17 is an impressive aircraft. It's been involved in a number of airlifts, including the evacuation of UK personnel from Kabul. How does it feel to have played a part in that?

It's been a privilege to have played a part in these operations by ensuring the RAF receives the equipment they need, in the right place and at the right time, to support these capabilities.

What are you most proud of having achieved in your time with DE&S in your current or a past role?

My proudest moment was during my time as a supply chain manager in the Air Commodities delivery team. My team were the guinea-pigs for a re-design of how supply chain managers manage their contracts to improve outdated ways of working while still supporting the RAF. We successfully transitioned from one supply chain manager covering all logistical aspects of a contract to splitting this across a team of 12. Through my management, we made significant improvements in data accuracy and demand management, which gave us greater logistical resilience.

And you're a reservist too. What is your role in the Reserves?

My role within 4624 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton is a logistic mover, working with the same C17s that I support day-to-day. My typical activities include checking in passengers and cargo due to fly out on operations, operating forklifts and other vehicles to load freight for transport, planning loads and building pallets.

What inspired you to join the Reserves?

I've always been interested in the armed forces. I have four family members who previously served or are currently serving, which has given me a great insight into military life, and the personal and professional benefits it can bring.

Why was it important for you to join the Reserves, in addition to supporting the Armed Forces in your day job?

It was important to me join the reserves to challenge myself, develop new skills and test how well I work under pressure. It has given me further insight into the constraints that both organisations face and how we can and should support one another during these issues. I've enjoyed working closely with full-time regulars in my day job too, and appreciate their commitment within DE&S.



Can you tell us about the Reserves deployment you have coming up?

From October I'll be deployed to RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus, where I'll be supporting the RAF's ongoing operations in Syria and Iraq through Operation Shader. I'll be part of their Air Movements Squadron, which is close to my role at RAF Brize Norton. The deployment will last for three months and I'll come back to my role in DE&S in March 2024.

NEWS

DE&S secures offshore patrol vessel support contracts worth £320 million

DE&S has negotiated two new support contracts for the Royal Navy's versatile offshore patrol vessels (OPVs), sustaining an important capability and jobs across the UK.

An eight-year contract worth around £250 million has been awarded to UK Docks Marine Services, based in north-east England, which will support the second batch of OPVs: HMS Forth, HMS Medway, HMS Trent, HMS Tamar and HMS Spey.

The contract creates more than 100 engineer, technician, project manager and administrative roles within UK Docks Marine Services, of which 25 to 30 will be based in South Shields and Gosport, with the remaining roles located overseas.

Paul Vooght, Future in Service Support team leader at DE&S, said: "I'm really proud of the delivery team who helped shape the global support package we now have on contract with UK Docks. The contract challenges UK Docks to 'put the maintainer first' in providing a commercial-style ship management service to meet the high availability demand of the Batch 2 OPVs."

Jonathan Wilson, UK Docks Marine Services Managing Director, described the award of the contract as "a resounding vote of confidence in homegrown British industry, skills and capability, and we look forward to putting those resources at the service of these five important vessels."

A second contract, worth £70 million over five years, has been secured with BAE Systems to support the first three Batch 1 OPVs – HMS Mersey, HMS Severn and HMS Tyne – which entered service in 2003. Sustaining more than a dozen UK jobs in Portsmouth, the contract will maintain the high availability of these ships in home waters and on deployments around the world. The contract will also secure spares, repairs and maintenance up to 2028, when the ships are due to retire from naval service.

Graeme Little OBE, Head of Future Support Acquisition in Navy Command, said: "This is another big step on the journey to implement the Naval Enterprise Support Strategy. I am

delighted with the outcome of the commercial activity by colleagues in DE&S who have put in place effective, efficient and commercially benchmarked support solutions that are critical to providing support to the offshore patrol vessels."

Head of Asset Management at BAE Systems Dean Kimber said: "We are pleased to continue our work supporting OPV Batch 1, enabling high availability of the ships as they carry out their vital roles protecting UK waters."

Commodore Steve McCarthy, DE&S Director Ships Support, said: "Our OPVs are a vital component of Global Britain's maritime security, defence engagement and humanitarian operations, and they are highly successful around the world. For small ships they pack a big punch and we are delighted to award these contracts to UK Docks and BAE Systems. Both contracts offer high levels of availability to the Royal Navy for years to come."

OPV operations include homeland defence, counter-terrorism, anti-smuggling, maritime defence, humanitarian support and engagement with UK's Overseas Territories, allies and global partners. The OPVs are designed to be available for operational tasking for more than 300 days a year.



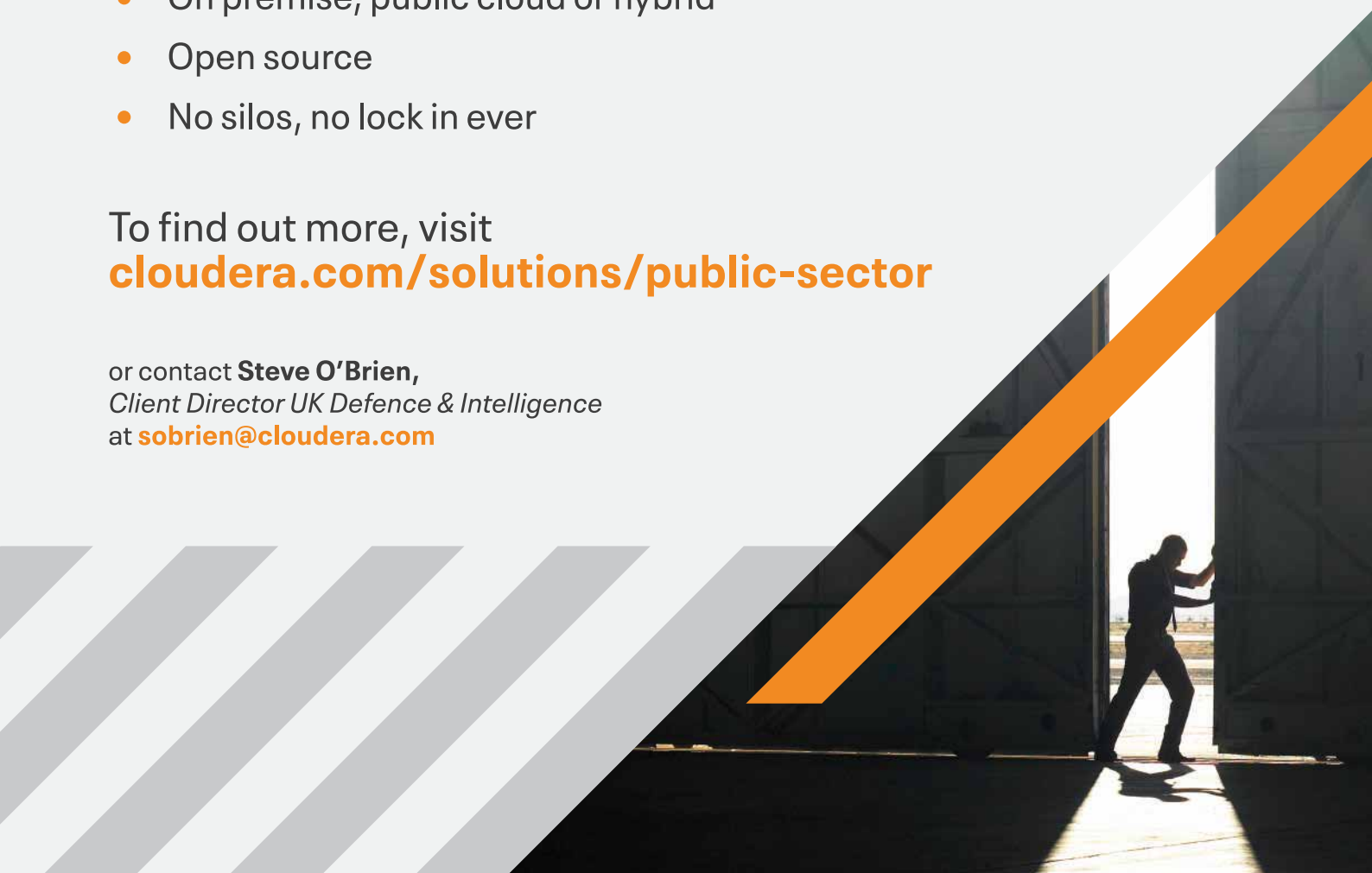
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NEWS

DE&S contract secures future of UK's specialist radar workforce

More than 400 highly skilled jobs across the UK have been secured with a £270 million deal to upgrade and maintain equipment protecting Royal Navy warships.

Radars that guard the Royal Navy's fleet of warships against hostile airborne and seaborne attacks will be supported and developed with £270 million of new funding.

The 10-year contract, awarded by DE&S to BAE Systems, will finance Artisan, Sampson and Long Range radars found on UK warships, including Type 23 and Type 26 frigates, Type 45 destroyers and Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers.

The contract was placed by the Maritime Anti-Air Weapons Systems (MAWS) team at DE&S. Team leader Debbie Hather said: "This has been a complex negotiation, but a combination of diligence, agility and collaborative working has yielded results. I must pay tribute to my predecessor James Mitchell who drove this contract award to the brink of completion, thus allowing me the privilege of nudging it over the finish line."

The 400 highly skilled jobs will be secured in Cowes, Portsmouth, Essex and in Hillend near Edinburgh. The deal includes upgrading existing radars, maintenance and other in-service

support. It also ensures the UK retains the specialist technical skills required for future UK radar development.

By merging previous contracts, the programme will also realise £50 million in savings to fund enhancements of current radar systems and research into future technology to tackle emerging threats such as uncrewed air systems.

The radars provide a key defensive capability to the Royal Navy by identifying and tracking potential airborne and seaborne threats.

The Artisan system, for example, can detect objects as small as a tennis ball and travelling at three times the speed of sound from more than 25km away. It can simultaneously monitor more than 900 objects from 200 to 200,000 metres and cut through radio interference equal to 10,000 mobile phone signals.

Rear Admiral James Parkin CBE, Director Develop at Navy Command, said: "By combining the support of our existing maritime complex radars, the Royal Navy will be better able to adapt to technological change. Our ships will be able to respond faster to developing operational threats and will maintain our status as one of the world's leading maritime forces."

The new contract will run until 2032, giving long-term security to the workforce and the opportunity to further enhance their expertise in this crucial area of defence.

Scott Jamieson, Managing Director of BAE Systems' Maritime Services business, said: "This is a pivotal moment for UK radar technology development. This contract secures a decade of investment into a critical capability for the UK Armed Forces. It also allows us to evolve future radar technology with the MOD to sustain maritime air dominance and vital radar development skills and experience in the UK."



NEWS

News in Brief

A new chapter for Hercules

Hercules, the famous RAF 'workhorse', has completed its final flypast and new homes are being sought for this long-serving star.

The nation recently bid farewell to this icon with three aircraft taking part in a UK-wide flypast.

Hercules has been at the heart of UK military operations for half a century, from transporting troops and equipment to war zones, to helping with evacuations and humanitarian missions.

Hercules is succeeded by the Atlas A400m, which is larger, faster and can fly further. Atlas has been in service since 2014 and is being delivered for the RAF by DE&S.

However, this is not the end, as 15 Hercules model

C-130Js have been made available for purchase by friendly governments and approved bodies.

DE&S will oversee the drawdown and disposal activities required to decommission the C-130Js and all their supporting elements, ranging from the flight simulators to spare parts and ground equipment.

The aircraft will be given a basic fit-out and declassified from a security perspective, before being moved into storage until sold. This work will be carried out by the RAF at Brize Norton, alongside industry partners.

The job of securing new owners will lie with the Defence Equipment Sales Authority, who have already received a number of enquiries.



NBS

Support information system reaches operational milestone

Bridging the Gap (BtG), a project to sustain and modernise information systems used to manage support, reached full operating capability in May, on-time and on-budget. This secures the £54 million of efficiency savings and over 600 UK jobs announced at contract signature.

Military outputs cannot be achieved without proper support and the information systems that enable this. Through a DE&S contract with Boeing Defence UK, BtG provides Defence teams with access to 71 software services to move and manage supplies around the world in support of training and operations.

Now at full operating capability, BtG has improved resilience and a new performance payment mechanism for existing services.

Air Vice Marshall Richard Hill, Senior Responsible Owner for the Business Modernisation for Support (BMfS) programme, said: "This marks a milestone in the 'modernise' phase of BMfS, which will transform our support processes and associated information systems."

Nigel Shaw, DE&S Director Digital, said: "Given the importance to the armed forces, we have been laser-focused on meeting our delivery commitments and are delighted to have hit the milestone."

Mark Griffiths, of Boeing Defence UK, said: "We recognise the critical importance of support, and are committed to ensuring BtG delivers for our customers."

NEWS

News in Brief

DE&S Operational Infrastructure team supports the British Army in Estonia and Kenya

The DE&S Operational Infrastructure team and industry partners KMW Nexter Defence Systems (formally WFEL) have delivered a new Medium Girder Bridge (MGB) to the British Army Training Unit in Kenya, a key location for operational training.

The delivery of this bridge means that soldiers are now able to take part in manoeuvre support training before operational deployments, something that was not previously possible.

The previous MGB has been in service with the British Army since the mid-1970s and was due to go out of service. However, the capability had a reprieve after operations in Afghanistan highlighted its importance and unique versatility.

Bringing the MGB back into service and delivering it back into the hands of soldiers has been a success for industry, DE&S and the British Army – working as One Defence team to deliver the capability on time and within budget.

In addition to this, the Operational Infrastructure team has been supporting Operation Cabrit in Estonia. They are providing in-service support for the BR90 Close Support Bridge, ensuring British troops can use the equipment safely. The Close Support Bridge can support all current Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup vehicles, meaning the Challenger 2 and the French AMX 10 main battle tanks can safely cross rivers on it.



DE&S data scientists come first in cross-government hackathon

A team that included two DE&S data scientists, Lucy Primmer and Ameen Ahmed, has come first in a hackathon organised by Evidence House, a new Downing Street-led initiative which crowdsources solutions to problems that impact the public.

The goal of the hackathon was to explore how open-source datasets and advanced AI models can be used to build predictive tools and prevent fraud in the UK.

The winning team designed an innovative anti-phishing SMS service. Users can forward suspicious messages to their service and receive a near-instant prediction on its legitimacy. The prediction is powered by XGBoost, an advanced machine

learning model trained on hundreds of thousands of data points of known phishing/non-phishing URLs. The team were recently given the opportunity to present their work in 10 Downing Street to senior ministers and civil servants.

This marks the first Evidence House-organised hackathon, with two more planned for this year.

After the hackathon, Lucy said: "It was a great opportunity to work with civil servants from multiple government departments. The organisers coordinated a fantastic schedule that included both workshops and presentations and plenty of hacking time. I never expected to win or to be asked to present at 10 Downing Street. It was such a privilege."



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NEWS

Out of Africa: testing forces and kit in Kenya

DE&S' Simon Pearce went on a fact-finding mission to Kenya to see how new equipment is helping UK forces prepare for operations in challenging contexts.

Since independence in 1964, a defence agreement has allowed British troops to run exercises in Kenya.

At various training areas, the country offers a range of challenging contexts, from hot and dusty to tropical jungle. I went to see how our forces are using these valuable facilities. I left with a new-found admiration for our troops and the teams providing the necessary kit in an extremely demanding environment.

Tactical Engagement Simulation in Kenya (TESIK) was developed to provide pre-deployment training for British troops destined for Afghanistan. The programme was so successful that when the Afghan deployments ended, it was decided to keep TESI K going to support a series of annual exercises, called Askari Storm, that stress-test infantry battlegroups.

In my role as a Training and Simulation Systems portfolio leader at DE&S, I joined colleagues from Ravenswood Systems (RS) at Nyati Barracks, a three-and-a-half-hour drive north of Nairobi. I went to see the equipment they supply and the support they give to our forces on location.

For those taking part, it includes living in sparse bush camps. But, while the living conditions for those on exercise are basic, the kit is not. TESI K is a fully managed technical service that delivers the latest generation infrastructure, technology and resources to enable troops to conduct realistic, live (blank-fire), force-on-force training.

TESIK uses laser transmitters and receivers to simulate weapon effects. The combat performance of individuals, vehicles and equipment are tracked, monitored and recorded. This data is used to support exercise delivery and after-action reviews.

To ensure near 100 percent network coverage, RS supply multiple masts for each exercise. The masts are solar-powered with battery backup. This is a big step forward from the diesel generators previously used.

During my visit I witnessed first-hand the challenges of operating in this harsh environment. Masts need to be moved from one training area to another. To operate effectively, they need to be located on high ground, which makes transport and positioning a challenge. As we were moving to Sheep Hill to visit one mast site, another RS vehicle was being recovered after it skidded coming down a steep bank – we had just had the year's first substantial rains following a nine year drought.

DE&S colleague Nick Taylor – head of the Soldier, Training and Special Projects Portfolio – joined me on the visit. The trip



was hugely beneficial for both of us, with an opportunity to meet British Army Training Unit Kenya military staff and trainees, engage with RS staff and witness up close the demands of this severe yet beautiful landscape. The 'office accommodation' might have been a bit spartan, but we got to share the camp with some amazing wildlife. It was a rare and exciting experience.

NEWS

Defence recognised in King's Birthday Honours

The hard work and achievements of people across the defence enterprise have been recognised in King Charles III's first Birthday Honours. Desider congratulates all those who have been recognised.

Civilian Honours

Adrian Baguley CB DE&S Deputy Chief Executive and Director General Strategic Enablers

Ann Underwood CBE formerly DE&S Deputy Finance Director

Michael Claridge OBE DE&S Weapons Operating Centre

David Ring CBE Independent Chair National Shipbuilding Projects

Clifford Robson CBE Group Managing Director, BAE Systems Air

Paul Ethell MBE HR Director Submarines, BAE Systems

Steve Smith MBE Chief Engineer Digital Intelligence, BAE Systems

Military Honours

Vice Admiral Richard Thompson KCB Royal Navy Honours DE&S Director General Air

Rear Admiral James Higham CB Royal Navy Honours DE&S Director Strategy and Corporate Operations

Captain Stephen Large OBE Royal Navy Honours DE&S Naval Ships Support

Brigadier Anna Luedicke CBE Army Honours DE&S Strategic Enablers Logistics Support

Major Peter Cornish MBE Army Honours DE&S Strategic Enablers British Forces Post Office

Colonel Peter Cowell MBE Army Honours DE&S Land Combat Vehicles

Chief Technician Gary Ellis Meritorious Service Medal - RAF DE&S Puma2 Gazelle delivery team



Adrian Baguley, Companion of The Most Honourable Order of the Bath

"Anyone who knows me personally knows I am deeply passionate about our critical mission to help defend the nation, to keep us free and safe from those who wish to undermine our freedoms and way of life. It's the importance of this vital mission that has kept me in Defence for my entire career. I am so proud of what we in DE&S do to support that mission and to ultimately do the right thing by the brave men and women in our armed forces who are on the frontline of that mission. I have had the undoubted privilege to work with some of the most talented and committed people throughout my career."



Ann Underwood CBE

"I have always been passionate about my work, possibly too passionate at times, so to have anyone think to nominate me and to be recognised is amazing. My daughter came with me on Saturday to break the news to my elderly parents and seeing their reaction was incredible. I'm also proud to be a role model for the Finance function and I hope this gives the wider team a boost. There are many amazing people who work in DE&S. I could not have achieved anything without the hard work of my finance colleagues and the wider business."



Clifford Robson CBE

"It's an honour and a pleasure to receive this award in the King's Honours List. Being recognised for work and an industry that I feel so passionate about means a great deal to me. The UK's sovereign defence capabilities are essential for the security of the nation. We should feel proud of the significant contribution the industry makes to prosperity and our local communities while doing our vital work to support our armed forces. I'm extremely proud to have played a part in maintaining and developing these capabilities for the next generation."

PEOPLE

Chris Roberts

Job title:

Innovation Bridge Business Manager

What does your role involve?

My role is to ensure that internal and external defence teams have a seamless journey while using the Innovation Bridge, DE&S' modern collaborative meeting space, hosted at Abbey Wood. From initial enquiry through to a successful execution of their desired programme of work, it is my job to manage this. My work also includes assisting and supporting planning meetings, setting up familiarisation visits and providing programmes advice.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

I really enjoy being on-site each day. The Innovation Bridge is such an inspiring place to work and I know I'm lucky to be part of such a symbiotic team. My role and DE&S' role in operating as a cog in the wider defence machine is really evident when exposed to all domains, functions and Industry. I am proud that I can help provide a safe space where small ideas can make an enormous difference – whether through culture change workshops, problem-solving hackathons or just teams developing ideas and seeing them through to tangible outputs.

What is the greatest accomplishment in your career so far?

I have done deep-dives into the statistics of Innovation Bridge use, which not only allows us to measure effective use of the space, but gives us useful insights into potential operational capability and delivery effectiveness benefits. This work has allowed the Innovation Bridge to become a more innovation-focused space that supports the DE&S strategy ethos.

What keeps you energised about working at DE&S?

Every day at DE&S is completely different. The nature of my job means I wear several different hats each day depending on the work, so maintaining an agile mindset is key. I'm always searching for new knowledge outside the immediate scope of my work. It's also great to see the organisation adapt and recognise the need for change to keep us 'future fit'.

Who or what has shaped who you are?

I am very much a product of my environment. I grew up in Liverpool in the late 80s/early 90s and that gave me a strong sense of identity, cooperation and resilience. I never felt the pull of university and instead 'earned and learnt', working my way up the ladder in retail. My journey from weekend temp to senior team manager means I'm able to view situations from all perspectives and engage stakeholders at all levels.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

You can find me relaxing in the gym for an hour each day, it helps me find balance in my daily life. I have recently become a cat dad to two kittens, Luna and Zelda. Suffice to say I have much less spare time now.

What might surprise people about you?

I have a passion for nostalgia and all things retro. My extensive retro gaming collection and weekly routine of purchasing Lego will support that notion. Museums showcasing historical cars, planes and trains keep me busy most weekends too.

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

'Do what you enjoy and enjoy what you do.' I heard this from a taxi driver in Cairo several years ago; amazingly simple, but when you break it down, quite powerful and eternally relevant.





EDITOR'S CHOICE

Air Engineering Technician Walker carries out maintenance on one of 846 Naval Air Squadron's Merlin Mk4s.

Want to receive Desider direct to your inbox? Email: Jonathan.mazliah100@mod.gov.uk

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Corporate Editor:
Jonathan Mazliah

Contributing Editors:
Louisa Keeffe
Lorraine Hennessy

Design and Photography:
Mark Hawke, Andy Wilkins, Katherine Williams, Hannah Bone, Jack Eckersley, Geraint Vaughan and Charlie Perham

Advertising Manager:
Edwin Rodrigues
07482 571535
edwin.rodrigues@noahsarkmedia.co.uk

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Edwin Rodrigues

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