

News story: My D-Day Connection

As Joint Forces Command commemorates the 75th anniversary of D-Day, Liz O'Connell of the Defence Academy reflects on her own personal connection to D-Day.

News story: My D-Day Connection

Liz O'Connell is one of many civil servants who work at the Defence Academy their place of work, being an integral part of the Defence Leadership Centre. As a Trainer, Liz is responsible for delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to civilian staff, as well as service personnel from all three military single services – the Royal Navy, British Army, and Royal Air Force.

Awarded an Afghan Civilian Medal in 2013, she completed a year tour in Kabul, Afghanistan, as a defence adviser to their equivalent government department for defence. She worked as part of a team operating out of Camp Eggers, a now closed US military base that was located near the capital city.

As we commemorate those who lost their lives in the Invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944, Liz reflects on her own personal connection to the historic events of D-Day.

Liz's uncle, Royal Marine John Cameron, was in Normandy on that fateful day. Then at the rank of Corporal as part of the No. 48 Commando.

A group of Royal Marines, the Corps of which Corporal Cameron was a member, wave Union Flags as the MV Boudicca departs Poole Harbour on a nine-day commemorative tour as part of 2019 D-Day commemorations. MOD Crown Copyright.

Hailing from a Cambuslang, a town on the outskirts of Glasgow, John left school at the age of 15. He originally worked in Glasgow's meat market until the age of 18, when he decided to apply for the Royal Marines. He became a corporal and moved to Kent to be stationed in the Royal Marine Barracks in Chatham, taking the service number of X113326.

John became a member of the No. 48 Commando, part of the 4th Special Service Brigade. As a coxswain in the 'Four Eight', he was responsible for the steering and direction of an LCM (Landing Craft Mechanised) landing craft. The LCM came to prominence during the World War 2, being used to land troops and tanks during amphibious assaults by Allied forces, most notably so in the Normandy landings on D-Day.

In his role as coxswain, Corporal Cameron was tasked with successfully

transporting the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division to Juno Beach, so they could seize the German airfield in Carpiquet, now the Caen-Carpiquet Airport. At the age of 20, his role was a major one, with lives on the line there was little margin for error.

Carrying around 130 Canadian soldiers, John set off from the south coast in the cover of night, taking them across the English Channel. Soldiers became unwell as a result of the craft battling strong waves, but the young Royal Marine successfully landed the Canadian troops on occupied French soil.

Sheltering from heavy enemy fire, with shells bursting all around his landing craft, John departed Normandy to head back to home shores for the next grouping of troops. He continued to transport soldiers, supplies and ammunition to the French coast throughout the following weeks.

John was one of many coxswains that were crucial in the successful landing of troops on the shores of Normandy, playing a large part in the eventual success of Operation Overlord.

After his completing his service, John went on to have two daughters with his wife Helen. He spent his later life in the Erskine veterans home in Renfrewshire, in his native Scotland, before passing away at the age of 91.

The Defence Academy of The United Kingdom, based in Shrivenham, 20 miles west of Oxford, provides higher education for personnel in defence, security, government and beyond – both from the UK and overseas. Housed in the former Royal Military College of Science, the institution exists to deliver the highest-quality of teaching and training in leadership, business management, acquisition and technology.

The main campus of the Defence Academy in Shrivenham. Shown here in 2013, as His Royal Highness Prince Michael of Kent visits for the official opening of the Defence Centre for Languages and Culture. MOD Crown Copyright.

A vast, sprawling site, the Academy, originally known as Shrivenham Station, was constructed in 1937 as a Royal Artillery Depot. After the World War 2, it served as the home for the Shrivenham American University, established to provide a transition for United States troops between their life in the military to subsequent attendance at a university in the US.

Since the 1950s, the purpose of the site has remained similar, offering military education through the numerous institutions that called the site home in the latter half of the twentieth century.

It was officially christened the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom in 2002, currently directed by the Director of Joint Force Development (JFD), Air Marshal Edward Stringer.

Press release: Government acts urgently to protect judicial recruitment

Immediate steps to tackle emerging and unprecedented recruitment issues in the senior judiciary have today (5 June 2019) been set out by the government.

Press release: Government acts urgently to protect judicial recruitment

- unprecedented recruitment issues force government intervention
- more than 10% of High Court judicial positions vacant, and the Chancery Division, which handles major commercial cases, is already 20% below strength and will be up to 40% below strength by the end of the year without urgent action
- temporary recruitment and retention allowance introduced to prevent delays to life-changing decisions in the courts

An independent, effective judiciary is vital for upholding the rule of law for everyone. Every day, judges take decisions on critically important issues that directly impact on people's lives, from delivering justice for victims to deciding care arrangements for vulnerable children.

For the first time ever in consecutive recruitment campaigns, vacancies in the High Court and at the Circuit bench have had to be left unfilled, raising the risk of vulnerable people waiting longer for life-changing decisions. The impact is already being felt in the family courts, where a shortfall of judges is contributing to significant delays in child care proceedings.

This government is committed to delivering world class public services and taking action when the evidence requires it to ensure their continued delivery. That is why today a series of policies have been announced to support recruitment and retention in the judiciary, to ensure our courts and tribunals system can continue to deliver important services.

Similarly, the government will consult on measures designed to address pension tax disincentives that may encourage senior clinicians to limit or reduce their workloads while participating in the NHS Pension Scheme.

Responding to a major review from the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB), the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) has introduced a temporary recruitment and retention allowance at 25% for High Court judges and 15% for Circuit and Upper Tribunal judges who are eligible for the new pension scheme 2015.

This measure will affect only about a quarter of the salaried judiciary and aims to resolve the immediate recruitment issue until a long-term, sustainable, pension-based solution can be implemented for all judges.

It replaces the existing allowance of 11% for High Court judges and falls below SSRB's recommendation of a 32% permanent salary increase for High Court judges and 22% for Circuit and Upper Tribunal judges covered by the new pension scheme. This strikes a balance between an appropriate investment of public funds and addressing serious recruitment and retention problems.

Lord Chancellor David Gauke said:

Our judges are a cornerstone of our democratic society – their experience draws billions of pounds worth of business to the UK, and without them people cannot get justice.

We have reached a critical point. There are too many vacancies and with the retirement of many judges looming; we must act now before we see a serious impact on our courts and tribunals.

Judges are in a unique position and once they join the bench are not permitted to return to practice. Without the best legal minds in these seats, everyone that uses our courts will suffer, as will our international reputation.

This temporary allowance, pending long-term pension scheme change, will enable us to continue to attract the brightest and best and prevent delays to potentially life-changing decisions.

The country's most difficult and complex cases are heard by our most experienced judges: safeguarding vulnerable victims against serious violence or child abuse; dealing with gang violence cases involving multiple defendants; and complex fraud cases that can last years.

In practice, delays to the system can mean:

- Victims of serious violence and sexual abuse having to wait longer to see the perpetrators brought to justice
- Care proceedings taking longer, meaning that vulnerable children are left in the dark about their future for longer
- Individuals affected by the decisions of Immigration and Asylum Tribunals having to wait longer to know where they and their families will live in future
- And parties involved in complex commercial cases, who have placed their confidence in the legal system to provide certainty and resolve disputes quickly, are left waiting for answers, damaging business and enterprise.

High Court, Circuit and Upper Tribunal judges in particular play a pivotal role in the justice system but currently more than 10% of High Court judicial positions remain vacant. As things stand the Chancery Division of the High Court is already 20% below strength and will be up to 40% below strength by the end of the year without urgent action.

Today's announcement responds to a major review from SSRB, submitted last autumn, which identified clear evidence of significant and growing recruitment and retention problems among the judiciary, particularly at senior levels. It found that, by joining the judiciary from private practice, some new judges took a pay cut of up to two-thirds.

While the robustness of the recruitment process rightly reflects the fact that judges must be of the highest calibre to make these life changing decisions, the government's proposal ensures that making a career change remains attractive and will prevent the slowing of cases through the courts, leaving vulnerable people and children at risk.

Today's package also includes a 2% pay award for all members of the judiciary in 2019/20. This was made following careful consideration of SSRB's overall evidence.

In addition, the government fully endorses the work that the Lord Chief Justice and Senior President of Tribunals are leading to strengthen leadership and support career development in support of the modern judiciary.

This includes taking practical steps by encouraging and supporting eligible candidates from under-represented groups to successfully apply for judicial office; supporting career progression for existing judges; growing leadership capability within the judiciary by implementing appraisals and career discussions; developing new training for leadership judges; and giving leadership judges the data and tools they need to drive performance in the system.

Notes to editors

- Last October [SSRB recommended a 32% allowance for High Court judges, 22% for Circuit judges and 8% for District Judges](#) covered by the new judicial pension scheme 2015 to combat the emerging recruitment problem
- The government's package of measures in response to SSRB is a temporary measure that aims to resolve this issue until a sustainable, pension-based solution can be implemented for the whole judiciary. The [full response can be read](#) on GOV.UK.
- There are around 1,850 salaried judges in England and Wales. About a quarter are expected to be eligible for this allowance – of whom around only 60 qualify for the higher allowance.
- The UK judiciary is respected throughout the world for its independence, integrity and quality. Foreign litigants are involved in 76% of cases in the Commercial Court, page 28, available at: www.thecityuk.com/assets/2018/Reports-PDF/86e1b87840/Legal-excellence-internationally-renowned-UK-legal-services-2018.pdf.
- Research suggests that the reputation and recognition of English judges

is one of the main reasons for litigants choosing to bring cases in London [Queen Mary University of London and White & Case, '2018 International Arbitration Survey: The Evolution of International Arbitration', \(2018\), page.9.](#)

- Legal services contribute around £25 billion to the UK economy. The sector employs well over 311,000 people in the UK, two-thirds of whom are located outside London. [Recent research](#) found that, over the past year, the commercial courts had a record-breaking year, hearing 258 cases – a 63 per cent increase from 2017/18.
- For further information please contact the Ministry of Justice newsdesk on 0203 334 3536.

Press release: Government acts urgently to protect judicial recruitment

Immediate steps to tackle emerging and unprecedented recruitment issues in the senior judiciary have today (5 June 2019) been set out by the government.