

News story: MOD signs £14 million contract for lifesaving medical technology

The Tempus Pro monitors, designed and manufactured by Remote Diagnostic Technologies (RDT), can help facilitate emergency treatment for Royal Navy, British Army, and RAF personnel if they are injured or taken ill on active duty.

The lightweight, robust and portable monitor, which is battery operated, can be used on land, at sea and in the air. It transmits medical data such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate in real time back to medical facilities and treatment teams, giving them a better understanding of a patient's condition ahead of time.



A demonstration of the Tempus Pro medical monitor.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Harriett Baldwin said:

Our Armed Forces serve with incredible commitment and bravery, and the new Tempus Pro monitor will ensure that they will receive the best possible care and treatment should they be wounded or taken ill on operations.

Backed by our rising defence budget and our £178 billion equipment plan, our investment in these cutting edge medical monitors demonstrates how we are working with our NATO allies to provide lifesaving equipment to our frontline personnel.

This deal, which will sustain over 60 UK jobs, has already seen 444 monitors delivered to the Armed Forces, with plans for around 900 more to be purchased over the next five years. The contract is part of the MOD's Innovation Initiative, aiming to encourage imagination, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in pursuit of maintaining a military advantage in the future.

Ministry of Defence

DE&S

Tempus Pro:

Deal to deliver around 900 lifesaving medical monitors to Armed Forces

900 DE&S is purchasing around 900 Tempus Pro medical monitors

£14m £14 million contract with Remote Diagnostic Technologies

60 The contract will help sustain 60 UK jobs in Basingstoke

Can be used remotely across the UK Armed Forces on ships, vehicles, aircraft and deployed medical facilities.

Procured through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency and used by our key allies including US and Canada.

The monitor can transmit medical data such as blood pressure, pulse and respiratory rate in real time back to a treatment facility.

Remote Diagnostic Technologies' Tempus Pro medical monitor.

Tempus Pro can be used remotely on medical evacuation vehicles and aircraft, battalion aid stations, hospital ships and field hospitals. It will help to provide consistent and streamlined medical support, meaning the records of all sick and injured Armed Forces personnel can easily move with them as they progress through different levels of care. The monitors are being purchased through the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA).

Chief Executive Officer of the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support body, Tony Douglas, said:

This state of the art piece of equipment shows how we are delivering proven, world-leading equipment to our Armed Forces. The Tempus Pro monitor is a step forward in innovation and safety,

demonstrating how we are committed to improving the medical care received by those keeping our country safe.

This deal also highlights DE&S' strong, collaborative partnership with industry, benefitting both our Armed Forces and the wider UK economy by sustaining around 60 UK jobs.

News story: Three World War 2 soldiers finally laid to rest 75 years after they gave their lives for their country

Lance Corporal (LCpl) Ronald George Blackham has finally been laid to rest alongside 2 unknown soldiers after they were killed in Capezzano within the Italian province of Salerno during the Second World War. All 2 enlisted into the 3rd Battalion Coldstream Guards and were given a ceremonial burial with full military honours on 16 March 2017 at Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) Salerno War Cemetery, Italy.

The service, organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services was conducted by The Reverend Jacob Caldwell CF, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards.

Sue Raftree, JCCC said:

These brave men fought for their country to make our lives better. The service today was to honour all three and to enable the family of Lance Corporal Ronald Blackham to have closure after over 70 years.

It has been a privilege to be able to identify LCpl Blackham and we will continue with our investigations to identify the two unknown soldiers.

The Coldstream Guards were brought up to Hill 270 to attack at midday on 25 September 1943, their plan was to reach the bottom of the hill by infiltrating from the left and using the thick trees as cover. No.1 Company were to lead followed by No.3 Company, both from the 3rd Battalion and included LCpl Blackham.

They planned to move in single file in a wide semicircle across the German

front. At 11:40 hours the attack began with No.1 Company on the left and No.3 Company on the right, regrettably there were huge casualties, including LCpl Blackham.

LCpl Blackham was just 22 years old when he was killed.

Reverend Jacob Caldwell CF said:

Today, we formally honour the sacrifice of three soldiers who lost their lives in the business of war for the purposes of peace. The sacrifice of soldiers such as LCpl Blackham and his two comrades at the Battle of Salerno remind us of the cost of war and the price of peace. As we honour their sacrifice we commit ourselves afresh to advance the cause of peace in this, our generation.

In 2014 the remains of 2 soldiers, including those of LCpl Blackham, were found in the neighbourhood of Capezzano and Coperchia in the municipality of Pellezzano, South Italy in the province of Salerno, by a group of military historians, Associazione Salerno 1943. The third set of remains were found by a separate military historical group, Avalanche 1943.

Family members who paid their respects to LCpl Blackham included his 81 year old sister, Alma Williams. Also present was Jill Morris CMG, British Ambassador to Italy and San Marino, and Victoria Wallace, Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). Current members of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards paid tribute to their former colleagues by providing a bearer party for the three coffins.



Alma Williams and Michael Blackham lay a wreath for their brother and uncle, LCpl Blackham, All rights reserved

Alma Williams, sister of LCpl Blackham said:

I was a little girl of seven years of age when my oldest brother Ron, was taken from us. I have clear and treasured memories of his 21st birthday celebrations, his last visit on leave and also the devastation and sadness caused to our family by the news of his death.

It is wonderful to have this final chapter written but so sad that so many members of the family are no longer here to witness this day.

Douglas Blackham brother of LCpl Blackham, who couldn't attend today's service, said:

Ron was my much loved and missed older brother. My parents never emotionally recovered from his loss. I am so pleased that my DNA was able to close this door, albeit 74 years after Ron's death.

Additional statement from the Blackham family is as follows:

All our family and in particular Ron's brother and sisters have been overwhelmed by the discovery of their brother Lance Corporal Ronald George Blackham after he was tragically killed nearly 74 years ago in the hills above Salerno.

During the battle for Hill 270 there were a reported 120 other casualties, some of whom are yet to be discovered and identified. This is a remarkable story and really does remind us all of the bravery and sacrifice made by the officers and men of the 3rd Battalion. We are all honoured and proud to be invited to the service and so grateful for the efforts and time provided by the MOD Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, and the Salerno 1943 Association who discovered his remains.

Commander (Cdr) Neil Thompson, Naval/Air Attaché British Embassy said:

I am proud and honoured to be representing the British Embassy at the burial of three soldiers who lost their lives during the terrible fighting that took place in southern Italy during the Second World War. These three soldiers bravely fought through difficult and trying circumstances with courage and strength.

We know a little about one of the soldiers, Lance Corporal Blackham, who had a very full life in the UK before signing up for his country. We are honoured to have much of his family attend the burial, including one of his sisters. It is comforting to know that the memory of a brave young man has been kept alive for over 70 years and hope that we continue to remember those like him, and all who died, for many years to come.

Nic Andrews, CWGC said:

Lance Corporal Ronald George Blackham along with two of his fellow Coldstream Guards, whose identities are not known, have been laid to rest at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Salerno War Cemetery. Today's burial ceremony is an opportunity to give thanks for their service and to remember the sacrifices made by all who died during the Second World War. The CWGC is honoured to care for them and all those Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two world wars, in perpetuity.

Lt Col Thurstan, 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards said:

Although more than 70 years have passed since the Battle of

Salerno, the burial we have witnessed today has lost none of its poignancy or significance. The sacrifice made by LCpl Blackham and his fellow Coldstreamers reminds us of more recent operational casualties and it is our privilege to honour the enduring courage and loyalty of soldiers from each generation.

Having received formal notification of remains being found the JCCC undertook genealogy research in an attempt to discover a potential relative. Subsequent DNA testing by LGC Ltd proved that a brother of LCpl Blackham had been located.

Luigi Fortunato, Associazione Salerno 1943 said:

The 1943 Salerno Association reconstructs the stories of ordinary people, stories that the war took away with them. To return Ronald George Blackham to the affection of his family, allow the brothers still living to have a tomb to pray, to give a name and a face to a young man who went missing, brings us a great emotion and rewards the efforts and the resources spent for the fieldwork.

Pasquale Capozzolo, Avalanche 1943 said:

The search and retrieval of the fallen in our area is a source of pride, and know that the remains of a member of the 3rd Battalion of the Coldstream Guards will have a proper burial has filled our hearts with joy.

Victoria Moore, Science and Innovation Division at LGC said:

It has been an honour to be present at today's ceremony, and I feel immensely privileged to have assisted in the identification of LCpl Blackham.

DNA profiles have been obtained from the remaining two unknown soldiers, and where possible we will continue to test any further potential familial relatives for comparison that may come forward.

One new headstone bearing LCpl Blackham and 2 inscribed with Known unto God for the unknown soldiers have been provided by the CWGC, who will now care for their final resting place in perpetuity.

News story: World War 2 airman finally laid to rest 70 years after he gave his life for his country

He was given a full ceremonial burial on 16 March 2017 at Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery, Germany.

The service, led by Reverend Rebekah Cannon, Chaplain of RAF College Cranwell, was attended by representatives of the Royal Air Force, the British Embassy in Berlin and the Royal British Legion. Current members of the Queen's Colour Squadron paid tribute to their former colleague by providing a bearer party for his coffin.

Reverend Rebekah Cannon, who led the service said:

It's been incredibly moving to lay this brave young man to rest today and to be part of his military family here to pay him our final respects.

Wilfred Lawson was born on 24 April 1918 at Penrith in Cumberland, youngest child of John and Elizabeth Lawson. He was 25 years old when he died. He had two older siblings, William and Elizabeth.

Wilfred joined the Royal Air Force in July 1936, before which he had worked for an ironmonger in King's Street, Penrith. He started his RAF career as an Aircraftman Grade 2, progressing through the ranks to Sergeant by the time of his death. In September 1940 he married Margaret Grace Flood and they lived on Sefton Terrace, Leeds.

Sgt Lawson's remains were discovered in September 2014 by the Vermisstenforschung Deutschland, a German group interested in researching those missing in war. Although there were no identifying items found with the remains, the site was known to be where his Lancaster bomber LL721 had crashed in January 1944.

Investigation work led by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), part of Defence Business Services, showed that of the 7 crew members, 3 were captured and held as prisoners of war, 2 were killed and buried at the time in the Berlin 1939-1945 War Cemetery and 2 remained listed as missing and were commemorated on the Royal Air Force memorial at Runnymede, Surrey.

It was possible to identify the remains through DNA analysis of samples from both Sgt Lawson's distant surviving family and relatives of the other missing airman.

Enid Townson, first cousin once removed of Sgt Lawson said:

It's amazing news that Wilfred's remains have been found and laid to rest in Berlin. I just wish that his parents and siblings had known during their lifetime what had happened to him.

They never quite gave up hope that there could have been a mistake and that he might one day come home.

Peter Nelson, first cousin once removed said:

We give Wilfred our thanks for his bravery in defending the free world. Although he's been lost for so many years he's now been found and will be in our thoughts forever.

Louise Dorr, who has led the organisation of today's service in the JCCC said:

It's the MOD Casualty Centre's mission to care for the fallen whether they're from current conflicts or historic campaigns. It's been an absolute privilege to arrange this ceremony for Sgt Wilfred Lawson. Although his blood family aren't able to be here today, his military family is honoured to be able to pay him this final tribute.

A new headstone bearing Sgt Lawson's name has been provided by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), who will now care for his final resting place in perpetuity.

News story: Better value for money and fairer profits

This represents a 16% reduction in the rate applied to single source contracts and will ensure better value for money for taxpayers and give a fair return to industry. All savings will be reinvested into the defence budget, including delivering the equipment our Armed Forces need to keep the UK safe.

The unique nature of much of the MOD's work means the department often has to award contracts without competition, either because there is one specialised

supplier or because the procurement must not risk national security. This lower profit rate will ensure the UK taxpayer gets the very best deal, regardless of the way contracts are delivered. The MOD is making sure big business does its part to support an efficient and economical defence budget.

Defence Secretary Michael Fallon said:

Taxpayers can be confident that this reduced profit rate will deliver better value for money on contracts as our defence budget rises and we deliver our £178bn equipment programme.

The defence sector is important for our prosperity, supporting high skilled jobs, and this rate provides a fair return comparable with that in other international markets.

A strong supplier base is essential to the security and prosperity of the UK. However, big businesses must do their part to deliver savings and balance the UK's budget. The new lower profit rate ensures that these businesses receive a fair return for the work they do, while freeing money for reinvestment in vital defence equipment, supporting jobs and innovation.

The figure of 7.46% is the starting point for calculating the profit on each contract before taking into accounts factors such as risk and the amount of their own money suppliers invest. The new rate is similar to profits earned by government defence suppliers in Western Europe and North America. It will come into effect from 1st April 2017.

The Single Source Contract Regulations were brought into force in 2014, following the Currie Review into single source procurement, to ensure that such contracts were charged at the best possible rate both for taxpayers and suppliers.

The Written Ministerial Statement on the new rate is available [here](#)

News story: Defence Secretary announces 1,500th signing of Armed Forces Covenant

Building materials supplier Travis Perkins were revealed as the 1,500th signatory during the third annual Partnering with Defence employer conference at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in London today.

Speaking at the conference, Sir Michael said:

By signing the Covenant, Travis Perkins joins firms across Britain committed to ensuring those who serve or have served our country are better supported.

Reaching this milestone also shows growing recognition of the unique skills and experience that reservists and former service personnel offer their organisations.

Amongst their commitments, Travis Perkins has pledged to provide Armed Forces personnel and veterans with a variety of work experience placements in their centres, branches, and stores across the country and are supporting members of the Royal Engineers in gaining NVQ qualifications for their construction skills.

Travis Perkins currently employs nine reservists and other members of the Armed Forces community across the country.

Maria Walding, a Compliance Manager at Travis Perkins, who is an Army Cadet Force adult volunteer, said:

The Travis Perkins Group has fully supported and values my role as a Reservist. I am proud to say I work for a company that consistently gives military personnel the chance to use their existing skills and build a lasting career outside of the military.

Travis Perkins CEO John Carter said:

As a business, Travis Perkins has long recognised the valuable skills and attributes those with a serving background can contribute, not only to our own workforce but also to the wider economy.

We are delighted to not only be here to celebrate the Group's commitment and ongoing support of the Armed Forces in our signing of the Armed Forces Covenant, but incredibly proud and honoured to be recognised along with our community of ex forces and serving colleagues, as the 1500th organisation to do so.

Travis Perkins joins a growing number of businesses that are making tangible pledges to the Armed Forces community.

Earlier this week Defence Minister Mark Lancaster also announced that the UK's main broadband providers including Virgin Media, Sky, Talk Talk, BT, EE and Plusnet, representing 95 per cent of Britain's broadband market, had committed to waiving fees on contracts that personnel had to cancel when posted abroad or to another part of the UK, often at short notice.

Since 2013, the Covenant has helped to deliver these key improvements for the

Armed Forces community:

- A new agreement with mortgage lenders allowing personnel posted abroad to rent out their homes without facing higher mortgage costs or having to change their mortgage;
 - Fairer mobile phone contracts, freezing the accounts of Armed Forces personnel and their families posted overseas and removing cancellation fees;
 - Better deals in motor insurance, allowing personnel to keep their no claims bonuses and avoid cancellation fees when posted overseas at short notice;
 - Employer networks in a wide range of sectors to support Service leavers through their transition to new careers;
 - Better access to banking, such as savings accounts to Service families posted overseas;
 - Tackling commercial disadvantage previously experienced by the Armed Forces community in relation to credit rating and access to mortgages on offer. For example, if their Service overseas forces them into a situation where they will need to rent out their home, members are now free from the need to switch to a 'buy to let' mortgage;
 - Better access to mentoring, work placements and employment opportunities for personnel leaving the Services;
 - Increased funding and sponsorship of military charities and sports events such as the Invictus Games;
 - Flexible paid or unpaid leave for mobilised Reservists;
 - Employment support for Veterans, Reservists, Service spouses and partners, as well as support for Cadets;
- Discounts and special deals for individuals and their families.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation, enshrined in law, ensuring that those who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged by their service.