

News story: Historic North Wales town announced as host for Armed Forces Day 2018

The event in the historic seaside town will be supported by the Ministry of Defence, together with the Welsh Government and Conwy Borough Council.

The announcement comes as events are held across the UK to mark Armed Forces Day, including the national event this year hosted by the City of Liverpool. Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will join the First Sea Lord and thousands of people at the South Wales celebrations in Caerphilly to honour the work and dedication of our brave Servicemen and women deployed around the world.

Defence Minister for the Lords, Earl Howe said:

Llandudno represents a superb venue for next year's celebrations and I'm sure the town will bring together the whole nation in celebrating our Armed Forces.

Wales was the proud host of the national event in 2010 when thousands of people celebrated in Cardiff. The support from the Welsh Government and local communities, coupled with the rich and vibrant history of Llandudno, means that the town is the ideal choice to make the event even more successful in 2018.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I'm delighted that the national Armed Forces Day event will return to Wales in 2018. This time next year, we will see veterans of wars gone by and soldiers serving in conflicts around the world today marching side by side in Llandudno, united in pride in service to their country.

In Wales we have a special connection with our Armed Forces and this annual event gives the public an opportunity to show their appreciation and pride for our soldiers, sailors and air personnel who sacrifice so much for others.

Our debt of gratitude also extends to the families they leave behind and the veterans past and present who have dedicated years of their lives to service. I am honoured to mark Armed Forces Day today – and in the years to come – in their company.

Councillor Gareth Jones, Leader of Conwy County Borough Council, said:

We are proud and privileged to be named as the Host of the National Armed Forces Day in 2018.

Conwy County has a deep affiliation with the Armed Forces and a strong historical link. Llandudno will be a great destination to showcase the outstanding work of the Armed Forces past and present.

The event will be supported by all the North Wales Councils and key colleagues across Wales. Serving personnel and veterans of our Armed Forces Community will be assured of a very warm welcome and an event that thanks them for their commitment to keeping the country safe.

North Wales has many current and historic links to the Armed Forces, including and many Regular and Reserve Army units, including the Royal Welsh recruit from there. RAF Valley on Anglesey, is home to a fast jet training base. Nearly 10,000 veterans live in Conwy, supported by a number of local and national charities.

This year, events along the coast included an Armed Forces parade in the nearby town of Caernarfon on 17 June, and today a Forces' themed street party is being held in Conwy.

News story: Record number of events will hail UK Armed Forces

The ninth annual Armed Forces Day will centre on Liverpool, where regulars, reserves, their families and veterans will gather for a parade, receptions, displays, a ship visit and Red Arrows and Typhoon flypasts.

There will be hundreds more significant events to thank the UK's Forces, from Caerphilly to Plymouth to Edinburgh in the UK and from the Falkland Islands to Cyprus overseas.

Ahead of attending today's event in Liverpool, the Prime Minister said:

Our world-leading Armed Forces work day and night to defend our country and our way of life, both at home and abroad.

In the aftermath of the Manchester attack, military personnel played a vital role on UK streets, providing visible reassurance to our communities. And further afield they continue to take the fight to Daesh in Iraq and Syria, helping to drive the terrorists back and give ordinary people in those countries the chance to rebuild their lives.

I am proud to be attending the Armed Forces Day celebrations in the great city of Liverpool this year, joining thousands of people in expressing our gratitude to the men and women who do so much to preserve our freedom.

Ahead of Liverpool's event Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon announced that nearly 11,000 service personnel have been able to get on the housing ladder or change their home using Forces Help to Buy scheme payments. Since its launch in April 2014 more than £163m has been paid to scheme applicants, allowing service personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to buy their own home.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We owe a huge gratitude to the men and women of our Armed Forces and salute their service in keeping us safe each and every day.

As we celebrate Armed Forces Day there are 10,000 regulars and reserve personnel serving now on NATO operations. There are Royal Navy ships serving in the Gulf, the British Army is supporting UN peacekeeping in South Sudan, and the Royal Air Force are patrolling the skies above the Black Sea region in the campaign against Daesh terrorism and on NATO deployments; the Royal Navy is helping protect the Gulf; the Army is peace-keeping in South Sudan and Somalia; and the Royal Air Force is patrolling the skies above the Black Sea.

The Help to Buy milestone demonstrates our promise to ensure that our Armed Forces and their families can enjoy the stability of owning their own home. It is part of our commitment to them in return for the immeasurable commitment they make to us.

Today's event in Liverpool will consist of a large-scale military parade from St George's Hall to the Pier Head supported by bands. Reflecting Liverpool's strong connection with the Royal Navy, the Type-23 frigate HMS Iron Duke will be docked in the city. In the air there will be flypasts by the Red Arrows, Typhoon and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight. Military villages of static displays, machines and equipment will complete the show.

Liverpool's Assistant Mayor and Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism and Events, Councillor Wendy Simon, said:

It is a privilege to host Armed Forces Day and there is a real buzz about the city as we get closer to Saturday's celebrations.

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We are a city renowned for its success when staging large, outdoor events and Saturday will be no exception. As the national focal point for Armed Forces Day we will make sure that when the spotlight shines on us, we will do all that we can to make the

city, the armed forces and the UK proud.

UK Armed Forces are currently involved in over 20 operations in more than 25 countries, from South Sudan to Iraq. 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 cadet forces have almost 100,000 members, many of whom will be at events up and down the country.

News story: First ever memorial to African and Caribbean Service Personnel unveiled in Brixton.

Today (22nd June 2017) the first ever memorial to African and Caribbean servicemen and women was unveiled in a ceremony attended by Defence Secretary Michael Fallon and Mayor of London Sadiq Khan.

Speaking ahead of the event at Windrush Square, Brixton, where a new permanent memorial was unveiled, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The UK is indebted to all those servicemen and women from Africa and the Caribbean who volunteered to serve with Britain during the First and Second World Wars. It is thanks to their bravery and sacrifice that we are able to enjoy our freedoms today. We should also congratulate those who have worked tirelessly to place this memorial in >the heart of Brixton.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The brave men and women commemorated today came from all walks of life but were bound together by their immense courage and determination.

Serving thousands of miles from home, they fought and fell with British soldiers to defend the freedoms we enjoy today, despite the majority never having visited this country.

We owe them all a tremendous debt of gratitude for their sacrifice and for the substantial contributions so many >veterans have made to enrich British life.

The Government has supported the monument by providing £80,000 worth of funding through the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Black Britons volunteered at recruitment centres to serve in the Army and Navy soon after Britain joined the First World War in August 1914. As the war pulled in volunteers from all four corners of the world, they were soon joined by volunteers from the Caribbean, many of whom paid for their own passage to fight for the "Mother Country".

The West Indies not only contributed men to the war effort but people from the islands made significant donations despite significant economic hardship.

The British West Indies Regiment was enacted by Army Order in 1916, with the first battalion formed in Seaford, East Sussex. By the end of the war 11 battalions comprising over 15,000 soldiers – 66 % of whom came from Jamaica – had seen action, particularly in Palestine and Jordan. However, many men also fought in the European battlefields of France, Belgium and Italy, as well as in Egypt, Mesopotamia (Iraq) and East Africa. Altogether 2,500 were killed or wounded.

During the war servicemen from the unit received 81 medals for bravery, with 49 servicemen were mentioned in despatches.

55,000 men from Africa were recruited for military service and hundreds of thousands of others carried out vital roles, fundamental to sustaining the war effort as carriers or auxiliaries as part of the Labour Corps. They came from Nigeria, the Gambia, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Nyasaland (now Malawi), Kenya and the Gold Coast (now Ghana).

While African troops did not see active service on the battlefields of Europe, they did fight in the Middle East and on the African continent. It is estimated that 10,000 Africans were killed with 166 receiving awards for bravery.

Jak Beula, CEO of the Nubian Jak Trust said:

More than 2 million African and Caribbean Military Servicemen and Servicewomen's participated in WWI and WWII but have not been recognized for their contribution. The unveiling of this memorial is to correct this historical omission and to ensure young people of African and Caribbean descent are aware of the valuable input their forefathers had in the two world wars.

During the Second World War, forces from the British Commonwealth of Nations were active in all the major theatres of war. Some 16,000 men and women from the Caribbean left their families and homes to volunteer for the British Armed Forces.

Around 6,000 served with the Royal Air Force and the Royal Canadian Air Force working as fighter pilots, technicians, air gunners and ground staff.

In addition thousands of West Indian seamen also served in the Merchant Navy,

transporting cargo and people. This proved to be one of the most dangerous services during the Second World War with almost one third of all merchant seamen dying at sea.

West Indian women also served in Britain with the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) and the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS), with 80 choosing to serve in the WAAF while around 30 joined the ATS.

236 Caribbean volunteers were killed or reported missing during the Second World War, 265 were wounded. Caribbean air force personnel received 103 awards for bravery.

Paul Reid, Director of the Black Cultural Archives said:

The histories of World Wars often overlook the significant contributions made by African and Caribbean soldiers. However, today we can proudly mark the recognition of their bravery and sacrifice to the struggles of independence.

As the national heritage centre dedicated to the preservation of Black history, we will continue to tell the stories of their service and to ensure their contributions and the legacy of this historical narrative becomes part of a more inclusive British history, and remains accessible to all through our archive collection.

Notes to Editors

1. June 22 is Windrush Day which marks the anniversary of the arrival into Tilbury Docks, Essex of the MV Empire Windrush and the first wave of post-war immigration, 69 years ago.
 2. The memorial was devised by the Nubian Jak Community Trust (NJCT). The Trust runs a commemorative plaque and sculpture scheme to highlight the historic contributions of Black and minority ethnic people in Britain and has led the three year campaign to honour servicemen and women from the First and Second World Wars.
 3. The memorial comprises two obelisks in Scottish whinstone, resting on a 12 foot pyramid shaped plinth of Ancaster Limestone, weighing just over 5 tonnes.
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News story: £260M job-sustaining contract for advanced identification system

The system, called Mode-5 and developed for the MOD by UK-based company Leonardo, uses advanced cryptographic techniques and world-leading electronic technology to allow UK land, sea and air units to quickly identify friendly forces and operate safely alongside NATO allies across any battlefield.

Mode-5 IFF has been designed to give UK units a clear and secure view of potential threats and targets, providing a powerful cyber shield against jamming and interference intended to reduce vital situational awareness.

The contract will allow Leonardo to install the system in more than 350 units ranging from Royal Air Force's Sentry aircraft to the Royal Navy's Type 45 anti-air destroyers and the British Army's High Velocity Missile (HVM) multiple launcher system.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

This £260 million contract for battle-winning technology builds on decades of operational experience to keep UK pilots, soldiers and sailors safe on operations.

It is yet another example of the jobs and skills-sustaining impact of the Government's £178 billion equipment plan to supply the UK's armed forces with the best possible kit.

Less-advanced IFF systems have been used by nations all over the world since the 1940s. Mode-5 uses the same basic 'call-and-response' method as earlier systems, but significantly improves on them. Crucially, the system can easily interface with allied forces, reducing the risk of 'friendly fire' incidents between UK units and the units of other allies.

Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) Chief Executive Officer Tony Douglas said:

Advances in digital and cyber warfare mean that it's never been more important for UK military forces to have the kind of confidence in their situational awareness that Mode-5 IFF instils.

The installation of this world-leading system will continue to give our fighting men and women a decisive edge on operations.

The new contract will cover the installation of Mode-5 on pieces of equipment that are in service already with the UK. New platforms coming into service in the future, including the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, F-35 Lightning II combat aircraft and the new Apache AH64E Helicopters are being fitted with Mode-5 under separate contracts over the course of their construction.

News story: Defence Minister Focuses on Scottish business, skills, and innovation

The MOD spent £1.5 billion with Scottish businesses last year and supports 9,700 jobs across Scotland, with the Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth Carriers being built in Rosyth and new Offshore Patrol Vessels under construction in Govan and Scotstoun ahead of this summer's Type 26 Frigate steel cut.

Mrs Baldwin met Scottish SMEs at the Defence Suppliers Forum, held at defence company Leonardo's facility near Edinburgh. The Forum builds relationships between businesses and Government through face-to-face meetings and candid discussion.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

Scotland is on the front line defending the United Kingdom from growing threats on land, air, and sea; and the Government is listening to Scottish business and building skills to keep the UK safe, secure, and prosperous.

This is yet more evidence of our unquestionable commitment to defence and industry in Scotland, as our rising defence budget and £178bn equipment plan supports Scottish business, jobs, and skills far into the future.

Following the Forum, Mrs Baldwin recognised the winners of the Raytheon SME supply chain awards at the company's Glenrothes plant, where it employs over 600 engineers and technicians. Amongst the winners, were North Lanarkshire company, Link Cable Assemblies, who received the Enabling Business Growth Award.

Apprenticeships are a key element in creating a country where everyone has the chance to go as far as their talent and hard work will allow, regardless of background. 24 graduates and 24 apprentices joined Raytheon's programmes

this year, some of whom Mrs Baldwin met to hear about the company's support for the Government's focus on skills through its science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) ambassador programmes. Over 50 Raytheon STEM Ambassadors visit schools to teach pupils about aerodynamics, autonomy, and control systems.

SMEs are at the heart of the MOD's Innovation Initiative. Backed by an £800 million fund, the Initiative encourages imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship. The goal is to work more effectively with businesses across the UK – and particularly with SMEs which might not normally think of themselves as Defence suppliers.

The 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review committed to spending 25% of procurement money with SME suppliers by 2020. As part of this drive to support businesses, the MOD has launched a refreshed Supplier Portal and an improved Contracts platform linked to the Defence and Security Accelerator. The Accelerator was created to help businesses collaborate with Defence and develop new routes to market for their technology.