

News story: Iron Age and Roman evidence found at Corunna Barracks Ludgershall

The Ministry of Justice granted a Licence to exhume and, a team of archaeologists from leading archaeology and heritage practice Wessex Archaeology, excavated 14 graves in March of this year.

Most, if not all, of the people buried were laid to rest wearing hob-nailed shoes or boots. One individual was buried with a spindlewhorl and another with a single coin. The coin (a nummus) was minted during the reign of the Emperor Flavius Valens between 364 and 378 AD and is likely to have been issued from Trier, London or Arles.

The small section of ditch, discovered during the excavation of the graves, is approximately 800 years earlier than the Romano-British cemetery and belongs to the Middle Iron Age (approximately 500 to 400 BC). It is entirely possible that the ditch once enclosed a settlement exploiting a prominent slope close to fertile soils.

Despite years of remodelling and redevelopment of the barracks, the graves survived reasonably well. They were located in a prominent position overlooking a gently sloping, south facing valley. The post excavation analysis phase has only just begun but already, there are tales to tell.

Cut through solid chalk, the graves were aligned either north south or west east and most contained one burial each. The individuals appear to have been buried in coffins or in plank-lined graves and, like many other cemeteries of a similar date, there were few grave goods. Wessex Archaeology has been engaged in major excavations on behalf of the Army Basing Programme (ABP) for a number of years and were commissioned by Lovell Partnerships to support their work in preparation of the land for the development of new family accommodation for Army personnel relocating to Wiltshire in 2019 from bases in Germany and within the UK.

The site of the former Corunna Barracks will see the construction of 242 new army family homes under the Army Basing Programme on behalf of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The development also includes land for a new primary school and community facility, public open space, play areas, landscaping, internal roads and associated infrastructure.

Corunna Barracks had its origins in the huge construction programme to build vehicle depots to maintain and store the military vehicles that replaced horse transport. Corunna Barracks played a vital role during Operation Bolero as a Central Vehicle Depot on the arrival of United States forces in Britain preparing for the invasion of occupied Europe in 1944.

The vehicle depot was closed in 1997 and was used for a time by the Medical

Supplies Agency before its most recent use in support of major exercises on Salisbury Plain prior to deployments to Afghanistan. Project Manager Si Cleggett said:

We are in the embryonic stages of our investigations and will be in a position to offer more detail soon. The chance survival of this small group of late Romano-British burials will enhance our understanding of the area in the waning years of the Roman occupation. There are few records of Roman find-spots in and around Ludgershall but one of the Roman villas recorded at Shoddesdon Grange, Thruxton, Ragged Appleshaw and Redenham may have served as the administrative focus of large farming estates possibly including the Ludgershall area.

I often hear how mesmerised American tourists are by our incredibly rich heritage – I have recently wondered just how amazed American World War II troops drinking coffee in their canteen would have been to know their boots were only half a metre above the remains of people who lived there in the last days of Roman Britain!

Major General Richard Wardlaw OBE, the senior Army officer responsible for the Army Basing Programme, said:

The scale of the archaeology found at our ABP sites has been truly amazing, ranging from an insight into life 1,000 years before Stonehenge right up to World War 1 training tunnels and World War 2 artefacts. These latest finds shine a light into yet another era in the history of this part of Wiltshire and we are all keen to know the conclusions of Wessex Archaeology's investigations.

[News story: Defence Minister visits UK flagship of NATO maritime group in Georgia](#)

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster visited Royal Navy Type 45 destroyer HMS Duncan and other NATO warships in the Black Sea on a visit to Georgia this week. During the two-day trip (16-18 May) the Minister also discussed regional defence and security issues with Georgian government officials.

HMS Duncan is the flagship of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 which is currently on deployment to the Black Seas alongside warships from eight other

NATO nations, providing a tangible demonstration of the UK's commitment to Black Sea security and Georgia's aspirations for NATO and EU integration. The British Commander of the NATO Maritime Group, Commodore Mike Utley, and HMS Duncan's Captain, Commander Eleanor Stacks, welcomed the Minister aboard where he was given a tour of the ship and met with the Ship's Company.

Armed Forces Minister Mark Lancaster said:

Our security and defence relationship with Georgia is more vital now than ever. In the face of changing threats, it is essential that we work together with friendly nations that share our interests and values.

HMS Duncan's Commanding Officer Commander Eleanor Stacks said:

Showing the Minister for the Armed Forces around the ship and him meeting personnel embarked was a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate the work we do as part of a NATO deployment and the impact we have as within the alliance's collective defence measures.

Mark Lancaster thanked the personnel on board and acknowledged the sacrifice they make being away from their families whilst in support of the Alliance. The previous week, HMS Duncan had conducted a joint exercise with an RAF Typhoon, based in Romania as part of NATO's enhanced Air Policing mission, and two Romanian Air Force MIG21s, designed to test the reaction and agility of NATO forces in a crisis scenario.

In addition to discussing regional defence and security issues with officials from the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, the visit provided an opportunity for the Minister to thank the Georgian Government and people for their support following the poisoning of the Skripals in Salisbury in March. Georgia was among 28 nations to expel Russian diplomats following the incident, standing shoulder to shoulder with the international community's condemnation of the horrific attack.

[News story: DIO puts Commercial Strategy into action with Clyde Construction Framework](#)

The Clyde Commercial Framework supports the £1.3 billion Clyde programme to ensure that personnel responsible for delivering the UK's continuous at sea

nuclear deterrent are able to live work and train in safe, state of the art facilities.

The companies selected for the framework are VolkerStevin, Kier Graham Defence and Morgan Sindall. They will advise and deliver cost effective construction services and other infrastructure solutions to enable Her Majesty's Naval Base Clyde to continue to endure in its new role as the Royal Navy's Single Integrated Operating Base.

DIO, along with support from a team of procurement specialists including Mott Macdonald and Jacobs, adopted an innovative process to choose the successful suppliers.

In the past teams working on Clyde projects had tried various methods of contracting suppliers with varying degrees of success. All companies which bid for work on the Clyde programme could meet the core construction requirements of the contract, but through the new process the team was looking for an approach that could help them select not only a good construction company but a good partner.

Selection focused primarily on the company's relationship with the Clyde team and its ability to work collaboratively. This new approach was put to potential bidders at a range of industry days and all were supportive of this new way of working.

This unique way of choosing suppliers, having established they all had the required technical capability, focused on evaluating their behaviours and on how well they work together with teams at the Clyde.

The Clyde team worked with behavioural experts to set out the criteria for successful companies. This team of experts then observed, scored and helped to evaluate the behaviours of each company as they took part in a series of practical exercises with members of the Clyde project teams. This included a series of interviews and workshops where companies worked together with the Clyde team to develop objectives, discuss how they would approach the work and how they would go about implementing their plans.

Ian Arbuckle, DIO Assistant Head of Commercial Services, said:

We are incredibly pleased to launch our new framework for the Clyde. We have successfully selected three reputable industry partners who have demonstrated a commitment to delivering better value for Defence.

The successful Framework contractors also commented on the new procurement process that it

Felt a refreshing way to do business, huge leap forward from a procurement perspective, and an enjoyable experience which they will learn a lot from.

This innovative approach supports the Modernising Defence Programme and ensures our Armed Forces capabilities and affordability are met. The long-term investment and collaborative approach will provide sustainable social and economic benefits for the local area.

Commodore Mark Gayfer, Naval Base Commander Clyde, said:

I am delighted that today we have put in place the framework to deliver the right infrastructure to ensure that we are able to continue to provide high quality support to our submarines and also our sailors and their families for the foreseeable future.

[DIO's Commercial Strategy](#) was launched in 2017 and sets out our vision for future ways of working with suppliers in the soft and hard facilities management, construction and property advisory sectors.

Central to the strategy is the importance of a broad and more diverse supply base which increases value back to the taxpayer by generating wider competition. DIO aims to increase supplier numbers and create a genuinely competitive supply base which offers greater opportunities to Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) as well as larger suppliers.

The [DIO Commercial Strategy](#) direction for future DIO Procurement Plans.

[DIO website](#)

Twitter: @mod_dio

Read [DIO's blog](#)

[News story: Defence Minister launches new military 'FireDragon' fuel production line](#)

FireDragon, produced by 164-year-old Cardiff-based survival equipment manufacturers BCB International Ltd, is a pioneering new fuel used by British troops in-the-field to heat their combat rations, where regular catering facilities does not exist. Almost eight million of the tablets have now been supplied to the British Army.

Unlike alternative fuel tablets, FireDragon gives off no potentially harmful noxious fumes. It burns cleanly, is non-toxic and is made from sustainable natural ingredients.

The MOD's contract with the Welsh manufacturer has an estimated value of £3.6 million, with the company supplying stoves and fuels to service personnel. The deal reinforces the department's industrial commitment to companies around the UK, as well as the environment.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

From fighter jets to fuel rations, it is essential that our troops have the best kit possible. FireDragon sees our armed forces benefit from a cleaner, safer and more sustainable fuel source.

BCB International has 164 years of industry experience in survival equipment, and this new production line will ensure the company can meet growing demand and continue to expand its workforce in the years ahead.

UK Government in Wales Minister Stuart Andrew said:

For decades, BCB International has been at the forefront of pioneering new innovative products that safeguard lives in extreme conditions around the world. Whether half way up a mountain, in the middle of the desert, deep in the jungle or in rough seas, their commitment to innovation can often mean the difference between life and death.

And this commitment continues to its workforce and to its operations in Wales. The opening of this new production line is a vote of confidence in the skills and expertise of its workforce and in the confidence the company has for continued growth in the future.

Fifteen new jobs will be created as a result of the £750,000 production line. FireDragon is a further example of the relationship between defence and Wales, where the MOD spends £300 for every member of the population, £20 more per person than last year. The work being done in Wales includes the UK's biggest single order for an armoured vehicle in 30 years: the £4.5bn Ajax vehicles being built at General Dynamics' Merthyr Tydfil factory.

In tribute to Wales and its capital city, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson recently named one of eight brand new, cutting-edge, anti-submarine warfare frigates, HMS Cardiff. She will go on to provide advanced protection for the likes of the UK's nuclear deterrent and Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, and offer an unrivalled anti-submarine warfare capability.

BCB International's Managing Director, Andrew Howell, said:

We are delighted to welcome the Minister to our FireDragon fuel

facility. FireDragon is a safer and cleaner alternative. It is made from sustainable natural ingredients, it is non-toxic, burns cleanly, can be ignited even when wet and if necessary can be used as a hand cleanser.

The British Army were the first military to have the vision and make the switch to FireDragon. This move has encouraged other Armies to consider FireDragon as a fuel for the future.

Note to editors:

- BCB International Ltd (BCB) is contracted to supply Operational Ration Heaters (ORH) – consisting of stoves and associated fuel – to the UK Armed Forces. ORH is used to boil water for preparing hot drinks and heating pouched meals within the Operational Ration Packs (ORP).
- The fuel is supplied with a small lightweight cooker which can be packed with 3 FireDragon fuel blocks.
- The contract is a legacy MOD contract which is now managed by Team Leidos as part of the Logistics Commodities and Services (Transformation) contract.
- The four year ORH contract was awarded on 6 October 2015 and has an estimated value of £3.6 million.

For more information contact the MOD News Desk on 0207 218 7907 or the Defence Equipment & Support Press Office on 01179130537.

[News story: Britain and France Sign Agreement for Test Pilot Exchange](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and French Minister of the Armed Forces Mme Florence Parly today (17 May) held the first Defence Ministerial Council since the announcement of a permanent and regular forum for the discussion of UK-France defence cooperation in January 2018. During the meeting a bespoke technical arrangement which will oversee the exchange of test pilots between the two nations was signed.

The agreement formalises an exchange enabling French pilots to train at the UK Empire Test Pilots' School based at MOD Boscombe Down, and British pilots to train at the French Test Pilots' School, Ecole du Personnel Navigant d'Essais et de Reception based on the Istres Le Tube Airbase. This reciprocal exchange of personnel ensures that the skills of military flight test, analysis and capability enhancement are shared between the Armed Forces of UK and France, further strengthening the UK's relationship with France and building on the strong partnership between our armed forces.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

France is one of our most important allies and this agreement symbolises the importance of deep defence and security relationships. By participating in this exchange programme, we will strengthen understanding between our personnel.

We are the only two European powers willing and able to deploy and sustain significant military power and we will continue to work towards a special partnership for the future.

The UK and France have also successfully carried out the second development firing of the Sea Venom missile which will equip the Royal Navy and French Navy helicopters to prosecute a wide range of surface threats, from fast inshore attack craft up to corvette-sized vessels, including in coastal environments. Sea Venom has both 'fire and forget' mode as well as a 'man in the loop' capability, which allows full missile control until target impact.

French and British Armed Forces operate alongside each other in NATO, including as part of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Estonia. The UK and France have been fighting Daesh together in Iraq and Syria, and last month launched coordinated strikes against Syrian regime chemical weapons stocks. The UK and French navies work together around the globe to uphold freedom of navigation and the laws of the sea, with UK personnel currently taking part in France's Jeanne d'Arc naval deployment to the Asia-Pacific region, and are building on work last year to increase coordination of hurricane relief efforts in the Caribbean.

We are also developing cutting-edge defence capability projects together and deepening links across our Armed Forces, vital actions as both the UK's National Security Capability Review and last year's French Strategic Review of Defence and National Security described a world of rising instability and unpredictability – which is why we are conducting the Modernising Defence Programme to make sure we are configured to address the intensifying and complex threats that we and our allies now face.