

News story: RFA Tideforce docks in Falmouth ahead of entering service

The 39,000 tonne vessel, which will deliver fuel and water to Royal Navy ships on operations all over the world, follows her sister ships Tidespring, Tiderace and Tidesurge into the A&P Falmouth yard, where work to customise the fleet ahead of operational service is sustaining 300 jobs.

With the homecoming voyage complete, all four of the tankers have now arrived safely in the UK, marking the end of a crucial phase of the fleet's delivery programme.

Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew said:

Tideforce's arrival completes our new tanker fleet, ensuring our warships can continue their essential work across the globe. Hundreds of Cornwall workers will now install state-of-the-art systems before she joins her sister ships on operations next year.

Providing everything from a floating helipad, to a refuelling vessel for our brand-new aircraft carriers, we are delivering the equipment our Armed Forces need to combat illegal trade, safeguard our waters and promote peace throughout the world.

Each of the Tide class ships is as long as three jumbo jets and has a flight deck large enough for a Chinook helicopter to land on. Like the rest of the fleet, Tideforce is perfectly equipped to refuel Royal Navy warships, including the two new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, in hostile environments and challenging sea conditions.

Customisation work, including the installation of communications equipment and defensive systems, is sustaining hundreds of jobs in A&P Falmouth, while the wider Tide class programme is sustaining further jobs at 26 other companies throughout the UK.

CEO of Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement agency Sir Simon Bollom said:

Defence Equipment and Support personnel will continue to work closely with industry to ensure Tideforce and her sister ships are fully supported once they come into service.

The delivery of the fleet within budget and to a challenging schedule has been a significant undertaking which has been expertly delivered by the dedicated team at DE&S.

RFA Tidespring is already in service, with RFA Tiderace due to join her in September, while RFA Tidesurge has now completed her customisation programme and is about to embark on Capability Assessment Trials.

Head of Service for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Commodore Duncan Lamb RFA, said:

The arrival of RFA Tideforce, the fourth ship of the class, into the UK is a significant and tangible milestone towards reaching full operating capability.

These four new versatile state-of-the-art Tide class ships will enable the RFA to continue to provide first class global support to a first class Royal Navy for the foreseeable future.

David McGinley, Managing Director Atlantic and Peninsular Marine Services for A&P Group said:

The arrival of RFA Tideforce into Falmouth is a significant milestone for the A&P team. RFA Tideforce is the final vessel of her class and this is the fourth time we have supported a Tide class vessel during their arrival voyage. We will now complete the customisation, fit-out and capability assessment trials to the same high standards, on time and to budget, as we have for the rest of the fleet.

A&P Group is delighted to have played such an integral role in bringing this new fleet of tankers into service to support Royal Navy vessels around the world and are especially proud of our team and supply chain for their hard work and dedication.

Work to customise Tideforce is expected to take several months, with the ship then due to enter service in 2019.

News story: UK Government helps train Park Rangers in Malawi to combat the illegal wildlife trade

After a successful pilot operation and with training now across two sites, Nkhotakota and Majete Wildlife Reserves, both are managed by African Parks in partnership with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife (DNPW). The troops long-term goal will ensure the rangers are better skilled and able

to respond appropriately to the threat of poaching.

Poaching and the illegal wildlife trade are responsible for the loss of countless species and are driving the decline of many African animals including elephants, rhinos and lions.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We can be incredibly proud of the important work our Armed Forces are doing to help protect the magnificent animals of Malawi and to bring about the end of the cruel practice of illegal wildlife trading. By passing on their world-class, tried and tested skills, we can be sure that UK troops are aiding a highly skilled and professional network of park rangers, one that can effectively combat the threat poachers pose to the African wildlife.

While British soldiers are working with rangers to support the protection of wildlife, the Department for International Development is working with poorer communities who live close to wildlife reserves to create job opportunities and improve vital services.

Foreign Office Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin visited communities living on the edge of Majete Wildlife Reserve where she announced an additional £1 million of UK aid support to improve the lives of people living next to national parks.

Minster for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK is acting now to stamp out the illegal wildlife trade, which not only threatens the existence of some of our most precious species, but also inflicts damage on local communities and fuels corruption and crime which hold back development for some of the world's poorest countries.

By bringing together our diplomatic, military and development support we're helping countries like Malawi combat this crime, and also helping local people to benefit from living alongside these beautiful species, which is boosting economic growth and stability.

The increase in the UK Armed Forces' support to Malawi has been funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) as part of a three-year plan agreed by the Ministry of Defence and DEFRA.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Wildlife crime does not respect borders so we must share skills and expertise worldwide. The Malawi enforcement project demonstrates the global leadership we set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan. We are introducing one of the world's toughest bans on ivory sales and will host the next international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London later this year.

The Government of Malawi has taken an effective and proactive approach to combating the illegal wildlife trade in their country, enhancing penalties for wildlife crime and partnering with African Parks and the UK Government to drastically reduce poaching activity and secure its parks for the benefit of future generations.

The CEO of African Parks, Peter Fearnhead said:

The Malawian Government has shown great leadership and commitment in conserving its parks, where together we've recruited, trained and outfitted rangers to establish robust law enforcement teams utilising technology and community engagement to secure the landscapes.

Effective park management, including law enforcement and community development, is essential in protecting the last of the wild and combatting the illegal wildlife trade at its source. The partnership with the UK Government importantly advances our ability to ensure that these increasingly threatened areas continue to function as critical sanctuaries benefitting millions of people and animals across Africa.

[News story: New Competition: Predictive Cyber Analytics](#)

Updated: This competition is now open.

DASA is launching this competition to, in the longer term, develop a deployable solution to predict and counter future cyber threats. Primarily for defence, this novel solution would be used to reduce the likelihood and

impact of cyber threats.

To enable proactive defence in a hostile cyber environment, this competition is looking for novel approaches to cyber security. Ultimately these approaches would predict the most likely offensive cyber events and/or predict optimal defensive cyber actions.

Proposals that focus on theoretical models, lack implementation to real data, ingest social media feeds or other public data of a personal nature are outside the scope of this competition.

Up to £1 million of funding is available in Phase 1 to fund 5 to 10 proof-of-concept research projects of up to six months in duration. Additional funding is anticipated for future phases.

Further details about the competition can be found in the [competition document](#).

This competition is now open and will close at midday on 5 November 2018

If you have any queries on this competition, please do contact us at accelerator@dstl.gov.uk or [sign up](#) for alerts.

News story: Ministry of Defence teams up with innovative start-up to train next generation of cyber veterans

TechVets, which specialises in helping veterans get jobs in the cyber security and technology sector, will work with the MOD's flagship training programme for service leavers, under a new agreement signed today.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood welcomed the agreement, after the not-for profit group's co-founder Mark Milton signed the Armed Forces Covenant at the Ministry of Defence's Headquarters in London.

The technology and cyber security sector is rapidly growing, and while people leaving the armed forces have unique skills and experience which they can contribute in this area. Currently only 4% of veterans are working in tech and cyber, compared to 24% of non-veterans.

The agreement will look to increase the numbers of cyber veterans, by having TechVets work with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership, which provides service leavers with training and education opportunities whilst transitioning out of the armed forces.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Veterans have unique skills and experiences, gained from their time in the armed forces, which means they contribute a lot to society. It's fantastic that TechVets will provide opportunities for veterans to apply their considerable talents to the cyber security field, which is playing an increasingly vital role in keeping this country safe.

Co-founder of TechVets Mark Milton said:

We're delighted to be able to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and strengthen our support for current and former Service personnel and their families. The transferable skills of the veteran community are a real under utilised national resource and have a vital role to play in supporting the security and prosperity of the nation.

The Armed Forces Covenant delivery partners include businesses and trade bodies, charities and community organisations, local authorities and government departments. Signatories tailor their own pledges to support the Armed Forces community and implement these promises through their choice of policies, services, and projects.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. By signing the Covenant, TechVets joins the ranks of over 2,000 organisations across the UK who have committed to supporting current and ex-Forces personnel, ensuring that they and their families have equal opportunities.

At the signing, TechVets made a number of pledges, including:

- Working with the MOD's Career Transition Partnership to provide training and employment for veterans in technology and cyber security sectors of the economy
 - Supporting their employees' service as members of the Reserve forces, by accommodating their training and deployment
 - Offering flexibility when granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment
 - Supporting cadet units of the local community and schools
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News story: New competition: Biosensing across wide areas

Updated: Competition now open.

DASA is launching this competition to seek ideas for innovative technologies that can provide an improved way to rapidly detect and locate hazardous biological agents in the field. The ultimate aim is for a fieldable system that would detect and report without users (including trained military specialists and civilian first line responders) coming into close contact with the hazard.

By detecting these hazards as early as possible and remotely, it will enable front line users to safely avoid them.

[This competition](#) has an initial budget of £500k for Phase 1. Additional funding is anticipated to be available for future phases of this competition.

This competition is now open and full details are available in the [competition document](#).

The competition will close at 1pm on 7 November 2018

If you have any queries on this competition, please do contact us at accelerator@dstl.gov.uk or [sign up for alerts](#).