

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

We operate in a world that is increasingly challenging and unstable. It is the mission of Defence to stabilise, to overcome, to secure our nation and support our allies.

On 1 April, we stand-up Defence Reform, a reshaping of the MOD's leadership structures that will make UK Defence more responsive and coherent, and create the outcome-focused department our mission demands.

The UK defence system has been simplified into four groups – a Department of State, a Military Strategic Headquarters, a Defence Nuclear Enterprise, and a new National Armaments Director (NAD) group – designed to seamlessly interlock and work together as One Defence.

I am proud to be acting as the NAD, setting up the NAD group for success while the permanent NAD position is being filled. The NAD group brings together, under one leader, five MOD enabling organisations: the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, Defence Equipment & Support, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, elements of Defence Support, and Defence Digital from 1 July.

The levers to make a real difference

Through closer alignment and reduced duplication, the new NAD group is expected to save the taxpayer at least £10 billion over the next decade, which will be reinvested directly into Defence.

It will foster deeper integration, while streamlining innovation and the exploitation of novel technology, to deliver more lethal, more effective systems. And, because our security does not exist in isolation, the new NAD will be a powerful advocate for further interoperability and collaboration with our allies, as part of the NATO Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD).

This new 'fully fledged' NAD role is broader in scope than the role of UK CNAD representative, which I took on with my day-job as DE&S CEO. With oversight of a £20 billion-plus budget, combining eight separate procurement pots from across the MOD, and end-to-end ownership over the defence acquisition system, the NAD is responsible for building, developing and sustaining the UK's 'national arsenal'.

This is an enormous opportunity and one I am excited to take up. Our Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Defence have set ambitious targets for defence investment and procurement. By bringing these functions together, we create powerful levers to meet that ambition; to drive

programme alignment and integrated effects, strengthen our systems, and deliver the equipment and support our front-line forces need.

Powering the defence enterprise

The NAD group will work with industry to establish more innovative, effective solutions. It is an enormous opportunity to reduce waste and bureaucracy, and maximise economic benefit. Our defence enterprise will deliver with greater effect and a renewed focus on our mission of making the nation secure at home and stronger abroad.

I am eager to work together with our defence partners to realise the potential held within our defence enterprise and to action the recommendations of the Strategic Defence Review and enact the upcoming Defence Industrial Strategy. We share some big targets and it will be a collective endeavour to hit them.

Defence Reform and the NAD group ensures we approach them as One Defence, with industry, academia and our colleagues in the Front-Line Commands, and through the newly established Joint Defence Industrial Council.

Looking forward

The threat landscape will not wait, and neither will we. Our nation needs an Armed Forces equipped with a fierce arsenal of integrated systems and underpinned by a strong defence enterprise. It is a great responsibility and comes with big expectations, but together we will meet those and do even more.

We have come a long way in the past two and a half years. I am proud to have supported our military and that of Ukraine, while leading improvements to the defence acquisition system that reduced costs by 10 percent and increased outputs by 8 percent. I am prouder still of what comes next.

Successful organisations change to meet the needs of the time, and today's more dangerous world requires a structure that accelerates the delivery of more innovative, more integrated, more lethal systems for the UK's Armed Forces.

I am looking forward to returning to DE&S. Now, my focus is setting up the NAD group for success, while the permanent NAD role is filled, and building cohesion to ensure they arrive with as much momentum as possible, and then to get behind them as they drive Defence forward.

SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

Leading through change

Lieutenant General Simon Hamilton, DE&S Director General System Integration, sets out his priorities as he takes up his new role of DE&S' Deputy CEO.

As I step into the position of DE&S Deputy CEO, following Andy Start's move to take up the role of National Armaments Director (NAD), I want to express my profound gratitude to my colleagues across UK Defence whose resilience, dedication and expertise have been essential during an intense period of transformation.

We are operating in a context of rising threats. To meet our mission of equipping and supporting our armed forces, and to support a UK that is secure at home and strong abroad, we must take action today. While Andy is acting as NAD, I am proud to pick up the mantle and ensure that DE&S works in lock-step with our defence partners, whether in the laboratory, on the front-line or in industry.

As Deputy CEO, with day-to-day management of our organisation, I am committed to providing consistent stewardship of DE&S' work.

Delivering government priorities

The Government has made clear its commitment to strengthening our Armed Forces and protecting our national security. Their pledge to reach 2.5 percent of GDP on defence spending, conduct a Strategic Defence Review and develop a robust Defence Industrial Strategy align with DE&S' core mission to deliver the capability and support that keeps our nation safe.

As the Strategic Defence Review takes shape, DE&S will be central to translating strategy into reality. We will continue to deliver both immediate operational requirements and long-term capability development, with a particular focus on strengthening our domestic defence industry and building resilient supply chains.

A focus on operational delivery

My primary focus is and will always remain delivery of the MOD Equipment Plan priorities. Our mission partners depend on us, and I am committed to supporting them.

We will continue to work at pace to procure the equipment and support solutions our armed forces need to meet operational demands and hold the battlefield edge. Our backing for robust European security is steadfast and we remain committed to Ukraine's struggle for sovereignty and peace against Russia's illegal invasion.

Optimising our operating model

While we continue with our core mission, a second priority will be ensuring a smooth transition for DE&S into our new operating model. This represents years of collaborative effort and careful planning. As of 28 March, the operating model reached Full Operating Capability. While that is an important milestone, it is a single point along a longer journey. Now, the work to refine and optimise our processes and ways of working, and to address any teething problems, begins.

Our transformation, alongside Defence Reform, presents a once-in-a-generation moment to overcome operational challenges and meet the needs of our Armed Forces and allies.

Championing defence partnership

In a challenging global security environment, the partnerships we forge across the defence enterprise – in the UK and internationally – are more critical than ever.

At DE&S, we are uniquely positioned to support our colleagues across the NAD group, as a bridge between industry innovation and front-line requirement. We will be redoubling our efforts to strengthen partnerships between business and government, reduce waste and improve value for money – priorities explicitly highlighted in the Government's defence agenda.

The UK's support for Ukraine and commitment to NATO will continue to drive significant elements of our work. Our procurement expertise is critical in supporting allies while maintaining our own defence capabilities. The AUKUS partnership, for example, offers exciting opportunities for innovation and collaboration that will benefit both our security and economy.

DE&S will continue to play its part in strengthening the UK's global defence posture while growing exports and delivering value for UK taxpayers.

Looking forward

When I look to the future of DE&S, I see immense opportunity. The changes we're implementing now position us to be more responsive to emerging threats, more efficient with our resources, and more effective as partners to industry, our Armed Forces and our allies.

DE&S is committed to a focus on what matters most – delivering the equipment and support our Armed Forces need to keep our nation safe. We will continue to approach new challenges with the same determination and ingenuity that have been hallmarks of DE&S.



AIR DOMINANCE SECURED

NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.



MBDA is the world leader in air dominance weaponry, ensuring control of the skies in increasingly challenging and highly contested air space. MBDA's cutting-edge capabilities and collaborative approach with customers has resulted in an unrivalled portfolio of air-to-air weapons – ASRAAM, METEOR and MICA – equipping the latest generation of aircraft in-service including Eurofighter Typhoon, Rafale, Gripen, KF-21, Mirage 2000, Jaguar, LCA Tejas and soon the F-35A and F-35B. MBDA is constantly evolving these capabilities to stay ahead of emerging threats and equip the next generation of combat aircraft.



SENIOR LEADER COMMENT

Innovative leadership through job-sharing

Katherine Carr and Michelle Pester joined DE&S as joint Directors of Strategy and Corporate Affairs in September 2024. They tell Desider about their plans and the benefits their innovative job share brings.

What are your plans for 2025?

K: We want to take advantage of the fact that this new role brings together strategy, governance, communications, parliamentary engagement, operating model design and senior management coherence, to help DE&S through a period of really significant change. Our priorities will include helping the organisation to implement recommendations from the Strategic Defence Review, and positioning DE&S as a critical enabler for the new National Armaments Director.

M: As DE&S completes implementation of its new operating model and embraces the opportunities of Defence Reform, we want to ensure this is a great place to work, where our people have clarity of mission, exhibit and experience the right behaviours, and support and value inclusivity. All while continuing to prioritise delivery and support to UK operations.

What attracted you to DE&S as an organisation?

M: We saw it as a fantastic opportunity to get closer to front-line delivery and join an organisation with a critical mission. The scale of ambition here to deliver better acquisition and support outcomes for our armed forces and transform ways of working is quite unprecedented in government.

K: It's a privilege and a responsibility to work here. Watching the news, then coming into work and having an opportunity to make a difference to the defence of the UK through the DE&S mission feels very special.

Can you tell us about the mechanics of your job share?

M: We've been working as a partnership for eight years now, and share the whole role between us. Katherine is based in Bristol and works Monday to Wednesday; I'm in London and work Wednesday to Friday. Each week, we invest significant time in handovers, discussion and planning, ensuring each of us can pick work up seamlessly. The process itself creates space for thinking and re-prioritisation, which enhances the quality of our outputs.

K: It's a trusted partnership. We don't always agree, but we share values, aspirations and a work ethic. The benefits for us are huge: not just personal and professional resilience, but the ability to take on demanding and rewarding senior roles while preserving our work life balance.

What benefits does it bring to DE&S?

M: Our working arrangement allows for constructive challenge, adaptability and the sharing of skills and experience. Between us we can draw on over 40 years' worth of civil service experience in a wide range of roles.

K: We can draw on different networks too. And in strategy work, where problems can be really complex and the way ahead can often be unclear, we offer two brains and two perspectives working to a common goal.

Does the job share create any challenges?

K: It does require a significant investment of time and energy each week. And relinquishing control when you're not working, allowing someone else to make decisions on your behalf, takes practice too.

M: You have to leave your ego at the door, knowing you're investing in something bigger. We value the preservation of our partnership over any particular role, and will take decisions about career progression together. Despite the challenges, we think it's worth it and would love to see more colleagues job-sharing in Defence.



FEATURE

Improved accountability will drive better value in procurement

Ben Paxton, researcher at the Institute for Government, explains why improvements to defence procurement go hand-in-hand with improving accountability.

The below represents the views of the author and not of Desider, DE&S or the UK Ministry of Defence.

The Defence Secretary has said that better accountability will save the MOD £10 billion in the next decade, and that improving procurement will be central to this. With defence procurement making up a third of the MOD's budget, and the House of Commons Defence and Public Accounts Committees previously describing it as 'broken', this focus is welcome.

But efforts to improve accountability can be hampered when governments lack clarity over what they are spending and with whom – never mind whether contracts are delivering good value for taxpayers' money. Work from the Institute for Government on improving accountability in government procurement, published last year, showed how improving oversight of procurement and ensuring contracts are closely and competently managed, with clear consequences for suppliers that underperform, will be crucial to delivering the promised savings from greater accountability.

Better data would improve oversight

The search for efficiencies in the spending review – the government-wide process currently underway to set multi-year budgets for departments – has helped put a spotlight on the variable quality of procurement data held by many government departments.

The Procurement Act, which came into force in late-February, aims to improve the quality of data in public sector procurement. This new legislation is part of a welcome shift towards more open procurement, recognising that increased transparency and better data can be a win-win for suppliers and the public sector. More transparency can give suppliers a better understanding of what government wants, and the public sector gets a more competitive market with innovative solutions that are better aligned to its objectives.

The new legislation includes exemptions where necessary for national security interests, which some defence contracts will be subject to. But the MOD should embrace this step-change in transparency and the wider drive for better data in procurement to improve oversight and give the market greater visibility of long-term priorities and pipelines.

Greater clarity of accountability is needed

Across government procurement, unclear governance structures and multiple layers of controls can muddy the waters of accountability. In the vast and complex defence procurement landscape, where contracts can be highly technical and operate over long timeframes, these problems are particularly acute.



Reversing the trend towards “added complexity where simplicity is needed”, as Defence Secretary John Healey put it, will require a concerted effort to streamline the procurement policies and processes currently in place. The appointment of a new National Armaments Director, responsible for improving value for money from procurement, could provide the strong leadership that will drive better accountability from the top. But success will depend on clear lines of accountability running throughout the MOD.

This clarity of accountability depends on effective contract management, which includes accurately monitored performance, and suppliers facing consequences when they underperform. But setting clear performance indicators, which align with a contract's objectives and then effectively monitoring them, can be difficult, particularly so for Defence. Getting this right requires departments to have sufficient commercial capability in place to manage complex contracts effectively on a day-to-day basis, and clear processes for holding underperforming suppliers to account.

Greater transparency and having the “capacity necessary to deliver value for money” are explicit priorities in the Government's new and improved National Procurement Policy Statement. At this time of global instability, when getting good value for money from defence spending is so vital, these priorities should be at the heart of the MOD's efforts to improve accountability in procurement.

NEWS

UK secures 50th and final AH-64E Apache attack helicopter

The UK's fleet of AH-64E Apache is now complete, with the 50th aircraft handed over to DE&S at an event in Arizona, USA.

The 50th AH-64E Apache has been secured for the British Army, completing the new fleet of the world's most advanced attack helicopter.

The final Apache was handed over to DE&S at Boeing's manufacturing facility in Arizona, USA. The UK's operational fleet is now fully established at the Army's Wattisham Flying Station in Suffolk, while the training fleet is complete at the Army Aviation Centre in Hampshire.

As well as providing a superior capability for operations, the Apache programme supports the UK Government's growth agenda by supporting more than 300 jobs at Boeing Defence UK. The global market for Apache also benefits 75 UK companies including 33 small and medium enterprises.

Mark Langrill, DE&S Director Rotary Wing and Uncrewed Air Systems, was in the US to accept the final helicopter along with members of DE&S' Apache Delivery Team and the British Army.

"We are incredibly proud to accept such a cutting-edge capability and to receive the final airframe of the British Army fleet," he said. "The Apache programme is being delivered by a team drawn from across DE&S, industry and our British Army colleagues, all of whom share a common goal to bring the most up-to-date version of this battle-winning aircraft into service while creating and supporting jobs and skills in the UK."

Procured by DE&S through a £1.7 billion Foreign Military Sale with the US Government, the AH-64E combines parts from the Mk1 (D-model) Apache, which served the British Army for more than two decades, with a new fuselage and updated technology. With a top speed of over 300kph, its modernised engines, sensors, radar, and optical and thermal sights enable the aircraft to fly faster and strike targets at greater ranges.

The AH-64E also benefits from reduced sensor-to-shooter time and increased tactical agility. Its radar can passively geolocate threats without giving away the aircraft's position, detecting more than 1,000 targets, classifying 256 and prioritising the top 16 in seconds.

The new fleet became operationally ready for the Army in 2023 and has already proven itself during exercises and operations around the globe.

From the Arctic tundra to the deserts of Jordan, it has played a vital role in NATO operations, including Exercises Swift Response and Steadfast Defender in 2024.

Colonel David Amlôt MBE, from the British Army's Combat Aviation Programme, said: "Battle-tested and modernised, AH-64E Apache is a fully integrated weapon system designed to fight multi-domain operations in highly contested, complex battlespaces, and in the harshest environments from the desert to the Arctic.

"Through this procurement, we will see an increased interoperability with our NATO and allied partners, with an expected 19 nations operating the Apache by the end of the decade, further strengthening our collective deterrence."

Boeing Defence UK is providing the long-term training and support service for the new AH-64E fleet. The 20-year agreement with DE&S has created around 315 jobs at Middle Wallop and Wattisham, including apprentices.

Maria Laine, President of Boeing UK, Ireland and the Nordics, said: "Delivering the 50th E-model Apache to the British Army marks a significant achievement in Boeing's enduring alliance with the UK, a relationship that spans more than 80 years."

The 50th Apache will remain in the US for software testing to enable advanced teaming with uncrewed air systems before being delivered to the UK in 2026.



FEATURE

Striving for 24/7 equipment support excellence

Bethania Ciocca is DE&S' new Head of Power, Propulsion and Auxiliaries. Here, she shares her ambitions and her team's goals.



I am passionate about the work we do in DE&S. My goal is to establish agile and flexible commercial arrangements that ensure 24/7 equipment support for our mission partners – whenever and wherever they need it.

Imagine a turbine engine emitting a suspicious noise. Perhaps a fault has developed or a part has broken. My team ensures the right contractual frameworks are in place so that our mission partners have immediate access to engineering expertise, enabling them to diagnose and resolve issues or source replacement parts efficiently.

In the Power, Propulsion and Auxiliary team, we manage nearly 300 types of equipment, from propulsion systems and hydraulics to domestic and environmental units. While our primary focus is the Royal Navy, we are expanding our portfolio to include projects with the British Army and the RAF. By working across the three Forces, we can unlock significant synergies. This approach allows us to consolidate similar demands, creating streamlined contracts that drive economies of scale and greater efficiencies.

I have engaged directly with our mission partners – at dockyards and aboard ships – to understand their concerns. One pressing issue is how best to support the naval supply chain, given the breadth of operations, maintenance periods and the need to renew naval assets. To overcome this challenge, we are improving procurement processes and fostering closer industry partnerships.

A key approach has been to better exploit the vast amount of data available to us. Data presents both a challenge and an opportunity. While we have more data than ever before, we must refine our predictive maintenance forecasting and embrace data-driven decision-making to improve supply chain resilience. By investing in advanced analytics and digital tools, we can enhance efficiency, reduce equipment downtime and proactively address maintenance needs before they escalate. The aim is to help anticipate equipment issues before they occur; a planned, pro-active approach that ensures timely responses.

We are working on integrating data sources across different platforms to provide a more comprehensive operational picture, allowing faster and more informed decision-making. We are investing resources and effort into Foundry – the Navy's data programme, as well as exploring how best to incorporate data from the Army's engineering system, and introducing AI-powered analytics tools that enable real-time monitoring and predictive insights.

Collaboration with industry partners is more critical than ever. My engagement with them has been well-received because they share many of our challenges, as well as our drive for commercial frameworks grounded in responsiveness and impact.

During over 20 years in acquisition and transformation across sectors, including seven at DE&S, I've had the privilege of working on some fascinating projects. I thrive on stepping into new environments with the goal of driving positive change. International Women's Day on 8 March reminded me of the progress we've made over the past two decades, and how much remains to be done. This year's theme, Accelerate Action, resonates deeply with me. We must work harder and faster to achieve true gender equality. A key challenge remains attracting more women into engineering and the sciences, and into Defence, and then retaining them.

I am a member of DE&S' Diversity and Inclusion Council and a co-champion in our Race and Culture Network. We have some great programmes at DE&S that are working to address representation gaps in leadership. These are helping women professionals discover their authentic leadership identities, and are supporting colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds and empowering colleagues with disabilities.

To protect our country, Defence must embrace discomfort. I encourage my team to challenge the status quo – questioning ineffective processes and championing collaboration, innovation, diversity and agility. This responsibility belongs to all of us. My message is simple: we must prepare. We must rethink how we operate. And we must be ready for what lies ahead.

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FEATURE

Realising the power of digital engineering

The Digital Engineering Centre is enabling innovative new techniques to help solve defence challenges and deliver faster for the UK's Armed Forces.

The goal of the Digital Engineering Centre (DEC), launched by DE&S in November 2024, is to increase the pace of delivery for the UK's Armed Forces. By harnessing the latest digital engineering techniques, the DEC aims to speed up how new and emerging technology is incorporated into defence processes.

DEC teams work with allies and partners to unlock both proven and novel digital engineering tools and techniques, helping MOD teams understand the possible solutions that digital engineering opens up and how these can be applied to their programmes.

The primary focus of the DEC is to reduce the time taken to meet the changing needs of war-fighters. This begins when a Front-line Command first makes a request to DE&S, and continues through requirement identification, design, testing and deployment.

At every stage, digital engineering tools have the potential to speed up the process. For example, when requirements are set, traditional written statements can result in lengthy documents, whose precision can suffer when different stakeholders apply their lens and language to them. In contrast, digital solutions allow requirements to be set out in clear, unambiguous terms that enable smoother transfer and development through the design stages.

Digitally-modelled requirements also support more efficient design verification and validation through a 'digital rehearsal'. A digital design prototype is tested in a representative virtual environment, then validated against the modelled requirements, providing a faster, more cost-effective iterative design process that rapidly reveals unworkable components. As the design develops, the model can be rapidly tested and used for integration.

The DEC works directly with programme teams, running expert-led workshops to help them overcome particular problems and identify where and how digital engineering tools could be applied. They then design intervention roadmaps to help teams reach their goals, working with them to agree prioritised milestones for digital engineering integration, and advocating for any enterprise-level actions that may be needed.

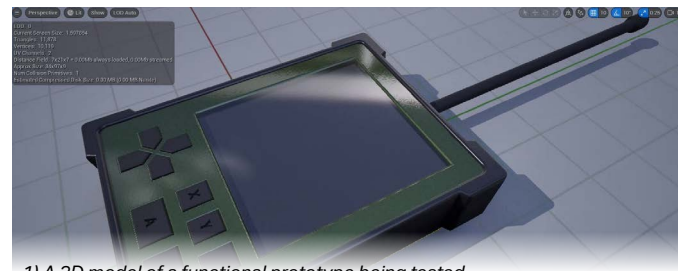
The DEC's service delivery method of 'triage, opportunity and roadmap' has already helped 12 programmes to rapidly identify interventions that could be useful to them. In one example, a programme used DEC tools to identify a way to quickly unblock a bottleneck, saving 300 hours by replacing a manual task with automation. When scaled-up across multiple similar programmes, it could save tens of thousands of hours.

The DEC also tracks digital engineering impact, identifying where blockers or opportunities exist across defence programmes, highlighting these to senior leadership and logging change.

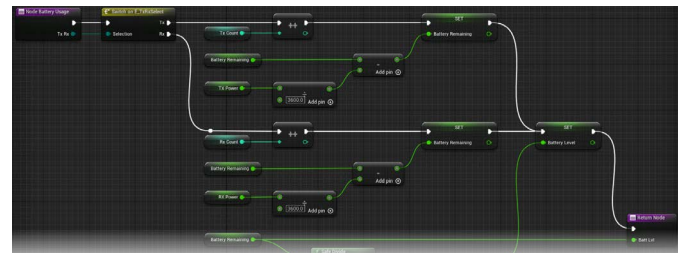
Ben Wood, Head of Digital Engineering Centre, said: "The primary focus of the DEC is to reduce the time it takes to meet the needs of our war-fighters. We have clearly demonstrated the benefits the DEC can bring in speeding up acquisition across Defence."

Concept visualisation case study

By harnessing digital tools the DEC has been able to develop custom virtual environments where requirements can be tested quickly, at minimal cost. Using real-time 3D platforms, developed by the gaming industry, the DEC developed several custom functioning models within realistic virtual environments. These models have allowed DE&S delivery teams and their mission partners to reduce uncertainty and highlight trade-offs, months or years before they could evaluate a real-world physical version. For one project team, it accelerated a decision point from three years to six weeks.



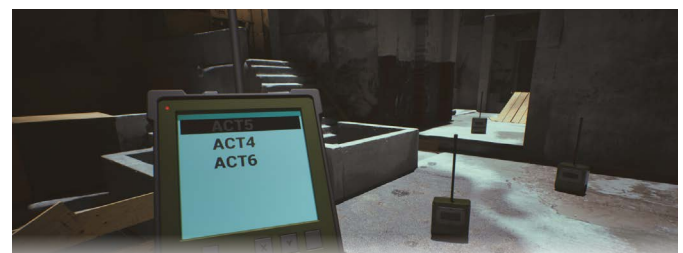
1) A 3D model of a functional prototype being tested



2) Creation of blueprint to provide functionality of the prototype



3) Creation of simulation environment for the functional prototype



4) Functional prototype operating within simulated environment

FEATURE

Inverting the approach to problem-solving

DE&S' Futures Lab explains its innovative approach to enabling industry to inform Defence and contribute to a key mission: the conduct of Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

The need to get the right information to the right people at the right time to aid decision-making is as old as warfare itself. Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) activity allows the UK to 'see more and see further', to understand the strategic and tactical environment in which its military forces operate. The ISR mission includes the consolidation of incoming data, the analysis and processing of the resultant information, and its timely transmission in multiple formats to key stakeholders.

Last year, the RAF asked the DE&S Futures Lab to identify novel and interesting approaches that have the potential to enhance its ISR mission. Futures Lab is a UK Defence-funded 'decision support' service. It creates bespoke industry and academia teams, drawn from an extensive provider network, that are able to make meaningful contributions towards addressing complex defence problems.

In seeking to 'see more', this Futures Lab task focused on signals intelligence: the detection, identification and geolocation of signals throughout the electromagnetic spectrum.

Futures Lab inverted the usual approach of setting detailed requirements, instead considering the problem of what products, technology and approaches could contribute to ISR mission outcomes. In doing so, it posed two questions to the market through its provider network:

1. How could automation be used to structure, label, manage and prioritise data to support triage and analysis efforts and so reduce the burden on intelligence analysts?
2. How could synthetic environments be used to accurately reflect the operational realities of signals intelligence collection and analysis to provide varied realistic and up-to-date test and training data?

Suppliers' responses and a broad market assessment identified 136 companies from traditional defence and wider suppliers, including in the e-sports and education sectors, that could deliver interesting and novel approaches. From this list, 12 were discussed with Futures Lab's RAF stakeholders and six were invited to an in-person event to discuss their approaches.

The RAF's experience of this process was just as valuable as its outputs. Having the freedom to do things differently energised their creativity. They reflected how the suppliers' presentations sparked ideas for solutions to problems they had not yet even identified.

This procurement approach uses the military concept of 'intent': a simple, concise statement of the desired outcome that does not prescribe how it is achieved. It provides the creative space to develop novel approaches to solving the problem; avoiding prescriptive requirements that risked demanding things that industry and technology cannot necessarily achieve. By bringing industry closer to the problem, not the requirement, it encourages innovation and reduces the time it takes to arrive at practical solutions.

The need to accurately and effectively inform military decision-makers at all levels remains as enduring and relevant today as ever, possibly even more so. Technology is a vital enabler of that, contributing to the rich data picture on which critical decisions are based. The Futures Lab, with its broad scope and outcome focus, continues to support this work.



NEWS

Contract placed for Ukraine lightweight multirole missiles

DE&S awards contract for thousands of advanced air defence missiles to be manufactured and delivered to Ukraine.



DE&S has placed a £1.6 billion contract with Thales UK to supply more than 5,000 lightweight multirole missiles (LMMs) to Ukraine.

The deal will see production of LMMs at Thales's Belfast factory treble, providing a major boost to the economy, and benefiting companies in Thales' supply chain across the UK. It will create 200 new jobs and support 700 existing jobs at Thales in Belfast.

The contract, which DE&S placed on behalf of the Ukrainian Government, is being funded by a loan underwritten by UK Export Finance (UKEF). This follows a deal signed last year to allow Ukraine to draw on £3.5 billion worth of support from UKEF to acquire military equipment from UK companies. It marks a historic step for industrial relations between the UK and Ukraine.

It is the largest contract ever received by Thales in Belfast and the second largest the MOD has placed with the company, building on a previous contract with Thales, signed in September 2024, for 650 missiles. The first batch of LMM were delivered at the end of last year and this new contract will continue these deliveries.

Andy Start, DE&S CEO and National Armaments Director, said: "The UK's defence industry has supported Ukraine from the start of the war and this important contract underlines industry's ability to scale-up production at pace to deliver the world-class defence equipment Ukraine requires. This is a critical step in the work of Taskforce Hirst, developing lasting partnerships between the UK and Ukraine's defence industries. The substantial increase in LMM production capacity will benefit both Ukraine's fight and the longer-term security of the UK."

Ukraine has already put the highly capable LMM missile to good use as part of its air defences, protecting civilians and critical infrastructure from Russian bombardment. Thales will deliver the contract in collaboration with a Ukrainian industry partner, which will manufacture launchers and command and control vehicles for the missiles in Ukraine.

Major General Anna-Lee Reilly CB, FREng, DE&S Director Strategic Capability, Engagement and Operations, and Director of Taskforce Hirst, said: "The signing of the Taskforce Hirst LMM mega-contract signifies a step-change in the scale of the support being provided by UK for Ukraine. This UKEF-enabled contract gives Ukraine the vital equipment it needs, and significantly increases the UK's production of short-range air defence missiles."

The deal helps deliver on the Government's pledge in its Plan for Change to improve the lives of people by growing the economy in every part of the UK. By spending more on Defence, the UK will deliver the national security that underpins economic growth, and unlock new jobs, skills and opportunities.

Defence Secretary John Healey said: "Three years since Putin launched his full-scale invasion, we are now at a critical moment for the future of Ukraine and the security of us all in Europe. This new support will help protect Ukraine against drone and missile attacks, and it will also help deter further Russian aggression following any end to the fighting. This new deal delivers on the UK's ironclad commitment to step-up military support for Ukraine, while boosting jobs and growth at home."

NEWS

Rapid procurement delivers improved snowmobiles for Royal Marines

In less than nine months, DE&S has delivered over 150 new vehicles to UK Forces in the Arctic Circle.

Royal Marines Commandos are striking faster and further across the Arctic's snow and ice thanks to the rapid development, procurement and delivery of 159 new snowmobiles for reconnaissance and raiding operations.

The Lynx Brutal Over Snow Reconnaissance Vehicles (OSRV) were delivered to Camp Viking – the UK Commando Force's winter home in Northern Norway – in February. Since then, they have been put through their paces by the Surveillance and Reconnaissance Squadron (SRS) from 30 Commando Information Exploitation Group as part of their winter deployment.

The new vehicles, which form part of the OSRV capability, were secured under a £10 million contract with a UK-based contractor who procured the modified snowmobiles from a Finnish subsidiary of Canadian firm Bombardier Recreational Products (BRP). The full quantity of OSRVs were delivered less than nine months on from award of the contract.

Following vehicle delivery, the contract also includes in-service support and post-design services to ensure the equipment can be operated and sustained throughout its service life.

Steve Hayward, Head of Specialist Vehicles and Uncrewed Land Systems (SVULS) in the DE&S Land Environment, said: "Responding to the ever-changing needs of our mission partners is at the core of what we do in DE&S. The rapid procurement and delivery of these snowmobiles, enabled through agile approaches and a collaborative team of stakeholders, has provided a swift

and effective enhancement to the Royal Marines capability when operating within the Arctic Circle."

The SRS is the eyes and ears of the Commando Force. Its members are trained to work ahead of the main thrust of allied forces, often deep into adversary territory. As Arctic warfare experts they are a key user of the new snowmobiles and so far the feedback have been positive.

"The platform has received high praise for its ease of use and manoeuvrability, making it the most agile platform used to-date," said an SRS operator, who cannot be named for operational reasons. "The new Lynx Brutal has proven to be superior to previous platforms, with better performance at night, extra suspension options that can be easily changed by the operator, and a more aggressive track that provides more power and lift in deep snow conditions."

The modified Lynx Brutal is based on BRP's commercially available over-snow vehicle. The new machine is lighter, with a more powerful liquid-cooled 850cc 2 stroke engine, improved suspension and track. The modifications were jointly developed and assessed by UK and allied Nordic nations to reduce the often lengthy development phase for new products while delivering a step-change in performance.

Ensuring the OSRVs were delivered rapidly and efficiently led to an alternative project approach from the DE&S SVULS team. They worked closely with Royal Navy and other mission partners

to ensure the project capitalised on existing assessment phase activities being carried out for other projects. This enabled DE&S and the Navy to significantly reduce the time needed to secure approval and award a contract, and helped to streamline and consolidate resource-intensive activities during the Demonstration and Manufacture phases.

Brigadier Chris Haw, responsible for the Commando Force Transformation Programme, said: "This is a very important investment in the Commando Force's Special Operations capability in the High North, at a strategically significant time. This is yet another cutting-edge capability enhancement as part of a wider transformation programme providing a more sophisticated and specialist force to Defence."





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NEWS

Major contract extension will support combat readiness and UK jobs

A five-year contract extension, worth £1.6 billion, will provide essential support for UK military assets, sustain UK jobs and boost army readiness.

DE&S has awarded British defence firm Babcock a five-year equipment support contract extension, worth £1.6 billion.

The contract extension will cover vital military assets including Challenger 2 tanks, 105mm artillery guns and Trojan armoured vehicles, ensuring they remain combat-ready. The amendment to the Service Provision and Transformation Contract (SPTC), which was initially secured in 2015 for a 10-year period, will also sustain 1,600 highly skilled jobs at locations across the UK. This includes over 400 in Telford and over 250 in Dorset.

Babcock will provide maintenance services covering preventative maintenance, emergency repairs and spare parts management. The SPTC extension will also include digital transformation to improve fleet management efficiency, keeping more vehicles and equipment primed for soldiers to use – boosting national security while also contributing to economic growth.

DE&S Director Land Environment Major General Lizzie Faithfull-Davies said: “It has taken a lot of hard work to collaboratively deliver this SPTC Reframe contract amendment. I am delighted to renew our relationship with Babcock. With this amended contract,

DE&S, the British Army and Babcock will now provide even better support to the in-service platforms of our Armed forces; ensuring that the vehicles the Army will fight from are repaired, maintained and ready whenever they need them.”

The deal will also support approximately 6,000 UK businesses throughout the wider supply chain, as well as 200 apprentices. These apprenticeships will offer valuable training and development opportunities in fields, such as HGV maintenance and automotive refinishing, providing career paths in the defence sector for the next generation of skilled workers.

Babcock’s Chief Executive Officer David Lockwood said: “In a period of increased global instability, more is being expected of our armed forces. This contract extension ensures that Babcock continues to provide the British Army with the tools to do its job, when and wherever they are needed. Our know-how, application of technology and extensive experience in the land domain help ensure that the British Army is ready to fight and win wars.”

The work comes ahead of the Defence Industrial Strategy, which will bolster UK industry and provide more opportunities for Defence to be an engine for economic growth. It follows a recent commitment from the UK Government to launch a new hub to provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with better access to the defence supply chain, and a commitment to set direct SME spending targets for the MOD by June.

DE&S Director Commercial Paul Bell said: “The SPTC Reframe contract amendment has secured the optimum deal for both Army and Industry and represents a step change of improvement in delivering support to the Army’s vehicles. This continues the long and successful relationship with Babcock, providing a transformative platform as we head towards the future Land Integrated Operating Services (LIOS) approach to support.”



NEWS

New UK-made space system to help protect military satellites

A contract has been awarded for the Borealis command, control and data processing system. Jointly operated by the MOD and UK Space Agency, it will help protect UK space assets.

DE&S has awarded a £65 million contract for the Borealis command, control and data processing system. This innovative UK-made system will allow the UK to better monitor and protect satellites, by quickly compiling and processing data from multiple sources.

The deal with CGI UK, an IT systems integration specialist, will support around 100 skilled jobs in Leatherhead, Reading and Bristol, boosting the UK's space capabilities and delivering on the Government's Plan for Change.

This unique system will provide the UK with a better understanding of the Space Domain, improving military commanders' decision-making processes and supporting operations around the world.

Paul Russell, DE&S Space Delivery Team Leader, said: "The Borealis capability will harness multiple different sources of data (defence, government and commercial) and support military and civil operations and capabilities across all domains. It will work in conjunction with other programmes, such as ISTAR (UK Space Command's programme to launch satellites into orbit to deliver Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability), to ensure key sovereign and international data is obtained, managed and shared to improve the UK's space domain awareness, ability to exercise freedom of action in space and assure space operations."

Under the five-year contract, Borealis will provide software for the National Space Operations Centre, which develops and operates the UK's space surveillance and protection capabilities.

Minister for Defence Procurement and Industry Maria Eagle said: "This new deal delivers for our national security by enhancing protection for our satellite technology that millions rely on, while boosting jobs and growth at home. This Government continues to work swiftly to develop the new Defence Industrial Strategy. This announcement will support hundreds of highly skilled jobs, unlocking defence as an engine for growth and driving forward the Government's Plan for Change."

Borealis will enhance the UK's ability to monitor and protect crucial space assets, which underpin the UK's security and prosperity, enabling

vessels to navigate the oceans, keep military personnel safe, monitor the climate and forecast weather. It will provide a single, bespoke system, which will compile all data related to UK satellites. This enhanced awareness of what is happening in space will enable UK Space Command to better protect critical space systems.

Major General Paul Tedman, Commander of UK Space Command, said: "The use of space is crucial for our economy, prosperity, security, and defence, but assured access to space is becoming increasingly contested by adversaries and congested by users and debris. Therefore, it is imperative that we know what is happening in space.

Borealis is an innovative system that draws together multiple inputs to enhance the UK government's understanding of the wide-ranging activity on orbit, allowing the UK to protect not just our own space assets, but those of our allies and partners as well."

CGI will work alongside a network of partner organisations hand-picked for their expertise to deliver the programme. Neil Timms, Senior Vice President of Space, Defence & Intelligence UK & Australia at CGI said: "We're proud to support UK Space Command and the UK Space Agency through delivery of Borealis. We believe this is a strategic step towards establishing a more holistic approach to the UK's national space data architecture, with Borealis and the National Space Operations Centre at its heart."



NEWS

MyJAMES application goes live, making life easier for military users

A new application suite, which can be accessed on personal electronic devices, will allow users to record faults against equipment and to assign authorised drivers electronically.

The MyJAMES application suite is a family of process-driven apps. These have been developed by Lockheed Martin under contract with the DE&S Joint Asset Management and Engineering Solutions (JAMES) delivery team, and in conjunction with British Army experts.

Military personnel have been able to record engineering activity on equipment that requires servicing, inspections and certificates through the JAMES Management Information System web-form for more than 20 years. This covers everything from a Challenger 2 battle tank to a parachute.

The MyJAMES suite brings new functionality and an intuitive refresh to this process. It can now be accessed using portable electronic devices (PEDs), whether civilian or MoD-issued, meaning effortless and uncomplicated access to JAMES for certain functions.

Staff Sergeant Alex Horridge, from the DE&S JAMES delivery team, explained that, “the ability to use these JAMES elements from your own mobile phone makes it really effortless and straightforward – a real asset for the end-user.”

Currently MyJAMES consists of two apps. MyATUD is an electronic Authority to Use Document, which permits equipment managers to assign drivers and operators to tasks through their PED. MySIMPLEFAULTS allows equipment users to view, create, manage and close simple equipment faults where they are the equipment holding organisation.

Thanks to this new suite of apps, end-users have straight-forward access to their driver tasks, all from the comfort of their PEDs. And simple faults can be quickly captured, assigned for rectification and corrected, improving the availability of Army vehicle fleets.

Paul Henderson, Lockheed Martin (UK) project manager, said: “The potential to access MyJAMES using a mobile really makes life easier for the military – something that Lockheed Martin have as a primary focus.”

MyJAMES has undergone extensive trials over the last year with 12 Regiment Royal Artillery, the British Army’s only regiment to provide Close Support Air Defence and Counter-Uncrewed Aerial Systems (C-UAS). The regiment fitted this trial around their normal work, needing very little training or support. MyJAMES helped them to rectify faults and allocate driving tasks faster and more easily.



Warrant Officer 2 Owen from the Royal Dragoon Guards, with Operation Cabrit, the UK’s operational deployment to Estonia, said: “Getting into the application is so simple; it has helped me speed up my tasks, is really straightforward to use, and it’s a real bonus that I can use my own phone.”

DE&S JAMES team leader Nigel Young said: “The release of this JAMES mobile application on a personal device shows how much potential there is. Even though JAMES is a mature application, it continues to strive for improvements and consideration is being given to adding further functionality to MyJAMES in the future.”



First autonomous mine-hunting vessel delivered to Royal Navy

DE&S and their Royal Navy partners are securing the operational edge by incorporating cutting-edge autonomous and uncrewed technology into the fleet.

FEATURE

In March, the Royal Navy took receipt of the UK's first Maritime Mine Counter Measure (MMCM) system. This marked a milestone in the UK's mine-hunting capability, enabling the Royal Navy to locate and destroy mines faster and without putting personnel at risk.

The MMCM consists of an Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) – Royal Navy Motor Boat (RNMB) Ariadne – as well as sophisticated off-board payloads and a Remote Command Centre (RCC).

RNMB Ariadne is 12 metres long and can be deployed from a harbour or a mothership to hunt for mines using the Thales Towed Synthetic Aperture Multiviews system, one of the most sophisticated towed sonars in the world. With this new capability, mines can be rapidly detected in a more cost-effective and safe manner, greatly increasing operational tempo and eliminating the need for sailors to enter mine danger areas.

Advances in sensor technology, data analytics and machine learning mean that RNMB Ariadne is able to operate either fully autonomously or remote-controlled by operators from the RCC. Fitted with AI automatic target recognition, it can filter and refine vast amounts of data, allowing

operators to speed up the process of classifying and neutralising mines.

The MMCM programme was set up to deliver mine-hunting equipment to the British and French navies, with the contracts managed by the Organisation for Joint Armament Co-operation (OCCAR). Both have now taken delivery of MMCM systems. The UK's investment of £184 million has supported more than 200 jobs, with both USVs and RCCs manufactured in the UK. The total contract value for UK and France is €430 million.

Rear Admiral Steve McCarthy, DE&S Director of Maritime Environment, said: "Delivery of the first MMCM system for the Royal Navy is a proud moment. This is an opportunity to celebrate the efforts of all involved to bring this transformative capability into service. This project has contributed to the growth and prosperity of our nation and will strengthen our security through enhanced maritime operations."

Following the delivery of RNMB Ariadne, Royal Navy personnel will undertake a period of training under Thales' guidance, before independently conducting a rigorous operational evaluation of the equipment. This delivery forms part of the DE&S-led Mine Hunting Capability programme,

which aims to transition the Royal Navy from conventional mine-counter measure vessels to maritime autonomous systems.

Alongside this delivery, the Royal Navy's Mine and Threat Exploitation Group (MTXG) has taken charge of three uncrewed vessels to help with mine-hunting and survey operations. The three Iver4 580 uncrewed underwater vessels (UUVs) were procured by DE&S and delivered by L3 Harris. The UUVs are capable of operating for hours at a time at depths of nearly 1,000ft. They can detect underwater objects, such as mines and other items of interest, without putting sailors and divers at risk.

Above sea-level, the Royal Navy has used Peregrine, a remotely-piloted mini-helicopter delivered by DE&S, as part of drug-hunting operations in the Middle East for the first time. The Peregrine was launched on day and night sorties from the flight deck of frigate HMS Lancaster, which is deployed to the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Oman, scouring hundreds of square miles of ocean on every flight. The drone is ideally suited to long and demanding surveillance missions, preserving HMS Lancaster's crewed Wildcat helicopter to conduct disruption and strike missions.

NEWS

Testing under way for new Royal Navy electronic warfare system

Testing has begun on the production model of the Royal Navy's next-generation electronic warfare system and new 'trainable' decoy launcher.

The first of the Royal Navy's next-generation electronic warfare systems has rolled off the production line, as final tests and upgrades are carried out.

Procured by DE&S, the Maritime Electronic Warfare System Integrated Capability – known as MEWSIC Increment 1 – will enhance defensive capabilities by replacing the Navy's existing electronic warfare system. It will be installed on current and future warships including Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carriers, Type 45 destroyers, and the Type 26 and Type 31 frigates currently under construction.

Babcock International is the prime contractor working with Elbit Systems. The MEWSIC production model is now undergoing testing at an Elbit Systems UK facility. Alongside this, the first build of an updated Combat Management Software System has been delivered to Portsdown Technology Park in Hampshire to support ongoing development.

Dr Allan Paterson, DE&S Maritime Electronic Warfare Team Leader, said: "The Royal Navy has invested in an ambitious programme to deliver modern electronic warfare capabilities that will help its surface warships keep the UK and its allies safe around the world. It's fantastic to see the first MEWSIC system being delivered by DE&S and our industry partners, so that this crucial phase of testing and evaluation can be carried out and the capabilities of MEWSIC can be proven."

MEWSIC is one half of the overarching upgrade to the Navy surface fleet's electronic warfare capability under the Maritime Electronic Warfare Programme. The other is a 'trainable' launcher for electronic warfare decoys to confuse anti-ship missiles. Called Ancilia, it is designed and built by SEA (Systems Engineering and Assessment) in Barnstaple, North Devon.

The £135 million system – which will replace Seagnat on existing destroyers and future frigates – swivels rapidly and adjusts the angle decoy rounds are fired at to maximise their effectiveness, something its predecessor was unable to do. This means there is no need to manoeuvre the ship to counter any incoming threats, as Ancilia will face them directly.

What takes anti-ship missile defence to the next level is the integration of Ancilia with MEWSIC's Command and Control system. This defensive combination will give Navy personnel in the operations room increased situational awareness, helping them to better understand the operational environment and deliver the right counter-measures to the right location and at the right time.

Some things still need to be done manually, however, including loading and unloading Ancilia with decoy rounds. Navy electronic warfare specialists have been testing the practicalities of how this can be best done ahead of the system being brought into service. When ready for installation alongside MEWSIC, two Ancilia systems will be fitted to each Type 26, 31 and 45 vessel.



NEWS

DE&S highlights

A digest of DE&S news from the past month.

DE&S secures Aster missiles in boost to Sea Viper defence system

Following a new contract amendment, the production of Aster missiles is to be increased and accelerated, as part of the Future Family of Surface-to-Air Missiles – Principal Anti-Air Missile Systems (FSAF-PAAMS) programme. The amendment was signed by Joachim Sucker, Director of the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation's Executive Administration (OCCAR-EA) – on behalf of France, Italy and the UK – and Eurosam Managing Director Anne Diaz De Tuesta.

The DE&S Maritime Anti-Air Weapon Systems (MAWS) delivery team worked with OCCAR, Eurosam and MBDA to secure the Aster missiles. These will further bolster the UK's Sea Viper defence system, which includes the Aster missile and the Type 45 launcher and ship interface systems. Sea Viper has already proven its worth while protecting commercial shipping routes in the Red Sea.

OCCAR is an international organisation whose core business is the through-life management of complex, cooperative defence equipment programmes. The current OCCAR member states are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK.

The amendment covers the production of over 200 missiles, including both Aster 15 ship-launched missiles and the larger Aster 30 ground- and ship-launched missiles. As a result of the contractual change, Eurosam and its affiliate MBDA will enable OCCAR-EA to deliver the Aster 15 and Aster 30 variants to the British, French and Italian Armed Forces within a shorter timeframe.

New contract award to support Ukrainian Armed Forces

DE&S has awarded Babcock International Group a contract to create digital drawings and Computer Aided Design files of Ukrainian defence parts, allowing soldiers to recreate these on the front-line.

This latest technology agreement will see Babcock work with QinetiQ to pilot critical innovative support to Ukraine. Older parts from Ukrainian kit will be reverse-engineered to better understand their function and design with the aim of recreating them.

The aim is to provide Ukraine's Armed Forces with digital files that would enable the manufacture of parts during operations using a variety of methods including 3D printing, delivering a point-of-need support capability.

DE&S team celebrates triple award win

The Air Defence and Windfarm Mitigation Systems (ADWiMS) team are celebrating a triple success at the 2024 Government Commercial Function Awards, Defence Commercial Awards and Global Offshore Wind Awards. The ADWiMS team won the Defence Commercial Innovation Award at the first, were Highly Commended at the second, and shared the Offshore Wind Collaboration Award at the third as part of the Joint Offshore Wind and Air Defence Programme.

The team is collaborating with offshore windfarm developers to understand how to mitigate the impact of offshore wind power on air defence radars to support the Government's aim of 50 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2030. This is a complex and novel process, new to Defence, that has required joint working to understand how the MOD and developers can co-exist, working together to support each other.



PEOPLE

Pauline Boardman

Job title

DE&S Coaching Supervisor

What does your role involve?

My first responsibility is to look after a team of DE&S people coaches. Each people coach supports up to 30 people, and together they ensure everyone in DE&S can thrive. All DE&S colleagues will have a people coach, who focuses on performance, career management, matching people to work, and providing general support and care. As a coaching supervisor, you could say I'm the people coach's people coach! I support them with any challenges they face, ensure they have what they need to excel in their role and work with them on their own professional growth.

I also work alongside my brilliant fellow coaching supervisors and colleagues to implement DE&S' new people management model. This involves devising new ways of working, updating our procedures, helping teams understand how the model will work and resolving lots of tricky questions. The work we're doing to improve our people's experiences in DE&S is hugely exciting and I'm thrilled to be a part of it. While it's not easy, I'm positive this new investment in our people will pay dividends in helping us provide more effective support to the UK's Armed Forces.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

This is going to sound cheesy, but I love working with people and trying to make just a small improvement to their days. I'm fully invested in successfully implementing our new model and particularly in ensuring our people coaches recognise the positive impact they're already having. Change of this magnitude understandably creates uncertainty and anxiety, and naturally we occasionally make mistakes. However, even on the more challenging days, it's heartening to see people's energy, enthusiasm and dedication to doing a good job. I'm just going to embrace the cheesiness – the people in DE&S are awesome!

What is your greatest accomplishment to date?

I recently managed to stay awake for an entire film. I don't think that's happened since I worked in a cinema 30 years ago.

What keeps you energised about working at DE&S?

Definitely the people, but also the sense that I'm playing a small part in supporting the country and helping our Armed Forces keep us, our families and loved ones safe in this volatile world.

Who or what has shaped who you are?

My family. My parents instilled in me kindness, determination and a strong work ethic. My husband helps me see the lighter side of life. And my kids just keep inspiring me to be the best person I can be.

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

When I'm not snoozing in front of the telly, I read a lot. I'm currently working my way through some cosy crime novels, which seem appropriate for the time of year. I also love running (slowly).

What might surprise people about you?

I recently managed a 453 day Wordle streak. I broke it by forgetting to do it one day and I don't think I'm over that yet.

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

You're in charge of your own life. This motivates me to create the opportunities I want, change the things I don't like and to take ownership of my decisions and actions, rather than relying on things happening to me.





His Majesty King Charles III meets personnel onboard Royal Navy flagship HMS Prince of Wales. This is the first time in nearly 40 years that a reigning monarch has visited a Royal Navy warship at sea.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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A member of the UK Commando Force rides a Lynx Brutal snowmobile during exercises in Norway.

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