

## [Press release: Royal Navy's new offshore patrol vessel named HMS Tamar](#)

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HMS Tamar, the fourth of the Royal Navy's five cutting-edge new Offshore Patrol Vessels, has been formally named in Glasgow today.

The next-generation River Class ship will boost Britain's counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling work and provide essential support to defence operations.

The 90-metre vessel, which is equipped with a 30mm cannon and flight deck capable of accommodating a Merlin helicopter, is part of a five-strong OPV contract with BAE Systems, worth a combined £635m.

### **Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew said:**

From patrolling our coastlines and protecting UK waters, to anti-smuggling and counter terrorism operations, these ships are a key part of our Royal Navy fleet.

Today's naming marks an important milestone in HMS Tamar's programme ahead of starting sea trials and being accepted into operational service next year.

At Scotstoun today, the ship's sponsor, Lady Peach, officially named HMS Tamar by pressing a button to smash a bottle of Camel Valley 'Cornwall' Brut against the hull – in recognition of the ship being affiliated to Cornwall.

All the vessels are initially constructed in BAE System's Govan yard, before being moved to their Scotstoun site to be fitted out with their systems ahead of rigorous sea trials.

Alongside the Type 26 anti-submarine frigate programme, the Royal Navy work has filled the Glasgow shipyards' order books until the early 2030s, protecting 1,700 Scottish jobs and supporting a further 2,300 roles across

the nation through the supply chain.

**Sir Simon Bollom, chief executive for Defence, Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement agency, said:**

HMS Tamar continues the legacy of ships being built on the Clyde for the Royal Navy and will perform a vital role defending the UK's interests.

It is great news that we are celebrating this milestone alongside our partners in the Royal Navy and BAES.

We look forward to the delivery of the remaining OPVs and the further progress on the Type 26 build programme.

All the Batch 2 OPVs, named HMS Forth, HMS Medway, HMS Trent, HMS Tamar and HMS Spey, are set to be delivered to the Royal Navy by the end of 2020.

Last year it was announced by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson that the Batch 1 Offshore Patrols Vessels, HMS Tyne, HMS Mersey and HMS Severn, which currently support the Fishery Protection Squadron, would also be retained for at least the next two years.

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## **News story: 100 days to go until Armed Forces Day 2019**

Armed Forces Day 2019 is just 100 days away, with preparations underway for the national event in Salisbury and hundreds of community events across the country.

Now in its 11th year, Armed Forces Day is an opportunity for the nation to thank Servicemen and women, past and present, for their readiness to serve and protect the UK and its interests both at home and abroad.

To mark the milestone, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson met members of Armed Forces personnel at Ministry of Defence headquarters. Beginning the countdown to Saturday 29 June, he said:

I'm thrilled that the Armed Forces Day national event will take place in Salisbury this year in just 100 days' time. The urgent,

expert response of the Armed Forces to the Salisbury attack is just one reason why we're all so grateful for their service.

Armed Forces Day is an annual celebration of the very special relationship between members of our Armed Forces and the people they serve. Communities across the UK will come together to thank the Armed Forces for their dedication, expertise and excellence. I encourage everyone to get involved this year and show their support.

The national event will give the people of Salisbury and the public as a whole the chance to thank the Armed Forces for their tireless support towards the city's recovery following last year's Novichok attacks.

Salisbury has many current and historic links to the Armed Forces and is home to several Army bases and Salisbury Plain, one of the UK's biggest military training areas.

In 100 days time, hundred of communities across the UK will celebrate Armed Forces Day with street parties, parades, barbecues and tea dances.

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## **News story: FOUR UNKNOWN IRISH SOLDIERS BURIED ONE HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THEIR DEATHS IN THE GREAT WAR**

Two burial services have taken place on the Western Front honouring four unknown Irish soldiers who fell during the First World War. The first service took place at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) Messines Ridge British Cemetery near Ypres, Belgium on Tuesday 19 March with a second burial taking place earlier today (Wednesday 20 March) at Guillemont Road Cemetery, on the Somme in France.

The services, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services (DBS), were conducted by the Reverend Nathan King CF, Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Regiment. The bearer party at each service was composed of members of 1st and 2nd Battalions of The Royal Irish Regiment.

Despite extensive research, it was not possible for the JCCC to identify any of these soldiers due to the high numbers of casualties in both areas.

Rosie Barron, JCCC said:

It has been a privilege to organise these two services and to work

with The Royal Irish Regiment to ensure these Irish soldiers have had the burial they deserve. Although their identities remain unknown, they are now at rest alongside their comrades and their sacrifices will not be forgotten.

The first service (19 March) saw a soldier of The Royal Irish Rifles and an unknown soldier of an unknown regiment, laid to rest at Messines Ridge British Cemetery. The remains of these two soldiers had been discovered during work to widen a drainage ditch south west of the town of Wijtschate. Research, conducted by JCCC, shows they were most likely killed in either June 1917, during the Battle of Messines or in April 1918, during the Battle of the Lys.

Colonel Des Bergin representing the Irish Embassy and Lieutenant Colonel Ret'd Dominic Hancock of the British Embassy lay wreaths at the graveside (taken at the Wednesday 20 March service

A second burial service took place today (20 March) for a soldier of The Connaught Rangers and an unknown soldier of an unknown regiment at Guillemont Road Cemetery. The remains of these two soldiers had been uncovered during work on a wind turbine project near the village of Guillemont. They are believed to have been killed in September 1916.

The Reverend Nathan King, said:

For our services of burial, we have commended the treasured remains of soldiers lost in conflicts of the First World War. These are moving events and reaffirm the loss incurred in conflict, for those killed and the sense of loss suffered by family members. Although soldiers die, some of them unknown, their lives are celebrated here, and their souls offered to God, as held in the beliefs of the Christian faith. People are never forgotten, and their lives honoured.

Paul Bird, CWGC Recovery Officer said:

Although it has not been possible to identify these four soldiers, their service and sacrifice has not been forgotten. They have been laid to rest with respect and dignity alongside their comrades in Messines Ridge British Cemetery and Guillemont Road Cemetery. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission will proudly mark and care for their graves, together with all of those who served and fell, in perpetuity.

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# **Press release: UK Hydrographic Office works with Seychelles government to help tackle piracy in the Indian Ocean**

Bespoke Security of Navigation, Stabilisation Advice and Training (SONSAT) to support maritime security and safety of navigation