

[News story: Your chance to question Ministry of Defence medals and records experts at Family History Shows](#)

The MOD Medals and Records Offices, part of DBS are to attend the Family History Show events at York on 23 June and Sandown on 22 September, see <https://thefamilyhistoryshow.com/>. The shows are attended by family historians, societies and genealogical organisations. The MOD stand, supported by TNT UK Ltd, will be staffed by a DBS team, with colleagues from the Air Historical Branch and TNT Navy Record Search Service.

They will offer:

Live post 1921 service record search facility.

The MOD continues to hold all service records where the individual had a discharge date of post 1921, these total around 10 million records, with about 500,000 having seen service in World War 1. Using a sophisticated database that supports the MOD's main archive, an assisted search facility will be offered that will in many cases enable confirmation of whether or not the MOD holds a record for an individual. This information can then be used to apply for the record using the forms on Gov.uk. To assist the search, some or all of the following information is required: surname, initials, date of birth and service number.

World War 2 RAF casualty packs search facility.

RAF casualty packs from World War 2 are being transferred from the MOD to The National Archives. Using the MOD's archive and cataloguing database, an assisted search facility will enable identification of the pack that may relate to an individual. This information can then be used to either access the pack at The National Archives, or, for those yet to be transferred, apply for details from the pack using the forms on Gov.uk. To assist the search, the following information is required: the name of the individual(s), date of incident and type of aircraft.

Interpretation of service records

If you already have a service record, but are unsure what it says or how to interpret it, then DBS experts will be on hand to assist you.

- John Reynolds from the MOD's record office, a keen army historian and serving reserves officer, John has conducted battlefield tours across the world
- Stuart Hadaway from the Air Historical Branch, Stuart has previously worked at the RAF Museum, Hendon, and is the author of military books, including "Missing believed killed: casualty policy and the missing research and enquiry service 1939 – 1952"

- Sue Pass, team leader of TNT's navy search service who respond to more than 6000 enquiries a year

The DBS team look forward to seeing you!

[News story: UK aid package to create jobs and improve infrastructure in Lebanon](#)

A package of UK aid support to Lebanon will create jobs for local people and Syrian refugees and improve infrastructure to boost economic development, Middle East Minister Alistair Burt announced today (6 April 2018).

During the CEDRE conference (Conférence Economique pour le Développement, par les Réformes et avec les Entreprises) being held in Paris, he called on other donors to follow the UK's lead and step up their international support to help the Government of Lebanon deliver their plans for economic growth and improved support for businesses.

The UK's support will boost stability in Lebanon, which is on frontline of the multiple crises in the Middle East, and help Lebanon continue to host 1.5 million Syrian refugees in the eighth year of the Syria crisis.

Speaking in Paris, on the initiation of President Emmanuel Macron, Minister Burt announced that the UK will:

- provide grants to create jobs and deliver infrastructure projects in Lebanon;
- deliver a new programme to help small businesses grow and hire more Lebanese and Syrian employees to give people hope for the future;
- deliver a programme to boost investment in local infrastructure to improve the delivery of services.

He said:

“The UK cares deeply about the stability and future prosperity of Lebanon. We recognise the enormity of the challenges faced in the region and the extraordinary strength and resilience of Lebanon, not just in weathering these challenges but in providing, at no small cost, shelter, education, an opportunities to work for so many who have fled appalling violence, fear and destruction.

But today is not solely about the Syria crisis, and this is not a crisis conference. It is something altogether more hopeful – and in some ways at

least – more challenging. It is about turning a corner, reinvigorating growth in the economy, and unlocking the immense potential and possibility of the Lebanese people to help the country stand on its own two feet.

The path ahead will not be easy. But the benefits are clear. And the UK – as a strong supporter of Lebanon – remains committed to standing shoulder to shoulder with Lebanon now and into the future.”

Further information

- Today’s £40 million package of support is a new allocation from the UK’s response to the Syria crisis. The UK is a leading donor in the humanitarian response. To date we have committed over £2.46 billion in humanitarian funding to the region.
- It includes a £15m programme in partnership with the Lebanese Government to support to small businesses; £15m for the Lebanon Host Community Support Programme delivered through UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs to invest in local infrastructure; and £10 million worth of grant financing to create jobs and deliver infrastructure projects.
- You can find more information on the UK’s humanitarian response to the Syria crisis [here](#)

[Press release: FCO statement on the human rights trial in Vietnam](#)

The British Government is deeply concerned by the conviction in Vietnam of six members of the Brotherhood for Democracy for attempting to overthrow the regime and the harsh sentencing of 66 years in prison.

We do not believe that the peaceful expression of views on Vietnam’s own political system, or promotion of basic and universal human rights, should constitute a criminal offence. Freedom of expression and association are enshrined within both Vietnam’s own 2013 constitution and the international commitments to which Vietnam is a party.

[News story: Cash boost for families as](#)

tax cuts come into effect today

People across the UK will see a welcome boost to their finances today, thanks to further cuts to income tax.

Hundreds of thousands of graduates will also save up to £360 a year from the raising of the student loan repayment threshold which comes into effect today.

These are just two of several changes this month to help people earn more and keep more of what they earn, including increases to the National Living Wage and State Pension, and freezes to fuel and beer duties.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

From today, millions of people will have more pounds in their pocket and keep more of their hard-earned wages.

By increasing the National Living Wage, cutting income tax, and freezing fuel duty for the eighth year running, we are boosting living standards for millions of people this April, giving them more choice over how to use their pay packet and building an economy that works for everyone.

Today's changes to the personal allowance will mean that basic rate taxpayers will pay £1,075 less than they did in 2010-11 from 6th April 2018.

Since 2010 the government has cut income tax for over 30 million people, prevented half a million taxpayers from being dragged into the higher rate of tax, and taken 4 million of the lowest paid out of tax altogether.

Other tax changes coming into force this month will also help families with the cost of living.

Through the National Living Wage, full-time workers will now earn £2,000 more than they did when it was introduced in 2016 – a wage boost of £600 a year.

We've also increased the threshold at which people begin to pay back their student loan to £25,000. This figure will continue to rise in line with changes to average earnings, to help those starting out in their careers.

Pensioners will earn an extra £180 through the State Pension than they did last year.

For the eighth year in a row, the average car driver will also benefit from the government's fuel duty freeze, saving £160 a year.

And a pint of beer will be 12p cheaper than it would have been – after cuts and freezes made to duty since 2013.

And it's not just families who will benefit.

Britain's pubs will get a £1,000 discount on their business rates, and the great British high street will save £2.3 billion over the next five years thanks to a switch to business rates indexation two years earlier than planned.

These positive changes are part of the government's pledge to create an economy that works for everyone.

Changes coming into force this month:

- The National Living Wage is increasing by 4.4% from £7.50 to £7.83, benefitting over 2 million workers. A full-time minimum wage worker will earn more than £2,000 since the introduction of the National Living Wage in April 2016.
- The State Pension is increasing by 3%, meaning a cash increase of £3.65 per week those in retirement. And the full new State Pension will raise by £4.80 per week.
- The tax-free personal allowance is increasing from £11,500 to £11,850. A typical basic rate taxpayer will pay £1,075 less income tax in 2018-19 than in 2010-11.
- Fuel duty will remain frozen for the eighth successive year at 57.95 pence per litre to help with motoring costs – saving households and businesses an extra £850m a year in total – or £160 for the average driver.
- Alcohol duty cuts in previous Budgets followed by a duty freeze last year means the tax on a typical pint of beer will continue to be 12p lower than it would otherwise have been since ending the beer duty escalator in 2013.
- Pubs will have a £1,000 discount on business rates if they have a rateable value of £100,000 or less, and we're supporting high-street businesses by switching business rates indexation this month, two years earlier than planned, so that businesses can save £2.3bn over the next 5 years.
- By 2020, parents and grandparents will be able to pass on assets of up to £1 million to their children and grandchildren without paying any inheritance tax.

[News story: Chief Inspector launches a revised inspection plan.](#)

An [updated version of my 3-Year Inspection Plan \(2017-18 – 2019-20\)](#) shows what, as at April 2018, I intend to inspect in 2018-19 and in 2019-20.

My intention in producing a rolling 3-Year Plan, first introduced in 2016,

was to provide a better sense of the overall shape and range of the Inspectorate's work programme, to show how planned inspections fitted together thematically, and to signpost when particular topics would be examined.

I still see value in having a published long-range Plan, along with the flexibility to add to or vary it as necessary. However, I will complete my 5-year appointment as Independent Chief Inspector in April 2020. Therefore, I have not included a new Year 3 (2020-21), since this will be for my successor to devise and own.

I have received a good deal of support from stakeholders for the current 3-Year Plan. I have also received ideas for inspection topics or angles that people would like to see included, for which I am grateful. For the most part, I believe these can be accommodated without any major changes to what was outlined.

The updated Plan shows what I intended to inspect in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 as at April 2017. Alongside this, I have noted where the timing or scope has now been amended to reflect the input from stakeholders and my own assessment of current priorities and issues, informed by the 49 inspections I have completed since May 2015.

Of course, the [April 2017 version of the 3-Year Plan](#) was published before the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. As at April 2018, it remains to be agreed how in detail this will affect the UK's borders and immigration functions. I have therefore created space within the Plan for various 'Brexit'-related pieces of work, the precise shape and timing of which are not yet fixed. I will announce specific inspections in the normal way via the website as soon as I am able.

Finally, the Plan assumes that the Inspectorate will be at or near full strength throughout the period. Staff turnover, which affects the Inspectorate as much as the areas it inspects, means this is not a given.

Over the next two years, we will need to continue to recruit, train and develop high-calibre and committed individuals capable of carrying out rigorous and impartial inspections and producing constructive, evidence-based reports and recommendations. If you believe that you have the necessary qualities and are interested in joining the inspectorate, please keep an eye on the website, where any vacancies will be advertised.