

DESIDER

AN INSIDE LOOK AT DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT



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



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START

Talking

At DE&S, we equip and support our armed forces and, in doing so, help make sure the UK is both protected and prosperous. Achieving that mission in 2024 means facing down rapidly multiplying challenges and adversaries that are working hard to outpace us and gain the tactical advantage.

In a recent speech the Secretary of State for Defence, Grant Shapps, said that, in 2024, Defence will take the “long-term capability decisions we need to transform our armed forces into a formidable deterrent.”

The backbone of our success and our deterrent will be, and has always been, the dedicated, driven, expert people across the MOD, the Armed Forces and the defence industry, who make up the UK defence enterprise.

At DE&S, our people are trusted to deliver some of the UK Government’s most complex projects, from best-in-class aircraft carriers to game-changing modular armoured vehicles.

We hold a broad range of skills and experience across our organisation. Our civilian and military specialists – including project delivery, commercial negotiation, engineering, logistics and market intelligence – play an important role in providing the UK’s Front-line Commands with the capabilities they need. We are proud to have some of the most senior experts in Government working at DE&S, including Andrew Forzani, the most senior commercial advisor in Defence, and Adrian Baguley, the MOD’s Chief Project Delivery Officer. Both Andrew and Adrian play key roles in building and championing commercial and project delivery expertise across the MOD and wider Government.

Today, in the context of increasing global tensions and rapid technological innovation, the whole enterprise is being asked to do more and deliver faster, to deter our adversaries and protect the UK. In response, we’re working hard to become an organisation that acts with greater precision, speed, and

ingenuity. Our people are at the heart of this, driving these improvements forward.

We’re simplifying our ways of working, moving away from professional pigeon-holes and empowering our experts to innovate, collaborate and focus on delivering more, faster. And we will continue to create new generations of experts through our prestigious apprenticeship and graduate schemes.

We are also focused on making DE&S a place where every person can bring their whole selves to work and know their diversity is prized for the value it brings to our work. As DE&S’ Diversity and Inclusion co-Champion and a member of the Women in Defence Advisory Board, I passionately believe that a more diverse and inclusive Defence is also a stronger one. I will be working with colleagues across the defence enterprise to do all we can to make this a reality.

A one-team approach is key to ensure the UK and its allies stay ahead of the threats. Through our work with the Defence Suppliers Forum (DSF), and multilateral groups like the NATO Conference of National Armaments Directors, we’re putting in place the systems and processes that will ensure our skilled professionals can collaborate for faster and more efficient delivery.

We’re opening up the DSF Comms Forum to all UK-based defence and security businesses with security cleared personnel. If you’re not already on the list and would like join, you can do so through Make UK, ADS or TechUK.

I also urge companies to seek out our innovation partners in the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory and the Defence and Security Accelerator – experts in growing and developing novel solutions to Defence challenges.

I’ve met thousands of people since I joined DE&S in September 2022. Every time I do, it makes me even more certain that, working together, we can trust in our defence experts to sharpen our edge, maintain the advantage over our adversaries, and protect our nation and help it prosper.

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SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

My ambition for nothing less than world-class delivery

Deputy CEO and Director General Strategic Enablers Adrian Baguley has been appointed as MOD Chief Project Delivery Officer. He tells Desider what this new role means and why DE&S is the natural home for it.

Project delivery is a critical part of what we do in Government – it's how we turn policy into capability and impact.

I've spent 40 years in the MOD and much of my career has directly involved managing projects and delivering capability to front-line personnel. I'm honoured to have been appointed as the MOD's Chief Project Delivery Officer (CPDO).

I have dedicated much of my career to project delivery at all levels in the MOD and carry many lessons (and a few scars) from those I have helped to deliver. In recent years I have also supported many Senior Responsible Owners (SROs) to deliver their projects too. I graduated from the very first UK Government Major Project Leadership Academy in 2016 and am delighted to see this is still going strong.

The CPDOs across Government, under the leadership of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, are dedicated to building and championing project delivery capability. We provide leadership to project delivery professionals, guide them in best practice standards and work to ensure that projects are successfully delivered within their departments.

Defence involves some of the most technologically challenging and ambitious projects anywhere in Government, including over 20 percent of the UK's 235 'major projects' and thousands of smaller projects critical to our defence, security and prosperity. Supporting SROs, projects leads and project teams in delivering this vital portfolio is massively important.

Given the range and scale of the national security threats we face today, having strong project delivery at the heart of the MOD's mission is more vital than ever. Fortunately, there are over 7,000 project delivery professionals in the MOD, many based in DE&S. Their work is fundamental to our ability to equip our armed forces with the edge to protect our nation and help it prosper.

With my colleagues from the MOD's project delivery function, I plan to focus on four key objectives: the professionalisation of our people; the use of digital tools, automation and analytics; enabling best practice standards; and overall strengthening the function. In doing so, I am setting the ambition for nothing less than world-class delivery.

DE&S is the largest delivery organisation in the MOD; we are leaders in project management and delivery. Our teams work on the most complex projects, driving these through to in-service completion at pace. As Deputy CEO and Director General Strategic Enablers, I find examples of good, sometimes truly



excellent, project delivery practice across our organisation. Yet, there is more we can do and further we can go.

One of my CPDO duties will be chairing the Defence Project Council, which gathers representatives from across the MOD to share and promote best practice. We are driving forward a culture of continuous improvement and learning to create the ideal operating environment for project success.

Selecting a CPDO from DE&S demonstrates the MOD's renewed commitment to One Defence and reflects a need for our policy and delivery functions to work in harmony. This is good news for our partners in the defence industry and the armed forces. Strengthening how the MOD operates as an integrated procurement system should help to cut the time and costs of moving from requirement to contract to capability.

2024 is set to be an important year for Defence. We are reforming how defence acquisition and procurement are done to speed up development and delivery, reduce friction and increase availability. Effective project delivery will be central to our success.

FEATURE

Guiding innovations from concept to capability

Anita Friend, Head of the Defence and Security Accelerator, lifts the lid on how her team of innovation enablers are making an impact on UK defence and prosperity.

What if missiles could share situational awareness and organise themselves to 'work together' within mission parameters to achieve a common objective? Our Themed Competition, "It's Good for Missiles to Talk", is just one example of the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) working on behalf of DE&S and our partners across Government.

DASA's objective is to find and fund exploitable innovations that can contribute to UK safety and prosperity. We seek these out from all over the UK and from overseas, and turn them into resources that can become defence capabilities. DE&S plays a crucial role in this by connecting us to our Front-line Command clients. By giving DE&S early access to our innovations, we are able to offer potential solutions to current or future defence challenges.

We help innovators, ranging from SMEs to academia and non-traditional suppliers, develop their ideas all the way from concept to capability. We strive to make sure Defence has the very best solutions to maintain the strategic advantage over our adversaries and keep the nation safe.

Projects can develop in a lot of different ways, so when it comes to how we work, there's no one-size-fits-all template. The trigger for a new idea might be a problem-statement from a Front-line Command or a proposal from a micro-business with something unique to offer Defence.

To that end, DASA offers multiple ways to uncover innovation, including Open Calls and Themed Competitions. Open Calls allow innovators to submit ideas to address defence and security challenges, while Themed Competitions enable Defence and Security partners to pose specific challenges and seek solutions from industry and academia.

And we don't just stop at funding good ideas. We give support and guidance to businesses with the potential to help develop their processes and systems through business support services, such as Defence Innovation Loans.

A key way in which DASA finds innovation is through our network of Innovation Partners. DASA employs 12 Innovation Partners, based throughout the UK, including in the devolved nations, who work closely with their communities to signpost new defence challenges and opportunities for government funding.

We also have a network of DASA Business Partners embedded across the MOD, including in DE&S. As two organisations with important roles in capability development and delivery, DASA and DE&S work closely together to find innovative solutions to defence requirements. Gary Bailey, DASA's DE&S Partner, is responsible for working collaboratively to inform DE&S of new innovations that



come through DASA's Open Calls and to assist with any Themed Competitions that they are interested in running to drive change in Defence. From the initial idea to the final funded capability, DASA is able to provide a comprehensive end-to-end experience.

We are currently growing our relationship with the DE&S Future Capability Group by implementing regular DASA surgeries at DE&S and a DASA-FCG working group. This allows both organisations to easily meet and discuss innovative ways to enhance defence capabilities in a collaborative environment.

At DASA, our mission is to create a marketplace for innovation and ideas, where novel solutions to Defence's thorniest challenges are accelerated. It's a town square where unlikely partnerships and new ways of thinking are boosted with development funding and expert guidance.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

“The right people in the right place at the right time”

Scott Murray, Director HR, tells Desider why DE&S is putting its expert people at the heart of its future plans and new ways of working.

DE&S' mission is clear: we equip our armed forces with the edge to protect the nation. Our people deliver on this mission every day, but we know there's more we can and must do to meet the growing challenges our country and allies face.

Our people are the driving force behind DE&S' success. We have put developing the defence experts of today and creating those of tomorrow at the heart of our strategy and new operating model.

The design and build phases of our new operating model are well underway. This has been a genuinely game-changing process for DE&S. At every stage, we've started with an ethos of 'By Us For Us', with decisions informed by the views of staff and partners in industry and the Front-line Commands. Our people are experts in what they do and 'By Us For Us' puts them at heart of determining the way we will work, right from the outset.

While much of the detailed planning on roles and responsibilities within the new operating model is still a work-in-progress, supporting career development and unlocking our peoples' potential are key themes within it. DE&S is working to adopt a more agile, efficient, delivery-focused approach to how we deploy our people. We will use activity-based resourcing to group them by their expertise and make sure their skills are being used where they are needed most to meet the UK's defence priorities.

Not only will this improve the service we give to our clients, it will also provide greater opportunities for people to shape their abilities, with fulfilling developmental assignments throughout their careers supported by clear talent pathways.

A key tenet of this, that's at the heart of our approach to talent acquisition and



development, is the opportunity for our people to thrive in an environment which sees the value diversity brings to our work. It's important that we recognise the contribution of talent at all levels across DE&S. The more our people feel able to bring their whole selves and their full range of lived experiences to their work, the stronger DE&S will be.

We are already providing staff with opportunities to hone their professional skills within a broader organisational capability framework for professional, technical, leadership and business effectiveness learning. We have developed a learning management system where people can access the tools they need to identify capability gaps and the right learning to support their DE&S careers.

And looking to our future, we are developing the next generation of

defence experts through our graduate and apprenticeship schemes. We're proud to have over 500 graduates and apprentices across 19 schemes at DE&S, and are currently recruiting for almost 300 places on the 2024/2025 intake. When we recruit for these we focus on candidates' potential, rather than skills or qualifications, to make sure we get the right people regardless of their backgrounds.

We are enabling our people to develop and grow their skills and expertise. In doing so, we are ensuring that DE&S has the right people in the right place at the right time to deliver for our armed forces and our nation. We're creating an organisation that delivers defence expertise for today and for tomorrow.



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FEATURE

Securing the UK's critical underwater infrastructure at pace

How did the DE&S MROS team and its partners in Navy Command deliver two crucial Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships ahead of schedule?

FEATURE

The UK has become increasingly aware of the dangers posed by attacks on its critical underwater infrastructure, such as oil and gas pipelines, electricity cables and telecom links.

In response to this, it is imperative that the UK enhance its ability to detect and deter future threats. Multi Role Oceanic Surveillance (MROS) support ships with seabed warfare and mine-hunting capabilities play a hugely important role in this.

The DE&S MROS team succeeded in delivering two such ships to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) through a rapid procurement that met all requirements within 10 months – two months earlier than scheduled. How the MROS team achieved this shows what can be done with the right mix of expertise, risk, innovation and trust.

The team first analysed the Royal Navy's requirements and the possible solutions. They then created an assessment matrix to better understand the challenge and give everyone involved a clear picture of what could be achieved. This allowed the team to present a novel solution: procurement of offshore support ships from the civil commercial market, reusing existing vessels rather than building them from scratch.

DE&S MROS project manager Gareth Morris said: "All of our success is founded on openness and honesty. We were moving fast and asking for a lot of trust from Navy Command. Throughout this process, we focused on articulating the risks and rewards to our partners in the Royal Navy. Establishing ourselves as an honest, trusted delivery partner, meant we felt able to take greater risks and allowed the project to quickly move forwards."

Only 12 weeks after the start of the project, the team approached the market and just four weeks later they had found 12 candidates. Further assessments narrowed the possible candidate to four ships. Small MROS project teams were then sent to Scandinavia and South-East Asia to inspect the shortlisted ships and two were selected, one from each region. These would become RFA Proteus and RFA Stirling Castle.

What followed was a series of successful negotiations, built on fair and robust industry-standard practices, to reach agreed prices that would be acceptable to the ships' owners and would represent value-for-money for the UK.

Navy Command MROS Programme Director Commander Alex Goddard added: "I was charged with delivering the MROS

programme. To achieve this I counted on the professionalism and dedication of my colleagues in DE&S. It was with a great feeling of pride that we came together for the dedication of RFA Proteus last year. It gave us all the chance to reflect on what could be achieved through close collaboration between partner agencies."

RFA Commodore David Eagles said: "It is a huge honour and responsibility for the RFA to be charged with crewing and operating RFA Proteus and RFA Stirling Castle, and to deliver their unique sovereign capabilities in partnership and collaboration with our Royal Navy and DE&S colleagues."

RFA Proteus was delivered to the Royal Navy in October 2023, with RFA Stirling Castle following in December. They carry advanced systems and autonomous vehicles, which can be used to locate, identify and neutralise mines and underwater explosive devices, and gather critical data for analysis.

The outstanding work of the MROS team was recognised at the Government Infrastructure and Project Delivery Awards 2024, where they won Defence and Security Project of the Year.



FEATURE

Typhoon TyTAN: Keeping UK combat air defences airborne



Meet the TyTAN team, where industry, DE&S and RAF colleagues work as a single enterprise to keep Typhoon aircraft ready and the UK's skies defended.

The Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft is considered the backbone of UK combat air defence, securing the UK's skies and supporting its allies around the world.

The keys to Typhoon's success are its agility and versatility. Typhoon's most essential role is Quick Reaction Alert, defending British and Falkland Islands airspace and supporting NATO air defence in Eastern Europe. Its other duties include air-policing, peace-keeping and both air-to-air and air-to-surface combat.

The aircraft's importance was further underlined when it was called on to carry out precision strikes against Houthi facilities in Yemen. This followed persistent attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea and the deliberate targeting of HMS Diamond alongside US Navy vessels.

With such crucial and wide-ranging roles, the importance of ensuring that Typhoon aircraft are available and ready to react at a moment's notice cannot be overstated. This is the mission of the Typhoon Total Availability eNterprise (TyTAN).

Typhoon TyTAN is an arrangement principally between DE&S, the RAF and BAE Systems. When it began seven years ago, it introduced new ways of working for the MOD and its industry partners across the supply chain to drive improvements and reduce costs.

The most important change was a move away from an often 'transactional' way of working between DE&S and BAE Systems towards a fully integrated 'enterprise' approach, with collaboration and shared goals at its centre. This enterprise immediately reduced the cost of the support service by around one-third while improving levels of support to the UK Typhoon fleet.

"TyTAN is unlike anything else I've worked on," said Wing Commander Simon Davies DE&S TyTAN Service Delivery Manager.

"Fundamental to its success are the embedded behaviours within the team, where a culture of openness, transparency and honesty takes precedence. There are no barriers here between the MOD and industry. We all work together – many of us in the same building – and are completely focused on problem-solving to deliver a total support solution for this aircraft."

The UK has 137 Typhoons, arranged into seven front-line squadrons. Each squadron maintains up to 10 aircraft ready for operations, supported by an Operational Conversion Unit and a Test and Evaluation Squadron. Together, these make up the Forward Available Fleet.

Jez Milne, Typhoon Support Delivery Director for BAE Systems Air, said: "Our people are proud to be part of a Whole Force team, working side-by-side with the RAF and DE&S to ensure Typhoon is ready to respond 24/7, 365 days a year. TyTAN is unique in the way it delivers. A key part of how we work together is to always look for ways to improve, leverage our expertise and harness new technologies to ensure we maintain operational excellence for the UK Typhoon fleet."

The aircraft and its crews and support teams are located at two UK bases, RAF Coningsby and Lossiemouth, with further Typhoons committed to supporting British Forces in the South Atlantic Islands and at other locations around the world. The TyTAN team covers all availability services, including training, maintenance, ground and air crew, and round-the-clock technical support.

Wing Commander Davies continued: "TyTAN always delivers, and to cost. Each front-line squadron needs up to 10 jets, meaning 65 to 70 Typhoons need to be available at any given time and I'm proud to say TyTAN provides those numbers; we've never failed to supply those aircraft."

FEATURE

DE&S salvage experts recover bell from historic US destroyer

The DE&S Salvage and Marine Operations team has recovered an iconic symbol from one of the most notable US Navy shipwrecks.

During the first deployment of a new remotely operated underwater vehicle (ROV), the DE&S Salvage and Marine Operations (SALMO) team has brought the bell of the USS Jacob Jones up from the depths of the Atlantic after 107 years.

In 1917, the Jacob Jones was torpedoed by a German submarine while helping to safeguard a convoy carrying troops and supplies from the US to the UK. Sixty-four crew members were lost in the attack. She became the first US Navy destroyer to be sunk during enemy action.

The wreck was discovered in 2022 off the coast of the UK, resting on the seabed over 100 metres down. In December 2023, the US Navy's Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) – guardians of nearly 3,000 shipwrecks – asked the UK to preserve the sanctity of the wreck and recover its bell – one of the icons of any warship.

During the initial survey phase, tidal conditions meant the SALMO team had limited windows during which they could operate. Large amounts of sediment near the wreck hampered visibility and the team had to manoeuvre the ROV as close as safely possible to ensure a thorough search for the bell. It was eventually found, hidden by growth, in an upright position on the seabed.

The SALMO team retrieved the bell and placed a wreath and the US flag on the wreck in memory of those who were lost. After a ceremonial handover to the US, the bell will be given to the NHHC in Washington DC before going on display.

Rear Admiral (retired) Sam J. Cox, NHHC Director, said: "This recent chapter in the story of the Jacob Jones is one of collaboration and mutual respect for the site. The US Navy is grateful to the Salvage and Marine Operations team for recovering the bell, which will serve as a memorial to sailors who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defence of both the US and the UK."

The 150-strong SALMO team is the lead across the MOD for the global provision of marine salvage and marine emergency response. Its experts include divers, naval architects, master mariners, marine engineers, environmental scientists and ROV pilots.

Andy Liddell, Head of SALMO, added: "I am proud of what the team has achieved. To assist our allies in the recovery of the bell from such a historic wreck on the first deployment of the new ROV is a massive achievement."

As part of their work, they are responsible for managing more than 5,000 shipwrecks around the world. Where wrecks containing significant amounts of oil pose a pollution risk, the SALMO team may work to safely extract the fuel. This process was carried out



with HMS Royal Oak in Orkney over several years ending in 2010, and with RFA Darkdale in the Atlantic in 2015.

SALMO wreck manager Mathew Skelhorn said: "Oil is removed via a process called hot tapping, where you drill a hole and attach a pipe. The oil is pumped from the wreck to the surface and then transported for recycling at a refinery. The technical complexity varies enormously and, in large part, is dependent on the accessibility of the wreck. Essentially, the greater the depth at which it lies the more complex the efforts to remove the oil."

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FEATURE

Meet the next generation of defence experts

DE&S is investing in tomorrow's skilled workforce through its market-leading apprenticeships to ensure it can continue to make a fundamental contribution to the UK's prosperity and defence.

DE&S recognises that the next generation of learners will play a vital role in helping us deliver the competitive edge. As the 17th National Apprenticeship Week (5–11 February 2024) drew to a close, Desider spoke to DE&S apprentices Evie, Alex and Oliver.



Evie Taylor,
Business Administration Apprentice

Discussing her decision to begin an apprenticeship at DE&S, Evie said: "I studied Business at A-level and knew I wanted it to play a role in my career, but didn't know where or what my niche was. This apprenticeship offers me a general business qualification and a foundation for me to then go and explore what aspects of business I want to go into.

"I'm currently working in Business Support. I've learnt a lot about DE&S and the different departments in a short period of time. There is so much to DE&S that no-one knows everything, but I'm expanding my knowledge, and going through different placements means I never stop learning. It's a place where you can learn, you can develop. You really can have a good work-life balance and fulfil what you want to do."



Alex Weaver,
Finance and Accounting Apprentice

Describing his apprenticeship journey with DE&S, Alex said: "This is my second year of a three-year scheme, and I honestly couldn't ask for more. We get given a different placement each year. Last year I was in a delivery team, forecasting and budgeting for specific part of the Armed Forces. This year, I'm in the tax enabling team, which supports the whole of DE&S. The structure of the three-year placements, the amount of experience you gain and the content you learn on the college courses are priceless.

"It feels like a massive community here – everyone is keen to nurture you and help you with your career development. I can see where we started and how far we've come together as apprentices, and I definitely feel a sense of connection."



Oliver Geddes,
Engineering Degree Apprentice

Talking about his DE&S apprenticeship experience, Oliver said: "I'd always been interested in maths and physics, and I took part in Army Cadets when I was younger which got me interested in Defence, weapons and weapons systems. When I saw the Engineering Degree Apprenticeship at DE&S, it was the best of both worlds.

"The time I've spent at the Defence Academy on placement has been the best part for me. I was in the Light Weapons wing for a year working with small arms; learning about guns, taking them apart and everything else that's involved. It taught me how people interact in the workplace and has been a huge boost to my confidence. I would recommend working at DE&S and the degree apprenticeship because it's a way to get your degree without student debt, gain work experience and get involved in some really interesting work."

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FEATURE

Rapid procurement strengthens Army operation support

Working with British Army and industry partners, DE&S has acquired 500 advanced-mobility trucks in just seven months.

Following a rapid procurement process, managed by DE&S, 500 support trucks will be delivered to the British Army in 2024 to support operational activities. Thanks to an effective collaboration between DE&S and the British Army, the vehicles were acquired in just seven months.

“In an ever-changing and demanding operational landscape, it is essential that we can quickly identify what equipment our soldiers need and procure it rapidly,” said Major General Darren Crook, Director of the DE&S Land Equipment Darren Operating Centre. “This project demonstrates our agility and our commitment to push the boundaries; it shows what we can achieve when we work collaboratively to deliver the equipment our armed forces need, when they need it. I’m delighted that together with industry we have been able to turn around this contract, from conception through approvals to contract award and first delivery, in just seven months.”

The newly procured advanced-mobility vehicles will be from the HX family, which are a range of military trucks equipped with various protection capabilities to keep front-line personnel safe. Following the award of the £282 million contract, Rheinmetall MAN Military Vehicles will supply the trucks, which can be used to carry essential supplies, such as ammunition, food, water and support materiel, to operational locations.

The vehicles will be delivered under the Rapid Acquisition Project, which has expedited the procurement of the trucks with efficiency and precision, so that they swiftly reach operational deployment.

The HX is a proven and cost-effective truck class, which offers mobility and reliability over challenging terrains. The new trucks have received several capability improvements compared to those already in service, including an increased payload, a reduced turning circle, an under-run protection safety feature and a more efficient engine.



Colonel Stuart Nassé, Assistant Head of Military Capability Delivery at Army Headquarters, said: “We are delighted with this project, which provides essential reinforcements to the logistics spine of the Army. As a collaborative project, it shows that the acquisition process can be responsive to user demands and that, importantly, when the user, delivery agent and industry partner all work together, we can quickly achieve significant outcomes. We are really excited to put this important capability in the hands of soldiers this year.”

The rapid procurement comes at a crucial moment. In 2024, the British Army will face increased commitments through Operation Mobilise, which aims to enhance

the Army’s readiness and competitiveness, and ensure the UK is able to stand together with its NATO allies and other partners to prevent the spread of war in Europe. The procurement contract also delivers on the Chief of the General Staff General Sir Patrick Sanders’ objective of increasing logistical lift as a British Army capability.

Minister For Defence Procurement James Cartlidge said: “The rapid delivery of transport capabilities to the front-line is paramount to the lifeblood of British Army logistics and operations. This procurement demonstrates our commitment to equipping our armed forces with the best tools available, ensuring mobility, agility and resilience in the face of evolving threats.”

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-  Major Magnus Hallberg, NATO LCG DSS Chairman, NATO/Swedish Armed Forces
-  Major Gabriel Benoit-Martin, Project Director - Integrated Soldier System, Director Land Requirement, Canadian Army

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DESIDER

DEFENCE EQUIPMENT & SUPPORT

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

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UK Boxer prototype trials begin



The UK Boxer programme begins 2024 with milestone trials of its prototype variants at the UTAC Millbrook proving ground.

The first two UK-variant Boxer prototypes have begun joint Army-industry trials. This major milestone for the programme means troops from the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers and the Royal Welsh Regiment can now support the trialling of this new vehicle.

Boxer will form a core part of the British Army's new Armoured Brigade Combat teams. They will be paired with Ajax vehicles and Challenger 3 tanks to form the cornerstone of the Army's ability to fight and win conflicts on land.

With its ground-breaking power-to-weight ratio, agile mobility and advanced threat-detection technology, Boxer sets a new standard for armoured vehicles. It is designed to be modular, allowing the same vehicle-base to be rapidly reconfigured to different roles on the battlefield.

Lieutenant General Simon Hamilton, DE&S Director General Land, said: "The delivery of these prototypes for trials is not only positive news for the future of the British Army, it also boosts our commitment to investing in our defence industry and supply chains, meaning we can retain critical engineering and manufacturing skills in the UK through production and assembly in RBSL and WFEL."

The UK, the Netherlands and Germany have worked closely together on the Boxer programme, with vehicle production in the UK benefitting from international expertise, data and collaboration.

The first 117 vehicles are being built on German production lines, while UK facilities scale-up their manufacturing capabilities

to build the remaining 506 and further planned Boxer variants. UK production will take place in Telford through Rheinmetall BAE Systems Land (RBSL) and in Stockport through KNDS, with supply chain sub-contracts across the UK, including in Glasgow with Thales. In all, 60 percent of the contract by value is being invested in the UK.

The first two UK prototype variants were delivered to the UK by KNDS, and will now undergo joint Army-industry verification and validation trials at the UTAC Millbrook proving ground.

Patrick Gille, KNDS UK Programme Manager, said: "It has been a whole team effort to deliver the first two platforms from KNDS in Munich. We are now looking forward to working with DE&S and users from the Army as we commence trials at UTAC Millbrook. We are confident that we have designed and manufactured a great platform that will be well-received by the soldiers who will use it."

The overall programme protects up to 1,000 jobs nationally, while enhancing skill sets and creating an ambitious UK apprenticeship scheme.

Martyn Williams, Senior Responsible Owner for the British Army's Boxer programme, said: "The British Army is really pleased to see all of DE&S and industry's hard work starting to pay off with the arrival of the first UK Boxer vehicles."

Boxer is a collaborative project including Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and the UK via the Organisation for Joint Armament Co-operation (OCCAR).

FEATURE

Re-imagining the defence supply chain to keep our soldiers safe

Members of Project Crenic discuss why expert partnerships and innovation are crucial to improving Defence in an increasingly complex world.

Rob Lambert (Defence and Security expert, PA Consulting): In 2022, PA Consulting formed a new defence and security consortia, called Team Protect, with Leonardo UK, Leidos UK and Marshall Land Systems. Through DE&S, we agreed a systems integrator contract with the MOD called Project Crenic that would deliver new capabilities to keep soldiers safe from the growing threat of radio-controlled improvised explosives. This form of contract requires Team Protect to source best-in-class technology from a broad group, which can then be integrated into a single system.

In a world where the UK's adversaries are fast exploiting emerging technologies, we need to respond with speed and innovation. With Project Crenic, we are pioneering a new model of defence procurement that enables the MOD to swiftly access as broad a range of technology as possible.

Team Protect has established an ecosystem of 110 businesses to drive bolder and faster innovation. Forty-five percent of them can be classed as small or 'micro' businesses and over half operate in the innovation space.

Kristina Evans (British Army Head of Cyber Security and Senior Responsible Owner for the Land Cyber Electromagnetic Activities programme): Historically SMEs and start-ups have faced difficulties accessing and engaging with top-tier suppliers and the MOD. This has made it harder for us to attract non-traditional suppliers and plug skills gaps, limiting opportunities for innovation.

Steve Westwood (DE&S Force Protection Electronic Countermeasures team leader): This was a great opportunity to develop a model that brings the MOD and the defence industry closer together to agree realistic needs within the bounds of our requirements and unlock the potential of a diverse supply chain.

Kristina: We want to have the flexibility to evolve with changing threats and technologies. We can learn a great deal by engaging with a diverse ecosystem of companies.

Steve: What's compelling is that the big defence primes are here in the ecosystem, alongside a whole range of smaller companies who may never have considered it feasible to take part. The feedback I've received from smaller organisations is that this feels like a level playing field.

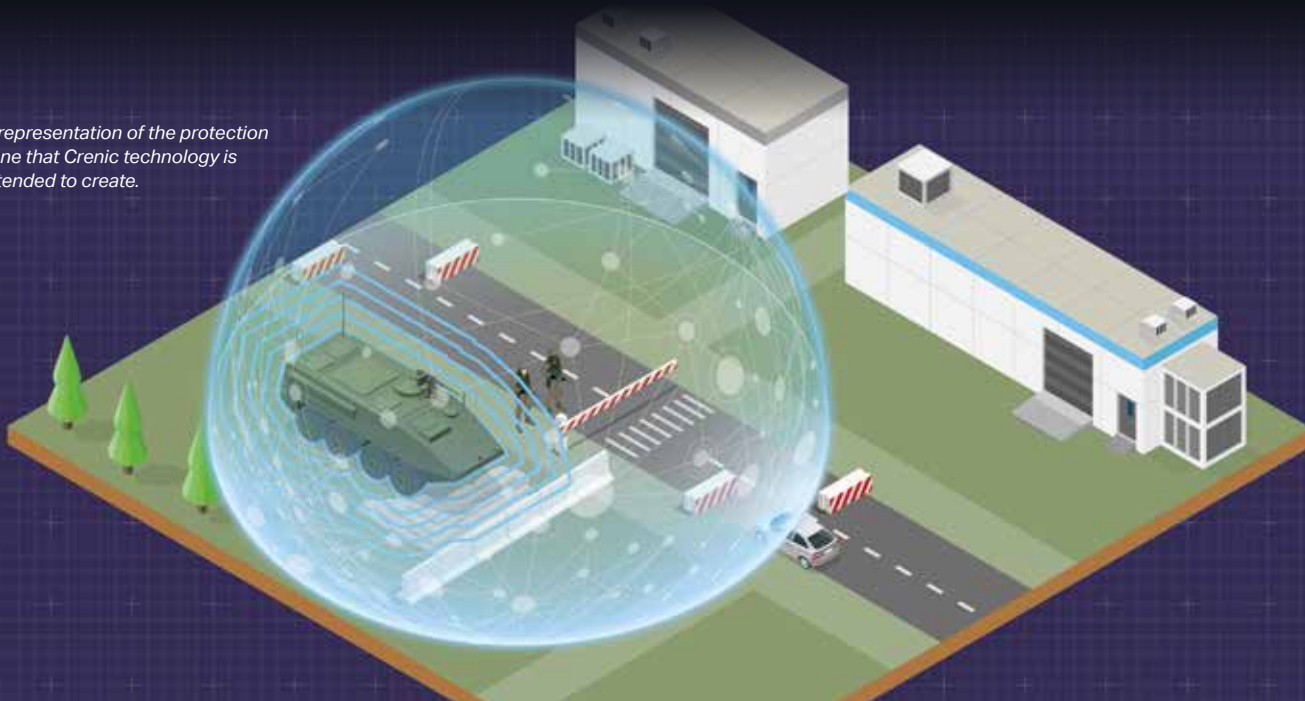
Johnny Pinney (Defence and Security Lead at Mind Foundry, an ecosystem member): The Crenic model is a solution to making the market more attractive. When you think about current threats from a digital perspective, they are developing rapidly. Therefore, you have to look at cutting-edge technologies, like AI, to help solve them. But it's not a science project, we must think about how the UK Armed Forces can apply them in the real world to save lives.

Air Commodore Paul Rose (UK Strategic Command Head of Capability Special Projects): When the engineers, the users and the science and technology community come together on a problem set, that's when the magic happens. Because there is an overarching agreement, we can collectively operate with greater speed and innovation to get ahead of the curve. We need to make sure we can test, adjust and upgrade at the pace of relevance. We cannot afford to wait.

Kristina: We are putting the building blocks in place for a truly transformed capability where we have enough of the right suppliers with different specialisms and flexibility in contracts.

Steve: There are always unknown unknowns and urgent capability requirements, but we now have the facility to rapidly engage with companies that are already on-boarded, vetted and ready to go.

A representation of the protection zone that Crenic technology is intended to create.



NEWS

World-leading Royal Navy air defence system to be upgraded

Cutting-edge Royal Navy missiles – recently used to down hostile drones in the Red Sea – to receive significant upgrades through new contracts awarded by DE&S.

Following major new upgrades, the Sea Viper Air Defence system will become the most capable naval air defence system ever developed for the Royal Navy.

Three Sea Viper enhancement contracts, worth £405 million, were awarded by DE&S to MBDA UK and will sustain 350 UK jobs, including highly skilled technology roles in Stevenage, Cowes, Bristol and Bolton.

The contracts will significantly enhance Sea Viper capability on board Type 45 warships and provide in-service support and availability of the system for five years. They aim to deliver ballistic missile defences able to counter more complex threats, while allowing for further upgrades to be taken forward in future systems.

Debbie Hather, DE&S Maritime Anti-Air Weapons Systems (MAWS) team leader, said: “This is a huge achievement for MAWS and a pivotal milestone for the programme after many months of hard work, long hours and dedication. This will see delivery of the first European Maritime Ballistic Missile Defence Capability to the Royal Navy.”

The Royal Navy’s Type 45 destroyers are among the most advanced in the fleet. They carry out a range of activities, including defence from air attack, counter-piracy operations and the provision of humanitarian aid.

Defence Secretary Grant Shapps said: “As the situation in the Middle East worsens, it is vital that we adapt to keep the UK, our allies and partners safe. Sea Viper has been at the forefront of this, being the Navy’s weapon of choice in the first shooting down of an aerial threat in more than 30 years.”

Type 45 HMS Diamond recently used Sea Viper missiles to shoot down multiple attack drones in the Red Sea as part of the US-led international taskforce Operation Prosperity Guardian. The multinational partnership is protecting freedom of navigation, international trade and human life in the Southern Red Sea by countering illicit non-state actors in international waters.

Rear Admiral Anthony Rimington, Royal Navy Director Force Generation, said: “A cutting-edge weapon system, Sea Viper continues to provide the Royal Navy with impressive lethality. Sea Viper’s evolution further enhances this capability against more complex and evolving threats, and strengthens our cooperation and interoperability with key partners.”

The initial stage of the first contract will upgrade the Royal Navy’s existing Aster 30 missiles to Aster 30 Block 1, which defend against anti-ship ballistic missiles, and will see modifications to the fleet’s Multi-Function Radar, Command and Control system, and Combat Management System.

Vice Admiral Paul Marshall, Director General Ships at DE&S, said: “I’m proud to see our teams work collaboratively with industry colleagues to support highly-skilled jobs and ensure those operating the Type 45 fleet have the edge over their adversaries now and in the future.”

MBDA UK Managing Director Chris Allam said: “These contracts will make Sea Viper the most capable naval air defence system ever developed for the Royal Navy in our 60-year history as the Navy’s primary air defence system supplier. They will also see the UK further enhance the co-operation with France and Italy through MBDA by joining the Aster 30 Block 1 programme, giving the UK the ability to defeat anti-ship ballistic missiles.”

The enhancements to Type 45 destroyers are expected to reach full operational capability by Autumn 2032.



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FEATURE

Embracing opportunities: Discover careers at DE&S



Desider spoke with two members of the specialist explosive and ordnance team to hear their perspectives on working for DE&S in 2024, and the opportunities to work with purpose – locally, nationally and internationally – that it provides.

In recent years, the UK defence sector landscape has undergone a transformative shift, creating an environment ripe with opportunities for people in search of fulfilling and impactful careers.

From real-world impact to career development and a focus on work-life balance, there's many reasons why it's a brilliant time to join DE&S.

Project portfolio lead Shelley joined DE&S 18 and a half years ago, while operations manager Gareth joined just 18 months ago. They began by explaining how they feel about working in Defence.

Shelley: "The military are doing critical work for UK and global defence – you read about it every day in the news. As a portfolio lead, I oversee a variety of projects that give our armed forces the edge, and it's a privilege to support them."

Gareth: "My role involves managing the in-service support for a range of military capabilities. I have friends and family who have served in the military and knowing my job directly supports people like them gives me a lot of pride."

The diversity of development opportunities is a compelling reason to

consider a career in Defence. Both Shelley and Gareth have greatly benefited from DE&S' commitment to training and upskilling.

Shelley: "I've had access to an incredible range of training from the get-go and now hold qualifications in procurement and project management. DE&S even funded my master's degree. I've moved between government departments too, enriching my career with transferable skills and experience, without ever having to leave the Civil Service."

Gareth: "The internal learning catalogue is extensive too. I've benefited from courses across operations management, supply chain and finance, all of which have given me a strong, varied skillset and allowed me to reach my full potential."

We recognise the importance of supporting our people and communities through staff networks, mentoring schemes and community outreach programmes. This commitment to social responsibility adds an extra layer of fulfilment for anyone looking for a career at DE&S.

Shelley: "I joined our staff volunteering network; it's a great opportunity to give

back. With up to six day's paid leave each year for volunteering, it's something that really sets DE&S apart."

Gareth: "Mentoring graduates on our operations management scheme has been really rewarding, giving them a consistent point of contact for support throughout their various placements."

DE&S is in the process of transforming its operating model. Traditional hierarchies are shifting to agile structures, advancing a culture of collaboration and rapid decision-making. Underpinned by a 'By us, For us' mindset, this shift will offer our people even more direct impact on strategic initiatives and presents an exciting time of change.

Shelley: "This is an exceptionally challenging time for Defence, in a world with a higher threat level than I've seen during my time here. But that brings all sorts of innovation and even more importance to what we do. We need to adapt rapidly and embrace new ways of working. By collectively identifying what needs to change and how, together we're improving our organisation to deliver the defence of tomorrow."

PEOPLE

Victoria Conway

Job title:

Assistant Commercial Officer

What does your role involve?

I currently work in the Future Combat Air Systems Acquisition Programme (FCAS). I'm part of a team that's managing a trilateral international contract, which is aiming to build the next generation of fighter aircraft.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

The best part of my job is the opportunity to work collaboratively with people from all over the world. Working in FCAS I get to experience different cultures and appreciate new perspectives and ideas.

What is your greatest accomplishment to date?

My greatest accomplishment to date is working with the FCAS media team to contract the designers who developed the new international logo for my team. I feel proud every time I see this symbol on a lanyard or poster, and one day on an aircraft, because I know that I was part of its development.

What keeps you energised about working at DE&S?

My team. I've been fortunate to have been placed in a very supportive team. They not only assist and educate me every day on how to be a better commercial officer, but have some of the funniest and kindest personalities that someone new to the Commercial Function could hope for.

Who or what has shaped who you are?

My partner has supported me through every career decision and late-night study session, believing that I could do it.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time you will most likely find me baking and dancing along to some music in the kitchen. I love all music, from 80s rock to classical, depending on the day. Maybe one day I might try being a contestant on the Great British Bake Off!

I've recently taken up the piano having always wanted to learn. I can now play anything... slow or wrong. It's a start! I can't wait to see how I progress. However, reading and painting are my favourite things to do. I was once told that if you owned 1,000 books it was considered a library, so my goal is a home library.

What might surprise people about you?

Myself and my partner love travelling. I somehow always get roped into trying new things, from volcano-boarding in Nicaragua to deep-sea snorkelling with whale sharks in Mexico.

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

It's never too late to start something new.





EDITOR'S CHOICE

As part of Exercise Pegasus Clover, a Jackal 2 reconnaissance vehicle from the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Regiment drives off an RAF Atlas aircraft after a Rapid Air Landing at RAF Shawbury.

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An RAF technician marshals a Typhoon aircraft prior to flight.

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