

Personnel honoured for outstanding acts in Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List

Military personnel from across the three services have been recognised for outstanding bravery, commitment, and commendable service in the latest Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List, published today.

Recipients have all shown outstanding courage and dedication while on operations, with numerous recipients recognised for their exceptional contribution to the evacuation of Afghan and British nationals from Afghanistan during Operation Pitting.

Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said:

I would like to congratulate the inspiring Servicemen and women who have been recognised in the Armed Forces Operational Honours and Awards List. The awards highlight the skill and bravery of Service personnel across a breadth of challenges at home and abroad.

Operation Pitting was the largest British evacuation since WWII thanks to our brave personnel, while those working on the Carrier Strike Group have made a vital contribution to our global security. Back home, our people helped save lives even when off duty – demonstrating unrivalled commitment to the service of their country.

Operation Pitting case studies

For his role as Commander Joint Force Operations, Brigadier Daniel Blanchford Royal Marines has been awarded the Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE). With a global remit to deliver the UK's extreme high readiness crisis response headquarters, he led highly effective responses to the repatriation of UK nationals from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic and the disaster relief response to the explosion in Beirut Port. When the Taliban's assault on Afghanistan took place, he generated, deployed, and commanded a force of more than 1,000 military, diplomats, civil servants, and UK Border Force personnel to deliver Operation Pitting.

Brigadier Daniel Blanchford said:

It is an honour to have been recognised in the Ops list, but this is really a story about the incredible and humbling work from all the soldiers, sailors, aircrew, RAF Police and movements team whose selfless and compassionate commitment around the clock in very

difficult conditions enabled us to evacuate 15,000 vulnerable Afghans.

Wing Commander Kevin Harry Thomas Latchman RAF has been awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) after demonstrating exceptional leadership and gallantry in the face of imminent danger during Operation Pitting. Following a suicide bomb explosion at Kabul airport, his crew loaded distraught passengers into the cargo hold. As he commenced take-off, a convoy of three vehicles entered the runway approximately 1,000 feet in front. With no time to stop, he successfully navigated the aircraft to clear the vehicles, which fled below the wing by only 10 feet. His superior airmanship saved the lives of 377 people onboard the aircraft.

Wing Commander Kevin Latchman said:

Operation Pitting was an incredible experience for all who took part, and I was very proud of my Squadron for their courage and professionalism in such a dynamic environment. For me, this was the most significant occurrence in my career and I am honoured to receive recognition.

Private Ahmed Fahim of the 3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment has received a Mention in Despatches (MID) for his unflinching courage and compassion working for much of the time as the sole military interpreter during Operation Pitting. Performing duties which far exceeded his rank, he worked tirelessly to calm distressed Afghans and reassure nervous Taliban fighters now in control of security in Kabul. In the aftermath of a suicide attack which killed over 175 people, he rushed into the desperate crowd to rescue a severely wounded baby, enabling her to receive medical care just in time to save her life.

Private Ahmed Fahim said:

I am so proud that I saved some lives the day the IED went off near the Abbey Gate, Kabul Airport. I remember pulling out the injured and the dead bodies and someone handed me a small baby from the crowd. I started running towards the doctor, looking at the baby while running and I did not stop running until I reached the medics. A few hours later I was told by the doctor that the baby survived and that was the greatest happy news for me that day.

Lieutenant Colonel Chloe O'Brien of the Royal Logistics Corps, who played a pivotal role in the preparation of the 1,000-strong Joint Task Force during Operation Pitting, has been awarded the Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS). Working to continuously evolving requirements, her leadership of logistic support to humanitarian efforts in hot, unsanitary conditions was instrumental in the success of the operation and undoubtedly saved lives,

providing critical care for vulnerable Afghans.

Lieutenant Colonel Chloe O'Brien said:

It was a challenging deployment which was truly an immense team effort of which I am very proud to have been a part of.

Also receiving a QCVS is Corporal Jamie Lee Found of the 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment for his leadership in protecting the Evacuee Handling Centre and managing the crowds seeking to board evacuation flights from Kabul Airport last August. For hours he provided hands-on management of his personnel, directing his team to form a shield wall. He worked tirelessly in the face of extreme adversity, dealing with multiple casualties and fatalities caused by the crush of those trying to flee.

Corporal Jamie Lee Found said:

It was an operation we've not really seen before – not the norm we would train for. We've done public order training to prepare us for certain situations but for the humanitarian side of it, I don't think there's any way you can train for that.

Other case studies

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Dennis Royal Navy has been awarded the QCVS for outstanding performance in protecting the health of nearly 4,000 Service personnel serving on the Carrier Strike Group. Effectively liaising with more than 40 countries to coordinate COVID-19 policies, he personally developed and managed the successful vaccination programme across the Strike Group that resulted in every individual being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Lieutenant Commander Andrew Dennis said:

It was a complete surprise to receive an award, and a great feeling to be recognised for my work with the CSG. Getting nine ships to sea safely from a COVID-19 perspective was really challenging. Policies had to be agile and working across Government was essential to creating a safe environment enabling us to successfully deploy.

The full Armed Forces Operational Awards List can be found on gov.uk [here](#)