

## [News story: SJFHQ undertake valuable maritime familiarisation visit to HMNB Devonport](#)

Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) was established under the last Strategic Defence and Security Review and is a new deployable, operational 2\* Joint Headquarters intended to command Joint forces in response to a crises or contingency worldwide.

SJFHQ personnel come from all 3 services and the purpose of the visit to [HMNB Devonport](#) was to widen the experience of SJFHQ staff from the [British Army](#) and the [Royal Air Force](#) in particular, so they can better appreciate the significant contribution the navy can play in any future operations. This will help them to plan more effectively and understand how the Royal Navy can best be utilised in SJFHQ led Joint operations.



Lt Col James Fuller, RM, briefs SJFHQ personnel on the capabilities of HMS Bulwark. Crown Copyright/MOD 2017. All rights reserved

The team spent 2 days at HMNB Devonport, where they received briefs on a range of topics, from amphibious operations to naval logistics and the new [Type 26 Global Combat Ship](#). They toured the assault ship [HMS Bulwark](#) and travelled in Offshore Raiding Craft for a coxswain demonstration from [1 Assault Group Royal Marines](#). After a briefing from the Navy's Flag Officer

Sea Training (FOST) team, the SJFHQ team then split into groups to visit 2 vessels currently undergoing FOST training and assessments. The first group travelled to [HMS Duncan](#) and watched her crew on an air assault exercise, while the second watched a damage control exercise on Norwegian frigate HNOMS Otto Sverdrup.



SJFHQ personnel ready to experience a ride on Offshore Raiding Craft, courtesy of 1 Assault Group Royal Marines. Crown Copyright/MOD 2017. All rights reserved

Lt Col Nick Morton RA, SJFHQ, said:

As a Joint Headquarters, it's essential that we all have a good understanding of the capabilities and specialisms of each of the 3 branches of the armed forces, not just our own. Visiting Devonport has really helped me to develop and embed my knowledge of the Royal Navy and the reality of how it operates.

SJFHQ also has embedded staff officers from the UK's partner nations in the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and the Anglo-French Combined Joint Expeditionary Force, several of whom took part in the visit. The visit to HNOMS Otto Sverdrup therefore also provided an opportunity to see a JEF partner nation in action.

Captain Peter Olive RN, Assistant Chief of Staff (Operate Branch), SJFHQ said:

Our visit was enormously valuable to the team, especially those from the army and RAF. It has really brought the Royal Navy to life for the staff and helped them to understand more about the limitations and difficulties of maritime operations, as well as the enormous benefits maritime power can provide to any future deployments.

Everyone here at HMNB Devonport and on HMS Bulwark, HMS Duncan and HNOMS Otto Sverdrup has been extremely helpful and accommodating, so thank you to them.

The visit followed an earlier familiarisation visit to the Army's Land Warfare Centre and plans are underway for a similar event with the RAF.

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## [News story: UK troops on NATO mission join Estonian national celebration](#)

Ahead of the deployment of 800 British troops to lead part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia, an advance team from 5th Battalion the Rifles already in country today joined the Estonia Independence Day Parade, marching through the capital of Tallinn to a crowd of thousands.

The event marks the Estonian Declaration of Independence in 1918, after Britain played a key role in helping the Estonians to gain their independence.

The UK and Estonia have a long history of working together across Defence, including standing side by side in Afghanistan, and next year marks 100 years since the earliest co-operation between the Royal Navy and Estonia.

In November 1918, to support the independence of the Baltic States, a Royal Navy Squadron was deployed to the region. This close relationship continues today, and in January this year, HMS Ramsey joined NATO's maritime group, commanded by ENS Admiral Cowan, an Estonian ship named after the Royal Navy commander in the Baltic in 1919.

The ENS Admiral Cowan, a former Royal Navy mine hunter, was formally handed over to the Estonian Navy in 2007, and is now the lead vessel of its division.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Today's landmark in Estonia's history is an opportunity to celebrate our defence ties that stretch back over a century to when they gained independence.

Britain is playing a leading role in European security by deploying forces to Estonia, alongside our allies, to defend NATO.

Backed by a defence budget rising every year, our deployment will be defensive but fully combat capable, from armoured fighting vehicles to communications specialists who can deal with cyber threats.



Photo Source: EESTI KAITSEVAGI Credit:TKE

At the NATO Warsaw Summit last year, the UK committed to leading one of four battlegroups in NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in the Baltic States and Poland. In addition to the 800 UK troops, France and Denmark will also deploy personnel to Estonia.

The main body of UK troops are due to arrive in April and will arrive with Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles and Challenger II tanks. British personnel have been exercising with Estonian, French and Danish colleagues in Germany recently to prepare for the deployment. The UK will also be deploying troops to Poland in support of the US-led battlegroup there.

The Defence Secretary discussed the deployment with NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels recently and also called on NATO to modernise its structures to be able to deal more effectively with current and future threats, including the threats from terrorism and cyber.

Earlier this week, Colonel Giles Harris, Commander British Forces in Estonia, met with Prime Minister Juri Ratas, who personally welcomed him to Estonia. During their meeting Col Harris and the Prime Minister discussed the historic deployment of a multinational NATO contingent to the region.

Col Harris said:

It is great to have NATO troops parading here on Estonian Independence Day. It reminds us of our shared history and values.

Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid also attended the celebrations, which in addition to the parade, included a formal flag-raising ceremony at the Tall Hermann tower, wreath-laying at the Monument of War of Independence on Vabaduse Square, and a church service.



Photo Source: EESTI KAITSEVAGI Credit:TKE

To find out a bit more about the NATO enhanced Forward Presence mission, watch the short explainer video below:

[NATO eFP answered](#)

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## [Statement to Parliament: Youth justice update](#)

In December 2016, we set out our plans to reform our approach to youth justice which will help drive forward improved outcomes for young offenders both in custody and in the community.

We are today announcing the next steps of our reforms with a package of measures which will create stronger, clearer governance for the youth justice system.

I have appointed Charlie Taylor as the new Chair of the Youth Justice Board. He is uniquely well placed to take on this role: he has led changes in government policy on the education of children who have been excluded from school, is a former head teacher of an outstanding school for children with complex behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and his youth justice review set out a compelling vision for reform. As the Chair of the Board, it is this vision that he will work with my department to drive forward.

We will create a new Youth Custody Service as a distinct arm of HM Prison and Probation Service, with a dedicated Director accountable directly to the Chief Executive and working closely with the Chair of the Youth Justice Board.

The Director will have operational responsibility for the day-to-day running of the youth estate, will keep a firm grip on performance, and will be a

board-level member of HM Prison and Probation Service. The Youth Custody Service will have its own workforce separately recruited and trained to work in the youth estate, and we will create distinct career pathways for those wanting to work with children and young people in the secure estate, including a new Youth Justice Specialist Worker role.

We will bring responsibility and accountability for commissioning youth custody services into the Ministry of Justice. Working closely with the Chair of the Youth Justice Board, the Department will be responsible for setting clear standards for the provision of youth justice and will be responsible for intervening decisively to address poor performance.

These changes will enable the Youth Justice Board to build on its strong track-record and focus on its statutory function of providing vital independent advice on, and scrutiny of, the whole system, advising the government on what standards to set for the youth justice system and monitoring delivery of those standards. It will continue to work closely with Youth Offending Teams to promote early intervention in the community and share best practice across the system.

The youth justice system covers England and Wales and the majority of services for children and young people in Wales are devolved. We will continue our collaborative approach with the Youth Justice Board Cymru and the Welsh Government under these new arrangements.

We are very grateful to Lord McNally, whose term as Chair ends shortly, for his dedicated leadership of the Youth Justice Board over the past three years, and thank him for the drive and passion he has shown.

Charlie Taylor will become the new Chair of the Youth Justice Board when Lord McNally's term ends. Under the Governance Code on Public Appointments, which came into effect on 1 January this year, ministers can, in exceptional circumstances, make an appointment without a competition. I have decided to appoint Charlie Taylor as the new Chair of the Youth Justice Board on these terms and, in accordance with the Code, have consulted the Commissioner for Public Appointments who has accepted the decision.

We are also publishing today the [findings and recommendations of the Youth Custody Improvement Board](#). The Board was set up to explore and report on the current state of the youth custodial estate and recommend how the system could be improved, particularly focusing on any current risks to safety and well-being. We are very grateful to its members for their work.

The Board's report underlines the importance of reforming the youth custody system. Many of their recommendations are reflected in our plans, and we will consider all their recommendations as we implement our reforms.