

News story: MOD launches biggest ever mental health awareness week with new confidential support for personnel on operations

This comes as the MOD announces a series of new joint projects with leading mental health charity Samaritans.

The initiatives, backed by £3.5 million in LIBOR funding, will build on the charity's digital technology to offer military personnel at home and on operations abroad access to confidential support. Online and face to face training in listening skills will also be offered to serving personnel and families, in order to give them confidence and expertise in encouraging others to not suffer in silence.

As part of the partnership with Samaritans, a confidential webchat service is being developed allowing military personnel, who often live in shared living quarters, particularly when serving on operations abroad, the ability to talk in confidence with a trained staff. Pocket guides are also being produced which will provide information and emotional support for when people are in isolated locations, particularly on operations.

Samaritan volunteers with military experience will also be trained in how to address mental health issues in a military environment, based on cutting-edge research from King's College London.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are absolutely committed to making sure that no one in our military suffers in silence.

I've stepped up our support for mental health in the Armed Forces, with an extra £2 million of funding a year and a new 24-hour mental health hotline.

I'm delighted to announce that personnel serving abroad will be able to access a new confidential system to help them in their time of need.

A range of events and activities will take place across the military and the MOD to mark Mental Health Awareness Week.

Civilian and military teams are being encouraged to use the week to hold conversations on mental health issues. Managers, using the recently launched Mental Health Guide for Managers, will also outline the support which is available across the MOD, including the recently launched Combat Stress 24-

hour mental health hotline. Discussions on stress and resilience will be held on the MOD's internal Defence Blog, the Land Warfare Centre will hold a wellbeing symposium and Joint Forces Command will also promote an online self-help programme available to personnel.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

We have long recognised the importance of treating the physical effects of battle but any invisible scars experienced by our brave service personnel were given less attention.

We are determined to change this and encourage a more open culture in talking about mental health. With our comprehensive mental health and wellbeing strategy, 20 specialist military mental health sites around the country, a 24/7 helpline and a partnership with the Royal Foundation, we are now far better placed to provide the comprehensive support our armed forces deserve.

As we mark Mental Health Awareness Week, I want everyone in the military to adopt the mindset that mental wellbeing matters just as much as physical health.

The Defence Secretary in February increased funding for Armed Forces mental health services to £220 million over the next decade and launched the new 24/7 Military Mental Health Helpline, in conjunction with Combat Stress. The new number – 0800 323 4444 – has already received over 350 calls.

The MOD currently has a network of 20 'hub and spoke' mental health centres, comprising of 11 hubs and a further nine teams. Regular visiting clinics are also held at other military centres across the country.

Last year the MOD launched its Defence People Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy focusing on preventative measures to protect our personnel. MOD also partnered with the Royal Foundation, a charity set up by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry, to improve training and education alongside the strategy to promote mental fitness.

There are a range of services provided by partners working with MOD and through the Armed Forces Covenant, including the NHS, other Government departments and charities, which serving personnel, veterans, and their families can access.

[News story: Defence Secretary](#)

announces massive £2.5bn investment in UK nuclear submarines

Updated: Attached photos from Ministerial visits

- £1.5 billion will go on building the Royal Navy's seventh Astute hunter-killer submarine
- the Defence Secretary named that new attack boat Agincourt
- another £960m will go to the second phase of construction for the UK's four nuclear-armed Dreadnought submarines
- the work will sustain around 8,000 jobs in BAE Systems' Submarine business
- the Defence Secretary also officially opened a new £100 million sub-construction building.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson today announced the Ministry of Defence is investing a massive £2.5 billion in boosting Britain's submarine building projects.

Speaking at BAE Systems' shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria, the home of British submarine construction, he announced £960 million worth of contracts have been signed to ramp up the next phase of construction for the UK's four nuclear-armed Dreadnought submarines.

He also announced that the Ministry of Defence has signed a £1.5 billion contract to build a seventh Astute hunter-killer submarine for the Royal Navy, before revealing that the attack boat will be called Agincourt. It will be the sixth vessel in the Royal Navy to be named after the Battle of Agincourt of 1415.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This multi-billion-pound investment in our nuclear submarines shows our unwavering commitment to keeping the UK safe and secure from intensifying threats. Agincourt will complete the Royal Navy's seven-strong fleet of hunter-killer attack subs, the most powerful to ever enter British service, whilst our nuclear deterrent is the ultimate defence against the most extreme dangers we could possibly face.

Not only is this a massive boost for our armed forces, but it's huge for Barrow, the heart of sub-building in this country. Today's news supports 8,000 BAE Systems' submarine jobs, as well as thousands more in the supply chain, protecting prosperity and providing opportunity right across the country.



Britain's third £1 billion Astute Class nuclear submarine, HMS Artful. Crown copyright.

The multi-billion pound announcements will help sustain around 8,000 jobs in BAE Systems' submarine business, as well as thousands more across the UK submarine supply chain.

The Defence Secretary made the announcements during a ceremony, in which also opened a new £100 million submarine construction building in the Cumbria factory. In front of a gathered workforce of employees and apprentices, he unveiled a plaque to mark the opening of the state-of-the-art Central Yard Facility building which, at 26,700 metres squared, is equivalent in size to 21 Olympic-sized swimming pools and, at 45 metres high, is as tall as ten double-decker buses.

It will be used to outfit and test each section of the new Dreadnought submarines. The Dreadnought Submarine Programme will now move into its second phase. This will continue the design and build of the first Dreadnought submarine and commence the build of the second, including furthering the design and manufacture of the nuclear propulsion power plant. This phase has commenced with contracts signed for £900 million and £60 million with BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce respectively.



Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson visits BAE Systems, Barrow-in-Furness.
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Elsewhere, Defence Minister Guto Bebb will be in Derby today – with the Rolls-Royce contract seeing over 700 jobs sustained at their factory in the city.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

The Dreadnought Programme is a true national endeavour, furthering our world-class nuclear capability. Today's announcement includes a £60m contract for Rolls-Royce, supporting over 700 jobs here in Derby as the factory continues to make the reactors that will power our state-of-the-art Dreadnought subs into the 2060s. I'd like to thank everyone at Rolls-Royce in Derby for their contribution to maintaining our Continuous at Sea Deterrent, protecting us against the most serious threats to our way of life, every hour of every day.

The Submarine Delivery Agency, which was established last month, will project manage the construction of future Royal Navy submarines, and support those in-service, working with Navy Command and the newly established Defence Nuclear Organisation.



Guto Bebb MP Minister for Defence Procurement meeting with Steve Dearden President – Submarines (right) during a visit to Rolls-Royce Raynesway Derby. Crown Copyright.

Chief Executive Officer of the Submarine Delivery Agency, Ian Booth said:

The incredibly complex Astute and Dreadnought programmes maximise the tremendously skilled and experienced workforce we have across the UK submarine business.

Both programmes require commitment and close collaboration with our industrial partners across the supply chain and in the newly formed Dreadnought Alliance, which will deliver a step change in how we will work together to efficiently and effectively deliver nuclear submarines for the Royal Navy.

Cliff Robson, BAE Systems Submarines Managing Director, said:

Securing this latest funding for our submarines programmes is excellent news for BAE Systems and the 8,700 employees in our Submarines business, as well as our local community in Barrow and the thousands of people across our UK supply chain who help deliver these nationally important programmes for the Royal Navy.

We continue to make progress on these highly complex and technical programmes and today's announcements will allow us to move forward

with greater certainty and stability.

Steve Dearden, President-Submarines for Rolls-Royce said:

The Dreadnought class programme is a vital, national endeavour and we are immensely proud of the role that we play as custodian of the naval nuclear propulsion capability in the UK. Dreadnought will be powered by the next generation Naval Pressurised Water Reactor technology, which will be simpler, require 30% less maintenance and have reduced in-service costs. Today's delivery phase II announcement allows us to move from design through to manufacture and the delivery of major components that are essential for the submarine build timeline.

[News story: Operational Honours and Awards List May 2018](#)

A total of 44 members of the Armed Forces and one civilian have been named in the latest Operational Honours and Awards List.

The full list, which recognises and honours service on operations is below.

Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)

Commodore William Jonathan WARRENDER Royal Navy

Air Vice-Marshal John Jackson STRINGER Royal Air Force

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Lieutenant Colonel Jason AINLEY, Corps of Royal Engineers

Wing Commander Kathryn Elizabeth FERRIS, Royal Air Force

Wing Commander Mark David LORRIMAN-HUGHES, Royal Air Force

Wing Commander Matthew James PETERSON, Royal Air Force

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Captain Patrick HALFORD, Royal Marines

Colour Sergeant Mark ROUGHSEGE, Royal Marines

Major James David BROWN, Grenadier Guards

Squadron Leader Craig Robert LEDIEU, Royal Air Force

Military Cross (MC)

Corporal Hugo WILTON, Royal Marines

Colour Sergeant Daniel Mark GARRATT, Parachute Regiment

Queen's Gallantry Medal (QGM)

Air Engineering Technician (Mechanical) Stuart Maurice ROGERS, Royal Navy

Mention in Despatches

Captain Thomas James LIMB, Royal Marines

Acting Lance Corporal Robert Patrick NEILL, Royal Marines

Lance Corporal Nathan William FLETCHER, The Parachute Regiment

Sergeant Andrew MATHER, The Royal Irish Regiment

Lance Corporal Charles Anthony Dexter TAYLOR, The Parachute Regiment

Squadron Leader Matthew Frederick AXCELL, Royal Air Force

Flight Lieutenant Helena BULLIVANT, Royal Air Force

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Sergeant Christopher SAMUEL, Royal Marines

Sergeant Alistair James SEDDON, Royal Marines

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Colour Sergeant Omar ACID, Royal Marines

Colonel Daniel BLANCHFORD OBE

Petty Officer Warfare Specialist (Electronic Warfare) James HICK, Royal Navy

Sergeant Paul RICHARDS, Royal Marines

Corporal Aleksandr David STOVELL, Royal Marines

Colour Sergeant Michael WAKER, Royal Marines

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Philip Matthew BIRCH, The Royal Anglian Regiment

Major Victoria Anne BULLEID, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps

Major Noel Clark CLAYDON-SWALES, The Light Dragoons

Major Fiona Allison DANGERFIELD, The Royal Logistic Corps

Colonel Andrew Bernard JACKSON

Warrant Officer Class 2 Peter KEOGH MC, The Royal Irish Regiment

Major Clodia Nicolette O'NEILL, Corps of Royal Engineers

Acting Sergeant Thomas Andrew STOKES, Intelligence Corps

Lance Corporal Liam Derek STOTT, Royal Army Medical Corps

Warrant Officer Class 2 Luke TOWNSIN, Corps of Royal Engineers

Staff Sergeant Mark Robert BRODRICK, Royal Air Force

Flight Lieutenant Gregory Stuart MOULD, Royal Air Force

Mrs Lisa GARDNER, Civil Servant

NON-OPERATIONAL GALLANTRY

Air Force Cross (AFC)

Squadron Leader Ian Samuel DORNAN, Royal Air Force

Flight Lieutenant Ben WALLIS, Royal Air Force

Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCBA)

Petty Officer (Diver) Toby Stuart JONES, Royal Navy

Acting Flight Sergeant Benjamin Martin HOWARTH, Royal Air Force

Press release: 50 Days to go until the tenth Armed Forces Day

Saturday June 30 will see hundreds of events held to mark the tenth version of the day, including parades and ceremonies right across the country. Men and women from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force, both regulars and reserves, will be recognised alongside the wider defence family including cadets and veterans.

The national event will take place in Llandudno, North Wales and excitement is building ahead of the biggest Armed Forces Day ever, with a record number

of flypasts, displays and exhibitions planned.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Armed Forces Day is a valuable opportunity to honour our troops who work so hard to keep us safe.

Our servicemen and women are on hand every hour of every day to protect us from the threats we face and I encourage people across the UK to come together and salute them for their tireless commitment.

Since last year's event in Liverpool the Armed Forces have had a busy year in the UK and around the world. From troops helping those struggling in heavy snowfall to the emergency assistance provided in the aftermath of the Salisbury attack. To further afield in Iraq and Syria where our Armed Forces continued to take the fight to Daesh, helping to drive the terrorists back and give ordinary people in those countries the chance to rebuild their lives.

Around the world our troops have worked day and night, from reassuring NATO allies in Europe to deploying over 2000 personnel to the Caribbean in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

The UK Armed Forces are currently involved in over 20 operations in more than 25 countries, from Estonia to Iraq. But many of those back at home will be in attendance at events across the country.

Also present will be many veterans that make-up the estimated 2.56 million Armed Forces veteran community living in the UK. Young Cadets will be present too; together the Sea, Army, and Air cadets have almost 100,000 members.

On the 30 June, a parade of around 1,000 serving personnel, veterans, cadets and marching bands will step off from the Llandudno War Memorial at 11am to signal the start of the Armed Forces Day celebrations.

[News story: An unknown British World War 1 sailor's grave identified and rededicated a century after his death](#)

A dignified service of rededication was held for Petty Officer (PO) Charles McDonald yesterday, Thursday 10 May 2018, at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Oostende New British Cemetery in Belgium, exactly 100 years after his death. PO McDonald, originally from Leith in Edinburgh, was

formerly buried as an unknown British sailor.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, was conducted by the Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton, Deputy Chaplain of the Fleet, Royal Navy.



David Slade kneels beside the newly marked headstone for PO McDonald, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

In May 1918, Charles McDonald was on loan to HMS Vindictive when it took part in the second Ostend raid, which was the second failed attempt to block the channels leading to the port. A successful blockade of these bases would force German submarines to operate out of more distant ports, such as Wilhelmshaven, on the German coast. This would expose them for longer to Allied countermeasures and reduce the time they could spend raiding.

In anticipation of a raid, the Germans had removed the navigation buoys and without them the Vindictive had difficulty finding the narrow channel into the harbour in heavy fog. When she did discover the entrance, a mechanical fault prevented her from turning fully broadside to block access; a German shell fired from a gun battery on shore hit the bridge, killing the commander and wounding or killing most of the bridge crew.

PO McDonald was climbing the stokehold ladder at the time, a shipmate confirmed that the ladder was shot away by the blast and Charles was never seen again. He was buried as an unknown British stoker, who died on 10 May 1918 whilst serving on HMS Vindictive.



A bugler plays during the rededication service for P0 McDonald, Crown
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More recently, a historian with a firm interest in HMS Vindictive submitted clear and convincing evidence to the JCCC proving that the individual buried in Oostende new communal cemetery was Charles McDonald.

Louise Dorr, JCCC said:

It is very poignant to be here today on the 100th anniversary of Charles's death to be able to give him back his name and rededicate his grave to him.



Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton is joined by Navy representatives by PO McDonald's new headstone, Crown Copyright, All rights reserved

Reverend (Professor) Scott J S Shackleton said:

PO Charles McDonald was clearly a sailor's sailor having joined the Royal Navy in 1898 at the tender age of 18 years. He came from Leith, the port of Edinburgh and although we know little about him it is likely that the sea would in some way have been in his blood. The raid on Oostende on 9 and 10 May 1918 was a bold and brave assault which would have inevitably been costly in terms of lives. It is a privilege to lead a service today to commemorate PO McDonald as a fellow matelot and Scot. May his soul rest in peace and rise in glory and may we never forget the sacrifice of the few for the many.

David Avery of the CWGC said:

On the centenary of his death, we are privileged to be able to re-dedicate the grave of Petty Officer McDonald in the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's plot in Oostende new communal cemetery. The CWGC are pleased that we are now able to pay tribute to this courageous sailor who had served his country for 20 years by marking his resting place with a headstone bearing his name.