



PRO PATRIA

Journal of Defence UK

2024 Volume 6

ISSN (print) 2754-9984

ISSN (digital) 2754-9992

OUR MANIFESTO FOR DEFENCE





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Advancing public awareness and understanding of the history and role of the Armed Forces in the life of the Nation;

Commissioning research into the threats faced by the United Kingdom and the military capabilities required to meet these threats;

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Front Cover Image: Ajax, the British Army’s new generation of armoured fighting vehicle, is put through its paces during cold weather trials in Sweden (Photo: Sgt Robert Weideman RLC – © Crown Copyright: Ministry of Defence).

INTRODUCTION – THE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

It's a General Election year but few people are talking about the biggest political challenge of all – Defence of the Realm – despite global instability and multiple threats to national security from rogue states – especially Russia, China and Iran – and from international terrorism. Even fewer have grasped the extent to which recent governments have allowed our armed forces to degenerate to such an extent that we now have vast capability gaps across all three armed services (gaping chasms would be a more accurate description). Very occasionally the issue of defence raises its head, usually when the news media's headlines can't help but reflect growing tensions in the world. So, shortly after Opposition Leader Sir Keir Starmer vowed that a Labour government would increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP “when borrowing rules allow”, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak gave a speech to NATO allies in Poland in which he set out a plan to reach the same 2.5% target “by 2030”. Mr Sunak also pledged to put the UK's defence industry “on a war footing”. These statements are welcome but how serious are the present PM and his likely successor about matching deeds to words? Some of us might be forgiven for thinking we have heard it all before.

We know, for example, that despite some modest increases in funding for our forces in recent years, there are still huge capability gaps in UK defence and that all three of our armed services are struggling to recruit or retain personnel. According to the most recent figures, more people are leaving the military than are joining. At the same time, the number of civil servants (and lawyers and accountants) at the Ministry of Defence has continued to grow. The Defence Secretary Grant Shapps now tells us that increases in defence funding will be made possible by cutting the civil service – but where will the money thus saved be spent? We can assume that a large slice will go to training and equipping the Ukrainians. The reason for this is equally clear. The British government, like its European Union counterparts, has lately taken the comparatively easy option of contracting out the protection of our interests at this dangerous time to western allies such as Ukraine and Israel, seeing them as our front line against Putin's Russia and Islamic-fundamentalist Iran.

It is right that we are supporting those who are resisting the Russians and Iranians, the latter regime a key backer of both Hamas in Gaza and the Houthis in Yemen, as well as an emerging nuclear power and, through its Revolutionary Guards, a global economic force to be reckoned with. But, while it is true that the Ukrainians and Israelis are, in effect, fighting the West's battles for us, against two of our most dangerous adversaries, we cannot rely on these proxies, especially when in



“The more I see of politicians the less I think of them. They are always terrified of public opinion as long as the enemy is sufficiently far, but when closely threatened by the enemy inclined to lose their heads, and blame all their previous errors on the heads of the military whose advice they have failed to follow.”

Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke (1883–1963)
Chief of the Imperial General Staff during World War II

the case of the Israel / Gaza conflict we have no control over our allies' actions, let alone the potential consequences of an escalating conflict. Simply selling weapons to Israel, and providing military hardware and training for Ukrainian forces, cannot in itself guarantee the security of the United Kingdom.

We should be aiming for 3.5% of GDP

Of course, we need to keep backing our allies around the world, Ukraine in particular, but we also need to be ready to confront Russian, Iranian, and, indeed, Chinese, aggression ourselves. The increases in the defence budget should come quickly, much quicker than either Sunak or Starmer are proposing – there seems to be no sense of urgency – and with a goal of reaching 3.5% of GDP as soon as possible, not just the modest 2.5% which, with threats growing at the rate they are, is far from adequate now. More importantly, the lion's share of funding must go into the rapid expansion of the Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force, and ensuring that they have the latest and most appropriate kit, not simply spent to shore up our allies and proxies overseas, or papering over the cracks. We need a new funding formula for the MOD and a genuine new commitment to *British* forces.

So, as the General Election looms, we must remind our politicians (of all parties) of the old mantra, “Defence is the first duty of government”. They will, naturally and inevitably, claim that they agree wholeheartedly with this statement and will do as much as they can to provide the UK with an effective defence policy, but they will invariably add that the country cannot afford a *massive* increase in the defence budget at this time, with the British economy in the doldrums due to “circumstances beyond our control” so any increased provision will have to be phased in over several years. And they will add that the MOD cannot spend a

large increase in its budget in a short space of time. (And all the while, they will be saying to themselves, “Well, anyway, there are no votes in defence, are there?”) But we can and should be ramping up defence as rapidly as possible. If repairing our depleted military is scheduled to take six years, remember that was the duration of World War Two!

Our politicians should be looking anxiously over their shoulders at the rapidly growing threats on the horizon, not least the danger to any prospect of a long-term economic recovery and the damage that would be caused by another massive economic shockwave. Where economic calculations are concerned, Defence of the Realm is, whatever the Treasury number-crunchers and the party HQ policy analysts might think, the real “bottom line”. Security really is “the first duty of government” and that is no mere slogan. We have already seen the impact of the Russia / Ukraine war, and of Iran’s support for Hamas and the Houthis, on the security of our trade routes and energy supplies, and the knock-on effect of these conflicts on the global economy and, in consequence, living standards in the UK. Can we risk any more such jolts to the system – and threats to the international order?

The British people demand stability and security

There is a clear domestic dimension to all this. In 2024, what is it that the British people want most from their political leaders? It is to restore stability and security. They want (and are entitled to be) secure in their homes, in their communities, their jobs, their finances, their old age, their health and welfare. They also realise only too well that they need the food and energy supplies, trade routes and, above all, the borders of the country to be secure, for all our sakes. They realise now, with conflicts breaking out all over the globe, that we are in a perilous situation, both internationally and here at home. When it comes to the imminent General Election, all the major parties will need to address the electorate’s justified demand to be *more secure*. Those who do not will suffer at the ballot box, but, more importantly, they will be failing this nation and her people at a crucial juncture.

Meanwhile, war with Russia is now widely considered “inevitable”; with some experts predicting that this conflict will come within 20 years and others that it could be just 2 to 5 years away. Not just “armchair generals” but serving officers and senior NATO officials have said as much. Are we prepared for that war? Not in Britain, it seems. One former MOD minister has said that when all government departments were invited to send representatives to an important cross-government meeting to discuss war preparedness, only the MOD was represented. Nobody else in government, outside the Ministry of Defence, is taking the apparent inevitability of an all-out war with Russia seriously. This would



Type 26 frigate HMS *Glasgow* enters the water for the first time. Constructed at Govan on the River Clyde, she is expected to enter service by 2028, to be followed by HMS *Cardiff* and HMS *Belfast* and then by a further five T26 City Class ships. (Ministry of Defence – © Crown Copyright)

be alarming were it not so absurd and almost laughable. The administration of government seems to be in the hands of would-be actors auditioning for parts in a real-life remake of *Yes Minister*, or *The Thick of It*.

What of our Western partners and allies? The fact is that, while some European governments are at last beginning to see the error of their ways and are moving gradually to a more effective defence posture, NATO Europe as a whole is still falling far short of what is needed to resource its military forces adequately, let alone “preparing for war”. Meanwhile, NATO’s driving power, the United States of America, is weak, confused, and edging towards “America First” isolationism. But we are in no position to lecture them on their failings. Here in the UK, our politicians have been merrily cutting defence for more than 30 years, shrinking our Armed Forces to the point where our army is now smaller than at any time since before the Napoleonic Wars (despite our population being 10 times bigger!).

The salami-slicing of our military began with the end of the Cold War and the desire by politicians (and the public) to enjoy a long-awaited “Peace Dividend”. But since the 1990s our underfunded and overstretched forces have been deployed to conflict zones ranging from Sierra Leone and Libya to Afghanistan,

“As a rule, a democracy is loath to pay, in time of peace, for the weapons with which to defend it. At the start of every war therefore, the small, regular armed forces have had to man the defences, while the nation behind them sought the arms that it would not provide in good time. This has always been accepted, as appallingly dangerous as it is as a policy. Members of the regular forces appreciate that that is what they have been trained and paid for most of their lives. The heavy casualties amongst them at the beginning of a war is the service they give in return. What is unnecessary, however, is that these regular forces should be ill-trained or wrongly armed at the outset; so far as the Navy was concerned, this was lamentably so in certain respects, notably in the matter of defence against air attack.”



Rear Admiral Tony Pugsley CD DSO (1901-1990), in his book *Destroyer Men*

Iraq, Syria, and now, the Red Sea. We have, latterly, provided military aid and support to Ukraine, and most recently to Israel, and in the early part of this year British forces played a major part in NATO's biggest military exercise in decades, Exercise Steadfast Defender, in readiness for that “inevitable” war with Russia. But the glaring holes in our defence capabilities are there for all to see.

While some of our Forces' kit is state-of-the-art (Type 26 destroyers, Typhoon jets, and upgraded tanks, as well as an array of smart missiles and the most sophisticated drone technology) all three services face a recruitment and retention crisis, and are likely to shrink even further unless urgent action is taken to reverse the decline. Meanwhile, “wokery” has infected Britain's Armed Forces even further with absurd “diversity” targets, and the very people who in previous generations would have rushed to enlist now see no benefit in joining up. The crisis is so serious that some politicians are talking openly of introducing conscription!

It is no good assuming that we are thousands of miles away from the likely battlegrounds. Actually, we are on the front line. Russia has effective maritime and air assets including nuclear submarines. The British Army, as several generals and expert commentators have pointed out in recent months, cannot fight Russia – or, at any rate, could not hold the Russians for more than a few days (weeks

if we are lucky). Thank God for Zelenskyy and the Ukrainians! The Ukraine war is not just about Ukraine and Russia, it's about the fate of the Western democracies. Ukraine is fighting our war for us, so we have both a moral duty and a political and economic necessity to continue supporting the Ukrainians militarily and financially.

But it is also important to remember that the West is fighting on a number of other fronts. The new Axis of Russia, China and Iran have little if anything in common ideologically, other than the dictatorial and essentially totalitarian nature of their regimes, but they are completely united in their hatred of the West. The coming conflict may well not be a direct military confrontation but a dramatic escalation of Russian and Chinese cyber-warfare against the West, or perhaps an Iranian-backed wave of piracy and maritime terrorism that strangles our energy and food supplies. Or, and this not impossible, the “perfect storm” – a combination of all these things, augmented by a wave of Islamist terrorist atrocities. Are we ready for all of these eventualities? We do not seem even to be ready for any one of them, let alone multiple attacks from all these different directions at the same time. Neither are other NATO countries.

So, what must be done? Our “Defence Manifesto”, set out in the following pages, gives an overview and brutally frank assessment of the UK's defence requirements and sets out recommendations for a new direction in defence policy. In our submission, politicians on both sides of the House of Commons, their advisers and the Civil Servants charged with implementing government policy have consistently failed to grasp the seriousness of the threats that we have faced. There have been honourable exceptions but not enough of them. This is why we have not only a static and muddled defence policy but no strategy for national resilience and national security. It is also why defence procurement is often short-sighted and there is no incentive to provide an efficient service or value-for-money.

It is frankly astonishing that, despite being faced with a war in Ukraine, on NATO Europe's doorstep, this has not led to the reappraisal of British defence policy that we desperately need, just a ramping-up of rhetoric. Political action has not remotely matched words. The situation in the Red Sea is hugely significant, and the RAF and RN operations against the Houthis, which were entirely proportionate to the threat, are to be applauded, but, despite the ludicrous spectacle of the BBC and much of the media suggesting that British air strikes represented an escalation of the conflict, nothing could be further than the truth. Keeping the sea lanes open is absolutely crucial. We are defending the rights of passage of merchant vessels, something that is guaranteed by the UN Charter. When more than 90% of our international trade is by sea and much of this comes through the Suez Canal, Britain had no option to strike back against the Iranian-backed pirates. But this is just a tiny glimmer of what else is to come. ■

THE DEFENCE ENVIRONMENT

In the past 30+ years we have seen the spotlight of world affairs swing from Europe to the Middle East and back again, and one might expect the pendulum to keep swinging back and forth but as of 2024 we have a “perfect storm” of issues coming to a head, or threatening to do so, in Europe, the Far East, the Middle East and Africa **all at once**. Of these, the threat from Russia is the most acute for Britain. The war in Ukraine may seem geographically remote but it could easily extend to the Baltic, perhaps also Northern Norway and we may find war coming right to our own doorsteps. The UK is within range of many of Russia’s conventional long-range missiles.



The new Axis – Xi Jinping of China and Vladimir Putin of Russia. Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is not here but he is a fully paid-up member of the Triumvirate, with Kim Jong Un of North Korea usually kept at arm’s length but still an associate member of the same club.

However, the word that seems to rarely occur in the defence policy documents of the MOD or the various political parties is “war”. The word “pandemic” never appeared in the 2019 General Election Manifestos of the various parties, but a pandemic was the dominating feature of the last five years. There is now a greater chance of the UK being confronted by large-scale warfare than at any time in the last several decades. Such a conflict is perhaps not inevitable but the chances are high enough as to warrant serious efforts to prepare for war.

Europe

The security situation of the various Northern European countries does vary according to local circumstances but one would expect all Northern European countries to recognise the same basic realities, so this document will examine the defence postures and perceptions of many of our neighbours to find out their view of the overall security situation.

The war in Ukraine is demonstrating that the Russian threat to all Europe is driving a strategic defence shift in almost all major nations – except here in the UK. France is on what Macron calls a “war economy”, with €3bn additional funds in 2023 alone to buy additional platforms, missiles, guns and ammunition. Germany has broken historic national norms on defence, reversing more than 70

years of military-averse policies, exporting arms to Ukraine, having to change strategic energy supply and increasing defence spending by over €100Bn, with heavy investments in missile defence. Even in Italy, where the poor economy is driving scepticism on Ukraine, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has said that “Italy will never be the weak link of the West”. What about the UK?

Finally, Finland and Sweden have both broken away from decades of neutrality to join the NATO alliance.

Sweden

In 2021 Sweden’s then defence policy stated: *“The security situation in Sweden’s neighbourhood and in Europe has deteriorated over time. An armed attack against Sweden cannot be ruled out. Nor can it be ruled out that military measures, or the threat of suchlike, may be used against Sweden. A security crisis or an armed conflict arising in our neighbourhood would inevitably have an impact on Sweden as well. Total defence capabilities (military and civil resources combined) should therefore be strengthened.”*

It is hard to imagine words like that being expressed in the UK. As will be seen further on in this document, Britain’s political class simply fails to perceive the threats that other countries perceive.

Furthermore: *“Sweden, within the framework of the solidarity-based security policy, alone and together with other states and organisations, should be able to defend Sweden against an armed attack. The Swedish unilateral declaration of solidarity comprises EU members as well as the Nordic countries. Sweden will not remain passive if another EU member state or a Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack.*

*“The Swedish Armed Forces as a whole shall be able to be organised for war and all wartime units shall be able to begin to perform their wartime duties **within one week** (editor’s emphasis) of the decision on heightened alert and general mobilisation.*

Efforts to increase resilience, especially in order and safety, protection of the civilian population, healthcare, food and drinking water, financial readiness, transport, energy supply and electronic communications and post, need to be further developed and strengthened.”

Poland

Again we quote from official Polish defence policy documents: *“The ultimate goal of Russia is to create a new international order based on the so called ‘concert of powers’. We assume that by 2032 Russia will maintain its aggressive stance in its foreign and security policies. Taking into account the asymmetry of military*

capabilities between Russia and NATO's eastern flank members, such a situation creates a direct threat for Poland and the region."

Poland's security chief has been quoted as saying NATO will be at war with Russia within three years of Ukraine being defeated. Poland's policy document of 2016 said that: *"Russia conducts a vast programme of technical modernisation of its armed forces, pursues an intensive schedule of military exercises, and continues to militarise its society. Russia's defence expenditures are treated as a priority and will be sustained at the current high level even during periods of long-term economic stagnation. This policy is highly coordinated with the operations of Russia's special services, including the deployment of such instruments as disinformation campaigns against other countries. Moscow uses instruments allowing it to decrease NATO's advantage of forces by conducting cyber-attacks, or threatening the use of force against individual states, including the use of tactical nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries."* That was in 2016, the situation has hardly improved since then.

Poland is in the forefront of European nations in its re-armament programme, buying artillery from South Korea, main battle tanks and fighter jets from the USA, anti-aircraft guns and missiles from various sources.

Poland could also be the location of any outbreak of land war with Russia. The Suwalki gap is the short border between Poland and Lithuania, buttressed by Kaliningrad (Russia) to the west and Belarus in the east. It is expected that a Russian move against the three Baltic states would start with an attempt to close the gap, unite Kaliningrad with Belarus and isolate the Baltic states from their allies.

Latvia

"Authoritarian regimes continue to undermine international security and democratic values of the West through wide spectrum of hybrid, cyber, conventional and nuclear threats. Russia is learning from its mistakes in Ukraine and will continue to remain a threat to Latvia's national security. Defence spending must increase to 3% of GDP. Army must increase its fighting force to 31,000 combat-ready active duty soldiers and 30,000 general reserve troops". (ed – Latvia's population is <2million so this is equivalent to 1 million regular soldiers in Britain, pro-rata.)

In 2023, a law was enacted to introduce compulsory military service. **Military service became mandatory for male citizens from January 1, 2024.**

As with the other Baltic states, Latvia has a significant Russian-speaking minority living within its borders, about 25% in Latvia's case. "Coming to the rescue of a persecuted minority" could well be a pretext for a Russia invasion.

A Canadian-led NATO battlegroup is permanently stationed in Latvia but such a small force (approximately 1,000 strong) would not significantly hinder a Russian attack.

United States of America

The USA has a crucial role to play in the defence of Europe. Quoting Sweden again: *"the armed forces of European NATO members rely heavily on American resources to be able to act in a high-level conflict. The defence of the Baltic states lacks operational depth on land and the ability to perform or to protect reinforcement operations to the Baltic Sea region would be of great importance in the event of a conflict in Sweden's neighbourhood. To the extent that American units are not present in Europe, for logistical and geographical reasons, reinforcement with use of airborne forces would normally be most rapid, followed by naval forces, with army forces taking the longest amount of time."*

"If the North Atlantic sea routes between North America and Europe are disrupted or closed, the possibility for the United States and NATO to defend the eastern and northern member states, including the Baltic states, will be considerably hampered. It would also be difficult if United States and NATO bases and staging areas in the Nordic countries were to be occupied or otherwise neutralised."

This assumes not only an ability for the US to assist in the defence of Northern Europe but also a willingness. Neither of these can now be taken for granted. If the US is heavily involved in a conflict in the western Pacific it may have limited resource to spare to help us. If Donald Trump wins the presidency and stays true to some of his statements he may be unwilling to help. The European powers need, more than ever before, to stand on their own two feet.

Russia and Ukraine

Readers will be familiar with the basic story. The Ukrainian armed forces put up a relatively poor show in 2014 and the Russian Army (assisted by separatists) took control of much of the Donbas region and Crimea, which they subsequently annexed. The separatists are not much mentioned in news reports but it has to be recognised that, apart from President Putin's ambitions, a significant number of people living in the Ukraine identified as Russian and wanted to be part of Russia.

Russia apparently regards the eastern expansion of NATO to Russia's borders as "structural violence", whereas the West sees that expansion as a natural and reasonable choice by individual nations. The Russians, who have long regarded themselves as a surrounded people, believe they need a bulwark of friendly, or at least, compliant countries to protect Mother Russia. To quote a Sky News commentator: *"It is this disconnect of world view, combined with the willingness to use force, that makes the situation in eastern Europe so very dangerous There will be a ceasefire, or some kind of uneasy stalemate – possibly this year, almost definitely by next year in Ukraine.....we will then be faced with a 'New Russian Army', to be used where President Putin wills – and he has a long list of*



Ukrainian military operations in Eastern Ukraine. (Photo by Taras Gren, Ministry of Defence of Ukraine)

're-adjustments' to correct what he sees as the disaster of the collapse of the Soviet Union. We are, most definitively, in a pre-war era."

The Ukrainian army has been reported as 200,000 active soldiers plus 250,000 reserves. The Territorial Defence Forces are light infantry raised to fight mainly in their own locality. They number about 130,000 and comprise 9 Brigades and several independent battalions.

Ukraine's Armed Forces have a total active strength of 700,000; with the Border Guard, National Guard, and police included, the total comes to around one million. This is clearly much less than Russia can mobilise (despite Russia's considerable losses) and not enough to inflict a decisive defeat on Russia.

Ukraine's Air Force has exceeded expectations, those expectations being that it would be wiped out on the ground in the first few days of the war. Although they lost over 60 aircraft in 2022, losses in 2023 numbered just 7, with about 45 aircraft (ex-Soviet designs) being transferred from NATO nations to help replace the losses. Modern western munitions including cruise missiles have made the remaining Ukrainian aircraft much more effective. The transfer of US-made F-16 fighters (albeit old ones) will strengthen the Ukraine AF further in 2024.

Most of the larger vessels that the Ukraine Navy possessed have either been sunk or captured leaving only minor craft but nevertheless the Navy has scored

considerable successes using land-launched anti-ship missiles and drones. Russia's Black Sea fleet has now been withdrawn to the east of Crimea to take it out of danger. The conflict has had significant effect on the wider world because Ukraine is one of the world's leading exporters of grain, including to Africa and the Middle East. Overland transport of such a bulky product cannot wholly replace sea transport.

How the war evolves depends mainly on how much support, material and financial, Ukraine gets from NATO and other western countries. Many in the West have voiced the opinion that if Russia overcomes Ukraine it will not stop there, but go on to attack NATO with the three small Baltic states being the most vulnerable and (being formerly part of the Soviet Union, like Ukraine) the most likely targets.

Of particular in interest to European powers are the missile attacks upon Ukraine and their effective defence against these attacks. Ukraine possessed some ex-Soviet missiles but these have been supplemented by the US Patriot and recently the European SAMP/T, both being long-range (100km) systems. They have also taken delivery of various western shorter range missile and self-propelled guns. Even with this impressive variety of air defence systems a significant number of Russian cruise and ballistic missiles do get through to their targets.

(The UK possesses only about 40 short range Starstreak launchers, mainly to protect Army units in the field, and has also the very recent Sky Sabre system, but just one battery with two radars and 4-6 launchers. More are on order but this is a very small number. The UK possesses no anti-aircraft guns apart from those mounted on Royal Navy warships. In fact the best anti-missile defence the UK possesses are the Navy's frigates and destroyers.)

Russia shows no sign of giving up, despite considerable losses in manpower and material. Russia's industries have been put on a war footing and 6% of GDP or one third of all government expenditure, is being devoted to defence. The current army recruitment target is 1.15 million troops. President Putin seems determined to win, come what may.

Middle East

Israel and Palestine

There is little to be added to that which is already commonly known about this conflict. A rapprochement between Israel and some of the Arab states (most notably Saudi Arabia) was on the cards but the on-going conflict in Gaza has put paid to that. Perhaps this was one of Hamas's (and Iran's) intentions. With the growth of both Israeli and Palestinian extremism there seems little prospects for peace in this area.

Iran

Iran is at war (albeit at a low level) with the West in general and Israel in particular but war by proxy, using Houthi (Yemen), Hamas (Gaza) and Hezbollah (Lebanon) as its main instruments. Iran is active in Iraq where there is a large Shia majority. Iran, though, has its problems with widespread discontent with the theocratic regime, especially among women and the young. Iran has made considerable progress towards acquiring nuclear weapons but not thought to have actually made any yet. Iran has also exchanged strikes with Pakistan recently. Pakistan is accused of sheltering Sunni separatists and itself accuses Iran of sheltering Baluchistan separatists.

Far East

China and Taiwan

President Xi has stated unambiguously that he wants to see Taiwan annexed and made part of the People's Republic of China (PRC). At the age of 70, one wonders how many more years he is prepared to wait. The Rand Corporation have run



Chinese power – a Chengdu J-20 5th generation stealth fighter
(<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52820207>)

several simulations of all-out war between the USA and its allies and in some scenarios China wins, in some it does not. A Chinese invasion of Taiwan would be a very hazardous operation, a blockade of Taiwan might be safer. At present a very large proportion of the world's supply of microchips comes from Taiwan and a war NOW (2024) would cause immense disruption to trade worldwide. Chip factories elsewhere in the world are under construction and when they are up-and-running a Chinese attack on Taiwan would be much less disruptive globally, and hence more likely.

China and the South China Sea

China, despite rulings from the international courts, has seized islands belonging to the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and others and has also built up and fortified various reefs and shoals in the South China Sea (enclosed by the so-called “Nine-dash line” and threatened violence against anyone who makes a move against them. Might is Right in the South China Sea. This is a potential point of conflict.

China and India

China has laid claim to territory currently possessed by India, and also vice-versa. There have been border clashes in recent years and the disputes are nowhere near being resolved.

North and South Korea

It has been reported that.....“North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un, has called for a change to the constitution to identify South Korea as the ‘number one hostile state’, ending the regime’s commitment to unifying the Korean peninsula.....Kim said he no longer believed unification was possible and accused the South of attempting to foment regime change and promote unification by stealth. Kim’s speech marks a departure from decades of official policy that saw reconciliation and unification as the ultimate goal, despite frequent rises in tensions on the peninsula.”

The North has warned in the past about a South Korean ‘pre-emptive strike’. The situation in the peninsula is quite unstable as the obvious invasion route from the North into the South is via the relatively flat land in the NW of S Korea, which is where the capital Seoul and much of the population live. The consequences of a North Korean attack in this region would be catastrophic for the South, the loss of life and destruction would be huge. This is an incentive for the South to attack first, to pre-empt any such disaster.

Africa

There have been a series of coups in Central Africa as well as Russian mercenaries being active in securing control over natural resources. Human rights abuses are

rife. France's Operation Barkhane, in Mali, has ended in complete failure. Mali sought French help in 2013 when Islamic militants seized control of two cities and threatened the capital, but the counter-insurgency campaign has ended in the withdrawal of all French troops.

Rest of the World

Falkland Islands

Argentina has not renounced its claim to these islands but as of early 2024 Argentina does not have the means to invade.

Caribbean

Even last year no-one would have thought this theatre would be of significance to the UK but Venezuela has laid claim to two-thirds of Guyana's territory and this might re-awaken Nicaragua's claim to all of Belize. The UK is not obliged by treaty to defend either of these countries but, given that both are former British colonies and their disputed borders were put in place by Britain, it would be argued that the UK has at least a moral obligation to protect them.

Australia

Australia is a quite well-armed country with a navy starting to approach in size the Royal Navy but nevertheless it is geographically isolated and the recent Chinese presence in the Solomon islands NE of Australia (lying across Australia's maritime link to the USA) shows that it's security is not to be taken for granted. It is hard to see what meaningful help, beyond a token gesture, the UK could offer Australia if they needed help but UK public opinion would demand action should Australia and New Zealand be imperilled.

As an Australian report noted: *"Australia is a maritime nation. The sheer scale of our sovereign maritime territory and responsibilities, our dependence on maritime trade for our prosperity and the increasing value of activity in the maritime environment must all be recognised in our maritime strategy. In a highly interconnected world, we face fundamental vulnerabilities from the realities of our geostrategic situation. In this report, the author argues that the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) lacks the resources to adequately protect Australia's vast maritime interests. This concern isn't unique to our time: maritime strategists have long lamented that, despite being uniquely an island, a continent and a nation, Australia struggles to understand the central importance of a maritime strategy to our defence and security. The underappreciation of Australia's dependence on the maritime domain and that domain's significance for the nation's prosperity and security has consistently produced a RAN that's overlooked and under-resourced."* ■

WHAT DO WE EXPECT DEFENCE TO DO?

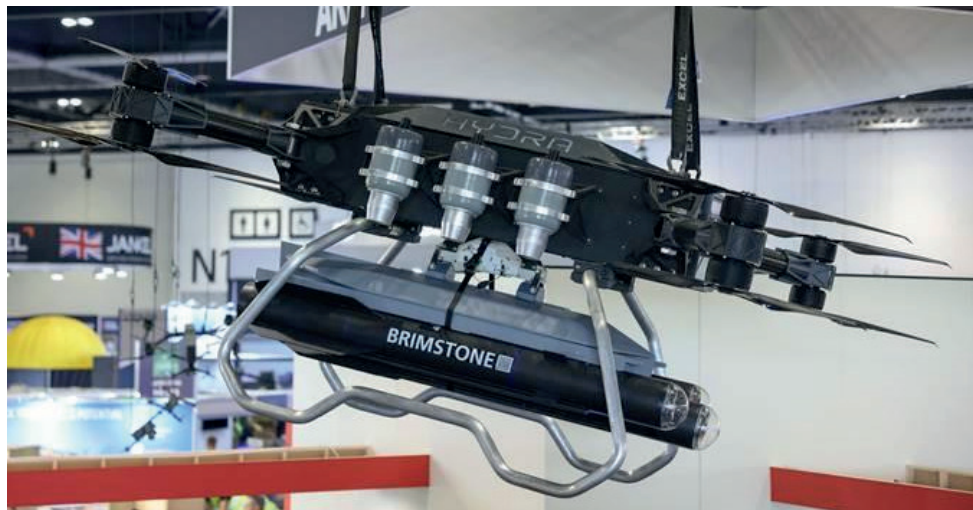
1. Defend the UK Homeland and sovereign territories

Governmental and military control emanates from the UK mainland, and it must be said that at present it is poorly protected. In any war the decapitation of military and civil institutions will form the prime targets for our enemy, with Westminster and the NATO base at Northwood being numbers 1 and 2 on the list. They will be closely followed by other military, commercial, infrastructure and industrial targets. The war in Ukraine has shown the effect of massed missile and drone strikes, a form of attack against which the UK is virtually defenceless (without the sort of "Iron Dome" that Israel has wisely put in place) and that assault could come from numerous directions. While land-based missiles can reach us from mainland Russia, one submarine loitering in, or near, Irish waters could unleash up to 72 non-nuclear cruise missiles, which at such a short range would give very little time to respond. The Republic of Ireland has no capability for detecting or countering submarine incursions into their territorial waters, and history has shown that neutrality is no barrier to another state using your territory for its own gain! Thus, to *defend*, we expect that in the first instance our defence posture will deter, but if that fails then it must protect us from attack.

2. Be a major pillar of the NATO Alliance

History has shown that the best way to defend our home base is to take the fight to the enemy and keep him away from our shores. To this end we must remain within and enhance our leading position in NATO. We must have adequate forces to support and stiffen our NATO allies on our common eastern frontier, which stretches 1,600 miles from the Barents Sea to the Black and Mediterranean Seas. At the present time the UK does not have an army large enough to do that in a meaningful way. This frontier is split in half by the Baltic, and while a major part of our forces will be tuned and exercised for fighting in the southern section, e.g. the Baltic States and Poland, we must also have the forces and transport assets available to support the Northern section, i.e. Finland and Norway. Thus, the UK mainland base must function as a focal point of the European strategic reserve, with forces large enough, adequately equipped, trained and ready to insert into any weak spot in the unified front.

This base will also function as the conduit through which forces can pass on their way from the US and Canada to the front lines. We must remember however, that while our focus may be on that eastern frontier, the NATO area stretches across the Atlantic and to the Pacific coasts of the USA and Canada. If we expect the US and Canada to be major supporters of our defence posture in the east of the



A weaponised Hydra drone which can carry up to three Brimstone missiles and could revolutionise the British Army's battlefield capabilities.

NATO area then, should the call come, we must be ready and expect to support them in the west. To that end our forces must be organised to operate in an expeditionary capacity, and again we will need the logistic and transport assets to make that possible. It should be remembered that the army we sent to fight in France in 1914, and again in 1939, was called the British Expeditionary Force. Those wars were started by miscalculations on both sides, and in this context we offer a quote from the late President Ronald Reagan: "History teaches that wars begin when governments believe the price of aggression is cheap."

3. Reinforce our other Allies

By having a major part of our forces organised to operate in an expeditionary mode, they will be better able to protect the Sovereign Territories and offer effective support to Commonwealth countries and others with whom we have defence agreements. To this end we must remember that we are the single largest European investor in East Asia, have defence agreements with several countries "East of Suez", and stability in that area is fundamental to the health of the UK's economy.

4. Provide and demonstrate value-for-money

The provision of assets to support the foregoing three sections will not be cheap. If we continue to purchase ever more of our military equipment from abroad, the negative effect on the UK's trade balance will devalue sterling, which in turn will unfavourably impinge upon her military budget, and the plan to bolster our

defensive capability will become unaffordable. The Treasury's "Green Book" demands that overall value for money must be a major factor when procuring equipment, thus it is important that our military financing fully supports the sovereign defence industry. That industry has the potential to employ many more people than it currently does, and to produce a large flow of skilled labour, particularly engineers of many disciplines, who will spread into other sectors of our commercial world and deliver a value of return to the nation that greatly exceeds the initial investment. This increased industrial capacity will also provide our forces with an enhanced freedom of action and operational advantage.

Thus, we expect that in this way military expenditure will extract the maximum value for the UK taxpayer and the economy at large. There are some who, for ethical or other reasons, are resistant to investment in defence and believe that the money should be spent on social programmes and their related industries. For such people we offer two quotations from George Orwell, author of *1984* and *Animal Farm*: "Men can only be highly civilised while other men, inevitably less civilised, are there to guard and feed them", and "The quickest way of ending a war is to lose it." – *I would add, and then the pigs really will take over (Animal Farm)!*

5. Support and be a tool of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

It has been said that the military is the left hook of diplomacy to be used when the right hand of friendship has been slapped away. It may not be used but, if it is there, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can follow Theodore Roosevelt's saying (which originated from Africa): "Speak softly but carry a big stick and you will go far!" On the other hand, they should be ready and able to assist in disaster relief operations wherever they may be.

6. Operate a robust and extensive intelligence operation

Collaborating with international partners, both military and civilian, offer support to friendly nations, especially those where the UK has interests, and play our part in supporting and protecting the international rules-based order.

7. Support the UK civil authorities and those of the sovereign territories

To this end moves should be made to co-ordinate the direction and control of the emergency services and the several voluntary aid organisations, such that they become a pseudo civil defence organisation. Other organisations such as the main supermarkets, which control so much of the UK's food supply, and the power generation companies, must be pulled in to make them more resilient to potential threats.

8. Awaken the UK to the developing threats

This also involves highlighting deficiencies and setting out accurate resourcing needs. General Patrick Saunders, the present Chief of the General Staff, has recently set the ball rolling with his call to arms, a plea for an increased MOD budget and, in particular, expansion of the British Army. Let us hope that his is not a voice in the wilderness to be ignored. A recent poll, across the nation, indicated that if the call for conscription came, about 50% of the under-35s would refuse to serve, instead opting to take whatever punishment was the penalty. “Generation Z” will not fight for King and Country. Very well, but what will they do when the fight comes to them? If they will not fight for King and Country, will they fight for themselves and their families?

9. Targets

Potential Target list for an initial strike by one Russian Submarine carrying 72 Non-Nuclear Cruise Missiles, which will open the way for further strikes from mainland Russia:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| a) Houses of Parliament | 3 Missiles |
| b) Nos. 10 and 11, Downing Street | 2 |
| c) HM Treasury | 2 |
| d) NATO Headquarters, Northwood | 3 |
| e) RAF Fylingdale, Yorkshire | 2 |
| f) Northern Area Radar Station, Island of Unst, Shetland | 2 |
| g) RAF Lossiemouth, Moray | 8 |
| h) RAF Coningsby, Lincolnshire | 8 |
| i) RAF HQ, High Wycombe, Bucks | 2 |
| j) Naval vessels at HMNBs Devonport, Portsmouth and Clyde | 20 |
| k) Navy Command HQ, Whale Island, Hants | 2 |
| l) Army HQ, Andover, Hants | 2 |
| m) GCHQ, Cheltenham, Glos | 3 |
| n) 1 missile each into the control towers of the following airports: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stanstead, Luton, Birmingham, Manchester, Prestwick, Glasgow, Edinburgh | 9 |
| o) London Stock Exchange | 1 |
| p) Lloyds Insurance Building | 1 |
| q) Lloyds Secondary Operating Building, Fidentia House, Walter Burke Way, Chatham Maritime, Chatham ME4 4RN | 1 |
| r) London Baltic Exchange, 77 Leadenhall St, London EC3 | 1 |

Total 72



Is this Target No. 1 for a Russian missile strike? (Photograph licensed under Creative Commons)

These initial strikes will be aimed to take out the major decision makers, and the UK’s physical ability to respond, e.g. radar stations, RAF Quick Reaction Alert (QRA), with anti-submarine aircraft, at Lossiemouth and QRA at Coningsby. RN frigates and destroyers that might be in port will be struck, neutering much of the navy’s limited anti-missile capability. Strikes against the commercial airports will cause short term chaos in the UK aviation area. The commercial heart of the City of London will be attacked, immediately destroying much of the nation’s ability to raise capital.

The cumulative effect of these strikes will immediately hamper the country’s ability to respond in the short to medium term. Recovery will take time and this will open the way for further extensive missile strikes from mainland Russia targeting more military infrastructure, munition production facilities and related industrial sites, utilities such as electrical production and distribution facilities (*consider this with the UK working towards the full electrification of its transport system and domestic services*), plus food distribution HQs and warehouses. The

potential target list to follow the strikes from that lone submarine is extensive and easily located from online sources. That list would include (but not restricted to):

Defence Manufacturing

BAE Munitions Manufacture, Glascoed, Monmouthshire
MBDA Manufacturing, Bolton, Greater Manchester
Thales Manufacturing, Belfast, Antrim & Down

Energy Production and Distribution

Gas terminals

Bacton (Norfolk) (up to one third of UK gas supply!)
Easington (Yorkshire)
St Fergus (Aberdeenshire)
Teeside

Theddlethorpe (Lincs)

Rampside (Barrow-in-Furness)

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals

Isle of Grain (Thames Estuary)
South Hook (Milford Haven)
Dragon (Milford Haven)

Gas-fired power stations

There are currently 32 gas fired combined cycle power plants operating in the UK, which have a total generating capacity of 28.0 GW.

Electricity Interconnectors

There are six, which enable the UK to import and export power from and to Europe and Scandinavia. These connectors also enable the bringing ashore of power from some offshore wind farms. There is currently only one remaining coal fired power station and for these initial strikes we are not considering the very vulnerable nuclear facilities.

Food Distribution

It has been said that the UK is only four missed meals away from national panic. The major supermarket chains, with their transport systems, supply 80% of the nation's food via computerised and centralised control systems, and the locations of their headquarter buildings are easily located online, as are their distribution warehouses:

Tesco – 20
Morrisons – 23
Sainsbury – 33
ASDA – 20
Waitrose – 3
Aldi – 13
Lidl – 14

WHAT DOES DEFENCE *NEED* IN ORDER TO DO ITS JOB PROPERLY?

What we must do to enable Defence to carry out its tasks, including Procurement, People, and Equipment?

The UK defends itself by “taking the fight to the enemy” before they can take the fight to us and our homeland, which is a critical underpinning principle of how we choose to protect ourselves. The UK therefore requires, as of necessity, the expeditionary military capabilities that will enable us to go out into the world and repel attacks to our mainland and national assets before they reach us. This approach matches the UK's unique position.

After decades of strategic mismanagement, penny-pinching, and a fundamental misunderstanding of our Armed Forces and military capabilities, we no longer have the ability to strike our enemies from afar, and nor have we replaced it with the ability to defend the UK homeland. In other words, despite the billions we spend every year, we are essentially defenceless.

The British government must act urgently to restore our ability to defend the UK, with a laser focus on the current global context and deteriorating security situation as has been set out in the prior sections of this document.

We must, as a matter of urgency:

- Embark on a national mission to restore Defence of the Realm to its rightful place in our British culture as a worthy, trustworthy, fundamental and civic duty – recognised by our nation and its government.
- Massively strengthen current military capabilities and the delivery of ongoing procurement programmes. This is required to recreate a stable, viable, national defence foundation before we waste time and money building more teetering structure on top of it.
- Increase the money available for Defence, including an immediate budget rise to 3.5% of GDP, to fully enable our Armed Forces to effectively protect the UK and fix decades of rot.
- UK MOD and the Armed Forces' lines of accountability, ownership and empowerment must be urgently redrawn so that tough decisions can be made, owned, and carried out effectively.
- The government must hold a full, thorough, Defence Review. Another ‘light touch’ review will not help solve our problems.
- There should be a national objective to restore the public image of Defence, which will have to be a whole-of-government effort that will

take time and must start now. Defence needs motivated, high performing people to achieve its objectives and transform itself.

- Recruitment to the Armed Forces has clearly overshot the mark in reaction to mandates on “inclusion and diversity”. A more inclusive military is important to our society but must be dealt with sustainably and with a long-term perspective.
- We must recognise that our Forces exist in a very different environment from the rest of our society, which those Forces must defend from aggressive, authoritarian (sometimes totalitarian), intolerant and extreme regimes and terror networks.
- More military minds are needed in procurement at the MOD, by increasing postings and encouraging ex-military back into the department as Civil Servants, increasing the impact of military discipline.
- The MOD must focus on increasing value for money to the British taxpayer. It must do this via deep reform of the current national machinery of defence including:
 - A transformative increase in transparency.
 - Military Capability that is holistic, across domains, and without duplication.
 - Increasing the robustness of the defence budget to economic factors like inflation.
 - Sustainably re-planning procurement programmes so they are fully funded and deliverable.
- The Navy must urgently generate an action plan to shake up its recruitment process and its approach to retention.
- The British Army must start growing again to address the worsening security situation. The cancellation of Morpheus, the Army’s battlefield digitisation programme, means that the last excuse for having a smaller Army that can “do more with less” has gone.
- The RAF must urgently address its ability to generate many more operational aircraft, and start taking space and unmanned capabilities more seriously.
- The UK urgently needs Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) and Ground-Based Air Defence (GBAD) capabilities at a size and scale fit to defend ourselves.
- All services must massively increase ammunition stores, spares, support and logistics capabilities.
- We must work even more closely and frequently with our NATO allies, both old and new.

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8175/>

HOW SHOULD THE UK GENERAL ELECTION ADDRESS DEFENCE?

Political parties, candidates, pressure-groups, think-tanks – we urge you all to raise your eyes above the parapet that encloses the domestic problems that occupy your thoughts, and instead gaze east towards the storm that is brewing on NATO’s 1,600-mile long eastern border. It may seem a great distance away but be assured that we are intimately connected with events there. Should that storm drift over NATO’s border, which it shows every likelihood of doing, then we will be *at war* with Russia. That eventuality will bring so much death and destruction to the British people that your domestic problems will pail into insignificance.

Eighty years ago, ballistic missiles were fired at London, wreaking havoc, death and destruction on an horrendous scale. We struggled to defend ourselves against those airborne attacks when they were unleashed against us, and we are little better prepared to do so now. Those V2 ballistic missiles continued until their launch sites on the Continent were over-run by Allied armies. Do not delude yourselves into thinking that such an assault cannot happen again.



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak arrives in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, to meet Ukraine’s President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. (Crown Copyright – Creative Commons)



Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer has said he plans to increase defence spending to 2.5% of GDP if he becomes Prime Minister. We believe it should be at least 3.5%.

his current war against Ukraine to the NATO Alliance would be a catastrophic error, and the only way to do that is to invest in defence.

Few politicians seem to grasp the seriousness of the situation we are in. This is not a time for “business as usual”; the scale of the threat is far greater than anything seen in decades. The safety and security of these British Isles and our Continental neighbours and Allies is at stake. Russia is the most obvious threat but not the only one, as events in the Middle East and Far East demonstrate all too clearly, with Iranian-backed Houthi attacks on merchant shipping in the Red Sea, and Chinese threats to Taiwan and most recently the Philippines, highlighting the deteriorating international security situation.

In the months running up to the UK General Election, it is vital that all those vying to be the next government of the United Kingdom give serious time and energy to addressing the chronic state of Britain’s defences. We need a national whole-of-government effort to bolster UK defence and security, and a “call to action” to rebuild our armed forces. At the same time we must blow away the cobwebs at the MOD, ensure we achieve value for taxpayers’ money.

Above all, there must be a fundamental change to how the defence budget is set and maintained, to ensure it is fit to deliver the necessary long-term strategic objectives it is there to fund and that it is more robust to disruptive factors like inflation. We are calling for an increase in defence spending to 3.5% of GDP, with more money than ever before staying on UK shores, supporting the nation’s prosperity. ■

A significant budget increase is required to ensure that this nation is properly defended. If that results in less money for the social programmes that you have so far championed, then so be it. “History teaches that wars begin when governments believe that the price of aggression is cheap”, as President Reagan astutely observed. Vladimir Putin (and his friends in Communist China and Islamist Iran) must be made to understand that expanding

Contributors to this issue of PRO PATRIA



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Fred Dupuy has had a 45-year career in the Merchant Navy, spending the first part of his career in general cargo trades, rising to Chief Officer and then transferring to the marine sector of the offshore oil and gas industry. For the last 20 years he has served as Ship’s Master on various vessels, with experience in emergency intervention, diving support/ construction, survey and wind-turbine installation. He is the Chairman of Defence UK.



Commander Graham Edmonds RN is a Director of Defence UK who served in the Royal Navy from 1966 to 2007 as a seaman officer and above-water warfare specialist, including active service in the South Atlantic in 1982. He has a deep professional interest and expertise in defence affairs and distributes a private e-mail newsletter on worldwide defence and security issues to Defence UK members, academics, politicians, defence correspondents, friends, colleagues and former shipmates.



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Andrew Smith FRHistS FCIJ is a journalist, media consultant and military historian. He is the Editor of *PRO PATRIA* and Chief Executive Officer of Defence UK Ltd, and has been a Board Member of UKNDA/Defence UK since 2008. Chairman of the Victorian Military Society and Editor of its journal *Soldiers of the Queen*, Andy is a member of the Society for Army Historical Research, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a Life Fellow and Past President of the Chartered Institute of Journalists.



David Wedgwood is a retired Headmaster who previously served in the Royal Navy as a junior seaman officer; appointments included HM Ships *Wizard*, *Diana*, *Lewiston*, *Picton*, *Brave Borderer* and *Cambrian*. He is President of the HMS Cambrian Association and a member of the Britannia Association and the Association of Royal Navy Officers (ARNO). He has been an elected member of the Board of UKNDA/Defence UK Ltd since 2011, and served as Chairman from 2015 to 2022.

THE ORDER *of* ST. GEORGE



Action this day!

The Order of St. George is a worldwide association of men and women who strive to uphold the timeless virtues of chivalry by their humanitarian endeavours.

St. George is the patron saint of soldiers and, true to this heritage, the Order of St. George works to support the welfare of our armed forces personnel. The 3rd Bt Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment is the Order of St. George's affiliated regiment and we support financially the work of the Regimental Welfare Fund. We are also a Platinum sponsor of the Royal Hospital Chelsea.

Our humanitarian work

Since 2022, our focus has been on practical support and humanitarian relief for the people of Ukraine

- Our Train & Equip team has worked on the ground in Ukraine to train medics in triage and field treatments.
- We've sent over £3,000,000 worth of medical supplies and medicines.
- We have sent several consignments of toys and presents to the children of Ukraine, and have also supported child refugees in neighbouring Moldova.

Our future plans

- Sending a further consignment of humanitarian supplies to Ukraine.
- Sending a team of experts to train Ukrainian personnel techniques to help veterans suffering from PTSD.
- Establishing a support programme for Australian special forces veterans.

About us

The Order of St. George welcomes into membership men and women who seek to support the values of compassion, charity, faithfulness and courage. Membership in the Order recognises and celebrates achievements in the community, whether large or small.

We would particularly welcome into membership readers of *Pro Patria*.

If you would like further information or can help our work please scan the QR code or visit www.orderofstgeorge.co.uk/propatria

The Order of St George is a membership organisation with a separate but associated Charitable Trust under the name of The United Kingdom Grand Priory of the International Knightly Order Valiant of St. George; Charity (England) No. 113739



Templer Study Centre

The Templer Study Centre is the National Army Museum's on-site study and research facility. It is an excellent resource for exploring the history of our Army and learning more about its impact on the wider world.

Visit the Templer Study Centre to gain access to archive, library, film, sound and photographic collections which collectively form one of the largest research resources for the history the British Army and Britain's Indian and other imperial forces. The majority of the collection spans from 17th century, when Britain's professional standing Army emerged, to the present day. However, it also includes some significant earlier material and the oldest item in the collection is a muster roll from the Siege of St Denis, dated 1435.

Collections

The Museum's archival collection contains a wealth of private papers, such as letters, diaries and memoirs. This includes the history of the British Army, its campaigns and battles, pre-eminent figures, such as the Field Marshals Lord Roberts, William Birdwood and George Nugent, and the personal stories of less well-known figures from privates to generals. The archive also holds a wide range of regimental material, including the collections of the Grenadier Guards, the Coldstream Guards, the Middlesex Regiment, The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), the Women's Royal Army Corps, the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI), and the Royal Army Education Corps.

Sound and Vision

The extensive photographic collection contains an estimated 500,000 images and includes some of the earliest military photographs ever taken. The sound collection includes over 750 oral history recordings, some conducted with soldiers who saw service as far back as the Boer War (1899-1902).

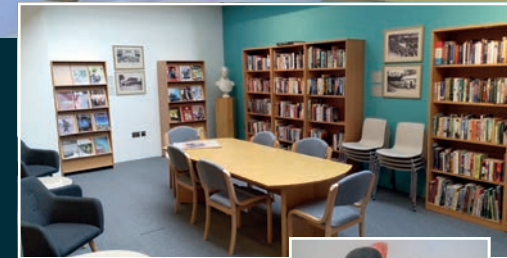
Library

The library comprises over 55,000 volumes. It provides a unique resource for the study of regiments and corps through its collections of unit histories and periodicals. These are complemented by a broad range of campaign histories, academic journals, Army Lists and collections relating to specialist subjects, such as uniforms and equipment.

The Templer Study Centre offers a comfortable, quiet reading room with ample desk space, free wi-fi access USB charging, and a smaller, soft-furnished lounge area for reading or quiet discussions. It also provides access to a range of online resources, including JSTOR, Ancestry and FindMyPast.

Appointments are available Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm; please email info@nam.ac.uk to make an appointment and see the Museum website (www.nam.ac.uk/collections/templer-study-centre) for details of the collections and guidance on registering for a Reader's Card.

National Army Museum, Royal Hospital Road, Chelsea, London SW3 4HT - www.nam.ac.uk



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