

# News story: Defence Secretary commits to boost diversity in the Armed Forces

The visit took place during Black History Month, a nationwide celebration of black history, arts and culture held every October.

Sir Michael Fallon met the unit's engagement team, who have been specifically set up to build links with minority communities across London, and congratulated the Royal Navy's longest serving female reservist [Chief Petty Officer Evadne Gordon](#) who joined 40 years ago and whose family moved from Jamaica to the UK in the 1950s.

The visit included a meeting with Commander Richmal Hardinge, HMS President's second ever female Commanding Officer, and a chance to speak to a group of Sea Cadets, following this month's approval of 31 new cadet units in state schools, five of which are in London and the South East.

The Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, said:

We are working hard to ensure the Armed Forces, like our cadets, better represent the society they serve but there is still much more to do. We want more sailors, soldiers and airmen to come from minority and ethnic communities. More diverse armed forces are a stronger armed forces; that has to start amongst the junior ranks and work all the way up to chief of the defence staff.



Sir Michael Fallon congratulated Chief Petty Officer Evadne Gordon for becoming the longest serving female member of the Royal Naval Reserves.

The Armed Forces have committed to ensuring that at least 10 per cent of all new recruits come from minority and ethnic communities by 2020, with intake levels currently at 7.2 per cent.

To achieve this a set of networks have been established within the Armed Forces, which is part of the diversity and inclusion strategy.



The Defence Secretary spoke to members of the Sea Cadets at HMS President

In June the Defence Secretary attended the unveiling of the first ever memorial to African and Caribbean servicemen and women during the First and Second World Wars.

15,000 soldiers from the West Indies Regiment saw action in France, Palestine, Egypt and Italy during the First World War – 2,500 of them were killed or wounded. These brave men from the West Indies won 81 medals for bravery, whilst 49 were mentioned in despatches.

55,000 men from Africa fought for the British during the First World War and hundreds of thousands of others carried out vital roles. They came from Nigeria, the Gambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya and Ghana. It is estimated that 10,000 Africans were killed. African troops were awarded 166 decorations for bravery.

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## [News story: UK Government ministers host Poppyscotland launch](#)

Although the deadline for the old 'round pound' coin passed on 15 October, they can still be banked or donated to charity, with Poppyscotland happily

accepting donations.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and UK Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan welcomed representatives of Poppyscotland and guests to Dover House this evening [25 October], including Harriett Baldwin MP and Tobias Elwood MP from the Ministry of Defence, to show their support for Scotland's Armed Forces community.

Speaking before the event, Lord Duncan said:

It is a pleasure to launch this year's Poppyscotland campaign in Dover House, as we remember all those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

I visited the Lady Haig Poppy Factory and met the ex-servicemen who create the more than five million poppies every year and saw first-hand the support Poppyscotland provides for our veterans.

It is important to remember also that Poppyscotland will still be accepting your old pound coins, so dig down the back of the sofa, check your loose change and buy a poppy to show your support for our armed forces.

During his visit to the Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, Lord Duncan learnt how to put together the distinctive four-leaf crimped poppies.

[Lady Haig's Poppy Factory Visit – October 2017](#)

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## [\*\*News story: UK hosts international nuclear disarmament verification exercise\*\*](#)

Experts from Norway, Sweden and the United States travelled to join UK experts from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at RAF Honington, Suffolk where the exercise, named 'Letterpress', took place.

The first of its kind, the exercise began to address the greatest technical obstruction to nuclear disarmament – the absence of an established or agreed process of checking the dismantlement of a nuclear weapon. Letterpress is part of an ongoing arms control research collaboration. In a concluding event yesterday personnel simulated the very early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon and there were a range of talks from international experts the



subject.



Exercise Letterpress included a simulation of the early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon.

**Speaking on the exercise yesterday, James Franklin, Head of Nuclear Policy for the UK Ministry of Defence said:**

International exercises of this scale are hugely important to ensure the possibility of a world without nuclear weapons. This exercise was part of our commitment made at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee 2017 and makes a tangible contribution to the UK's commitment to Article VI of the treaty itself which remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation framework. I'm proud that the UK remains a responsible nuclear weapons state, exercises like this and the reduction of our nuclear forces by over half since the Cold War continue to reinforce this

**Director General of the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, Ole Harbitz remarked:**

Disarmament verification constitutes a central part of Norway's non-proliferation and disarmament work. We must focus on effective and concrete steps to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, in

accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Exercise Letterpress is a core building block of our common efforts and exemplifies a fact-based approach to disarmament that we strongly believe in. International cooperation of this kind is essential in developing trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. Norway's long-term cooperation with the UK on disarmament verification -the UKNI – has greatly improved our understanding of the technical and security related challenges associated with nuclear disarmament.

Signing in 1968, the UK has been a long-term member of the Treaty on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has a key aim of achieving the long term goal of nuclear disarmament. Exercises like Letterpress are key to fulfilling our commitment to the Treaty.

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## [News story: Millions invested in pilot training at state-of-the-art helicopter centre](#)

The simulators put pilots through their paces, replicating extreme real-life scenarios, from flying in blizzards or under enemy fire to dealing with power failures and electronic warfare.

The deal will sustain 70 jobs at the Medium Support Helicopter Aircrew Training Facility based at RAF Benson in South Oxfordshire.



One of the helicopter simulators in action at RAF Benson.

Defence, Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, signed a contract amendment with simulator specialist CAE Aircrew Training Services to deliver training for Chinook, Puma and Merlin aircrews at a purpose-built facility, extending the use of CAE's current contract for another 8 years.

The equipment provides a realistic representation of the operating environments the crews will fly in, including emergency situations like the effects of icing and rotor blade damage, the impact of gun or missile fire and electronic warfare, total electrics failure and fuel management issues.

The contract will deliver training for Chinook and Puma aircrews until the Puma planned out-of-service date. Training for the Merlin Mk3 will continue at the facility for at least two more years as the Royal Navy transitions from the Mk3 to the Mk4 helicopter.





One of the UK Chinooks undertaking relief work in the Caribbean in the aftermath of Hurricane Irma.

The centre is equipped with six CAE-built dynamic mission simulators (three Chinook, two Merlin and one Puma), four computer-based ground school training classrooms and a Tactical Control Centre that allows for operational mission training.

**Adrian Baguley, Director Air Support at the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support, said:**

The importance of effective synthetic training cannot be underestimated and continues to play an increasingly important role in our overall training curriculum.

The Medium Support Helicopter Aircrew Training Facility has consistently delivered a high standard of quality training to the operators of our front line helicopter capabilities. This agreement continues to maintain the world-leading ground school and simulator training facility for our helicopter aircrews.

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## News story: DIO awards contract for new jetty at HMNB Devonport Oil Fuel Depot

The project will deliver a new jetty with fuel loading and fire fighting facilities; the fire fighting facilities within the depot will also be replaced. The jetty will be constructed within a Special Area of Conservation on the River Tamar and the project has to comply with stringent environmental regulations. The completed facility will service all of the Navy fuelling requirements at Devonport.

Bill Hughes, DIO Project Manager said:

This is a key milestone in the Navy Oil Fuel Depot upgrade programme. There have been considerable environmental challenges and constraints that have been successfully navigated through the excellent efforts of the Project team and we look forward to working in collaboration with VolkerStevin to ensure the successful delivery of this operationally critical project.

Terry O'Connor, DIO Account Director for VolkerStevin said:

We are delighted to have been awarded the design and construction of the new jetty at Thanckes Oil Fuel Depot. It continues our long association with the DIO and Royal Navy in providing key critical infrastructure solutions and we look forward to working closely with the project team and key stakeholders to deliver this strategically important scheme.

The dredging and clearing works are due to commence in January 2018 with the main piling works starting in September 2018 to avoid the annual fish migration season. The jetty is due to be in service by November 2019. The Thanckes Jetty is the first in a number of projects to modernise the Oil Fuel Depots in Devonport and Portsmouth to service the fuelling of the Naval Fleet in both ports.