

News story: Defence Secretary hails global outlook of Midlothian naval engineers

Sir Michael Fallon visited MacTaggart Scott, who design, build, install and maintain engineering systems for the Royal Navy – the company's "shop window" – and 40 of the world's navies, including the US, French, Canadian, Australian and South Korean.

The visit is part of the Defence Secretary's on-going engagement with Scotland's industrial base, 10% of which is defence-related, directly supporting 11,000 Scottish jobs with thousands more sustained. During the visit he met with some of the company's 32 engineering apprentices, which make up nearly 18% of the firm's industrial workforce.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

MacTaggart Scott is a terrific example of the benefits that combining innovation, a global outlook and an entrepreneurial spirit can deliver for Scotland as part of the UK.

They are a leading hub of international naval innovative design, manufacture and maintenance and should also be applauded for investing in our young people through their apprenticeship programme.

MacTaggart Scott designed, built and installed the huge lifts that will carry jets and helicopters between the flight decks and hangers on the Royal Navy's new aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales, currently being built in Rosyth. They also design and build helicopter handling systems, and are competing for contracts relating to the new Clyde-built Type 26 on which the first steel will be cut this summer.

Remarkably, the company has been involved in every submarine built for the Royal Navy since 1915, and manufacture and provide support to a range of specialist submarine equipment, including stealth mast raising equipment for periscopes, optronics and communications equipment, sonar handling gear, hydroplane, rudder and ballast tank valves and actuators for submarines across the globe.

Bill Marsh, Managing Director of MacTaggart Scott said:

Our innovative work for the Royal Navy's surface ships and submarines provides us with a vital shop window which sees half of our £35m turnover come from export.

Our ambition is to design, manufacture and install vital equipment and provide through life product support to every single Royal Navy ship and submarine.

- MacTaggart Scott is a privately owned engineering company founded in 1898 and employs 350 people, 32 of whom are apprentices.

Defence Budget

- The UK is investing £178bn in a decade long equipment programme.
- The UK Defence budget has a “double lock” which ensures that it will rise every year by at least 0.5% annually, above inflation and always exceed 2% of GDP.

UK

- Trade with the rest of the UK makes up over half of Scotland’s exports, and is four times the value of exports to the rest of the EU.
- The UK Government is firmly committed to the future of Defence in Scotland and its continued vital role in Defence.
- Scotland is home to military bases that provide essential capabilities for the Defence of the UK as a whole.
- By 2020, Scotland will be home to all of the Royal Navy’s submarines, one of the Army’s engagement and resilience Infantry Brigades, one of three RAF fast jet main operating bases and new P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

News story: UK invests in new submarine training school on the Clyde

HM Treasury this week approved the Initial Gate Business Case for the new submarine school to be built at Scotland’s largest military establishment this week. Final design approval is expected soon, which will allow work to begin later this year.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We are now making a long-term investment of hundreds of millions of

pounds to improve and upgrade the waterfront at Clyde to make sure it is ready to support the United Kingdom's whole submarine fleet.

As well as a boost to the Scottish economy, this will also bring welcome stability for our personnel, who work hard to help keep Britain safe and secure.

The new schools will provide academic and technical training for all Royal Naval personnel entering the submarine service from 2022. It is an important step for both the Royal Navy and Scotland as it means all submariners' careers, whether afloat or ashore, will be principally conducted from Faslane as part of a £1.3 billion investment in making the Clyde Britain's submarine hub.

All 11 Royal Navy submarines will be based at HMNB Clyde from 2020, seeing the number of people employed at the base will rise from 6,800 people to 8,200. The school will support the Astute hunter killer submarines, as well as the delivery of training for the new Dreadnought nuclear deterrent boats, which provide the United Kingdom with its continuous nuclear deterrent.

Head of the Submarine Service, Rear Admiral John Weale said:

Our new single integrated operating base will make significant improvements to the work-life balance of our 5,000 submariners.

By putting our boats and training in one place, our submariners can put down roots in Scotland knowing that they are no longer required to commute from one end of the country to another.

The re-location of submarine training from HMS Sultan and HMS Raleigh is consistent with the Better Defence Estate Strategy, published in November, which set out the department's plans sets out plans to achieve a more efficient, modern and capability focused defence estate and bring greater harmony to Service families.

Key milestones in the development of a Submarine Centre of specialisation at HM Naval Base Clyde include:

- A drumbeat of arrivals of the last four Astute class submarines on the Clyde due to be commissioned into the Royal Navy between 2018 and 2024 (eventually replacing the Trafalgar class).
- The move of the last two Trafalgar class submarines, HM Submarines Talent and Triumph, to the Clyde in 2019 and 2020 from Devonport (Plymouth). On current plans, the end of service date for Talent is 2021

and for Triumph is 2022.

- The move of the Submarine Escape Rescue Abandonment and Survivability Training capability from Hampshire to the Clyde by 2019.
- A new Nuclear Support Hub, providing modern standard effluent disposal by 2020 which will remain compliant with Scottish and UK environmental standards.
- The Faslane Nuclear Infrastructure Continuous Availability Programme to replace or refurbish Nuclear Facilities by 2024.
- The four Dreadnought nuclear deterrent submarines will start to arrive at Faslane from the early 2030s (replacing the Vanguard-class boats).

[News story: Defence Minister meets poppy producing veterans going for gold](#)

The Poppy Factory employs 27 disabled veterans in Richmond to produce poppies and wreaths for the Royal Family and the Royal British Legion, but not content with making 12.5 million poppies last year, they are now looking to gold-plate their award-winning employment scheme.

They are also the country's leading employability organisation for disabled military veterans, providing a free service to veterans with a medical condition or impairment across England and Wales to get back into work.

Having helped almost 700 people into employment since 2010, the charity won the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Silver Award last year for demonstrating great support to the Armed Forces community, and one of Deirdre Mills' key goals in her new role is to go for gold this year.

As part of the Armed Forces Covenant, which the government enshrined in law as a promise from the nation to ensure that the Armed Forces community are not at a disadvantage, the annual Defence Employer Recognition Scheme encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same – and the Poppy Factory is certainly doing that.

Defence Minister Earl Howe said:

From helping veterans across the country overcome adversity and get back into work, to empowering those who have inspired me here in Richmond today to contribute to such an honourable cause, the magnificent work of the Poppy Factory is a credit to the Armed Forces Covenant and I'm thrilled to see Deirdre is driving for even more success.



Earl Howe with Poppy Factory CEO Deirdre Mills.

Their new CEO Deirdre Mills enjoyed a successful career in the British Army herself before getting involved in charity work.

She said:

Our support is really making a difference, whether it be providing career advice or meeting the more complex needs of some of the hardest-to-help individuals in society. There is also a growing number of disabled veterans who are being referred to us by other organisations; this is both testament to the quality of our work and indicative of the growing number of military charities that are now working together to produce the best results.

We are working hard to accommodate and champion the needs of disabled people and a Gold Award will really help us demonstrate this to our donors and the public – we need to secure over £2m in sustainable funding each year to provide our life-changing service.



Earl Howe met Gary Lock, an ex Serviceman from 4 Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales.

Amongst those who Earl Howe met today was Gary Lock, an ex Serviceman from 4 Battalion Royal Regiment of Wales, who has been working at the factory since September. Suffering from a serious hip injury, Gary got in touch with the Poppy Factory looking for employment.

He said:

I really enjoy coming to work, and it's great to have a laugh and a joke while you're doing something that's making a difference.

[News story: UK and Egypt continue to tackle joint threats](#)

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach today welcomed his Egyptian counterpart to London to discuss shared challenges and threats, including that posed by Daesh.

Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy was received by a ceremonial guard from the

Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment, before holding discussions with Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon.

Discussion included shared security interests in Libya, planned Defence Engagement this year, including preparations for a future joint exercise involving counter-improvised explosive device (C-IED) training, and the UK's commitment to security in the region. Dates for the annual military staff talks were also confirmed, which aim to identify mutual training opportunities and areas where both nations can deepen their military relationship.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Stability abroad helps keep the streets of Britain safer and more secure.

With a strengthening relationship and as a key partner in defence and military matters, Britain is working with Egypt to combat threats, including from Daesh terrorism in Sinai and Libya.

Deepening our relationship with Egypt helps ensure stability in the Middle East and improves safety and security here in Britain.

The Defence Secretary [visited](#) Cairo in September, where he committed the UK to continue working alongside the Egyptian military, particularly through C-IED training.



Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach today welcomed his Egyptian counterpart Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy to London. Crown Copyright.

As part of joint Defence work last year, Royal Navy warships HMS Ocean and Bulwark visited Egypt and met with ENS Tahya Misr to practice manoeuvres and participate in an air defence exercise.

10 Egyptian officers from their Mistral class helicopter carriers were also hosted on board, and ahead of the exercise HMS Ocean, visited the port of Alexandria, the first Royal Navy ship to do so for eight years.

Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

I was pleased to welcome Lt Gen Hegazy to London, and following a positive exchange I have personally reaffirmed our important Defence ties. We will continue to develop this military bond.

While in the UK, Lt Gen Hegazy is also due to visit Northwood Headquarters, where he will meet Commander of Joint Forces Command General Sir Chris Deverell, among other senior personnel.

[News story: Service personnel want greater choice on where they get to live](#)

Launched in August 2016, the [Future Accommodation Model](#) (FAM) is being set up to provide the best possible accommodation better suited to the modern Armed Forces and their families – offering a choice based on need, not age, rank or relationship status.

The scheme aims to give personnel greater support in purchasing their own home through initiatives such as ‘Forces Help to Buy’ which helps younger military personnel purchase their first home, and has proven popular with those in lower ranks.

It will also include the option of renting privately, with £450 million being spent to subsidise costs. For those renting, allowances will adjust so that personnel based in more expensive areas will not pay more, so a three-bed property in Cornwall will cost them the same as a three-bed property in London. By giving service personnel greater choice in where they get to live it can also offer more opportunities for military families, like increasing employment prospects for partners and spouses.

Taking place between September and October 2016, this survey is part of an on-going consultation to inform the Ministry of Defence (MOD) accommodation policy development.

Chief of Defence People, Lieutenant General Richard Nugee, said:

The Future Accommodation Model will ensure that our people are offered a greater choice in where they want to live. Over the coming months, we will refine how we do this and look to ensure that service personnel are engaged and listened to every step of the way.

This survey will help us immeasurably to better understand what is important to personnel when it comes to where and how they live.

It is vital that the accommodation system works for everybody and reflects the needs of a modern Armed Force. This is why the MOD also refurbished 4,700 military homes last year and is investing over £4 billion to provide better facilities for the Armed Forces and their families.

Future Accommodation Model survey Headline Results

- FAM is considered attractive by over half of Service personnel – with Junior Officers and Other Ranks more likely to find it attractive than Senior Officers.
- Over half of Service Personnel feel that FAM is fairer than the current MOD accommodation offer.
- The most important factor regarding accommodation is the ability to live in good quality accommodation, while the choice of living in either a civilian or military community is considered the least important.
- For married personnel, and those with children, the second most important factor was the opportunity to live with family and children.
- There is a clear preference for home ownership across the Services, with over a third of personnel preferring the 'owning near work' option.
- If FAM were widened to include Service Family Accommodation (SFA), offered at the same costs as the 'Renting near work' option, then over a third would choose it.
- Some of the top reasons for choosing FAM options were: to own a property; to choose a location near to what's important to people; and, because they are financially attractive.

The [initial findings can be viewed here](#), and a second tranche of the full data tables will be published in March.

The Ministry of Defence will also be taking into account other evidence gathered, including results from the FAM focus groups and the survey results of the single Service Family Federations, which asked family members and partners of Service personnel for their opinions.