

News story: Secretary of State for Defence visits DECA Sealand

DECA Chief Executive Geraint Spearing and members of the Executive Management Board and Trades Unions greeted the Secretary of State for Defence on his arrival before a tour of the facility. The visit provided the opportunity for the Secretary of State to meet some of DECA's team of world-class technicians and experience first-hand DECA's electronics and components capabilities that were vital to securing the global F35 avionic component Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul and Upgrade assignment in November last year. This included demonstrations by the DECA team of our capabilities on in-service equipment across Air, Land and Maritime environments including some hands on experience in the DECA Capability Development Area.

The Secretary of State engaged with staff as he made his way around the Avionics Repair Facility, keen to see up close the precision work and ask questions on the activities on the shop floor including, Tornado Partnered Support, Typhoon fibre-optic cable repair work, secure communications and cryptographic activity that DECA staff from Sealand and deployed teams carried out on HMS Queen Elizabeth and DECA capabilities at our second site at Stafford.

Ian Ford, Typhoon Account Manager also provided an overview of DECA's repair-not-replace capabilities for Typhoon components that has identified potential cost avoidance savings of over £30M that are being actively taken forward with Industry partners. Secretary of State also received an overview of DECA's Test Solution and Software Development activities and was particularly interested in the recent obsolescence repair work and extremely positive customer feedback on urgent operational requirements for HMS Ocean's Engine Safety System and to Sentinel Tactical Display Units.

Following a tour of the Team UK, F-35 Campaign Room, where Secretary of State was given an overview of the program and was introduced to members of the joint team (DECA, BAE Systems and Northrop Grumman), the Secretary of State addressed DECA staff in the dedicated facility that will house the global F-35 component hub saying,

I am delighted to be here today because I did want to see this facility close up and see the support you are giving to our armed forces. What you are doing here is part of helping to keep this country safe.

I have also seen something else here today. I have seen the repairs you have been doing to HMS Ocean and I hope those of you who worked on that project can take real credit and pride.

I was scheduled to come here earlier this year to congratulate you on winning the European repair hub for the F35 and also, of course,

winning the case to be a global support provider. That was a partnership effort which I know many were involved in pulling together to make sure that Britain won that contract and I look forward to coming back here when some of this space is being used to service that contract.

Now that isn't the end of the story, that contract itself opens up huge opportunities for us here in Britain. It is not properly understood that the F35 programme is the biggest fighter aircraft programme in history. Eventually we will see some three thousand aircraft in service with over a dozen different air forces.

And you are part of that and your bid to win that contract opens up future opportunities for even more F35 work. You are not only playing a critical part in our nation's defence, you are actually doing something rather different, you are advertising Britain's skills, British technology and British brainpower. You are advertising that to the rest of the world, so thank you.