

UK Army Secures Multi-Million Deal with North East Defence Firm

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The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) has awarded a major three-year contract worth up to £125 million to Cook Defence Systems, a specialist manufacturer based in County Durham. The agreement will supply essential spare tracks for the British Army's armoured fighting vehicles, including the Challenger 3 tanks, ensuring they remain fully operational and ready for deployment.

The deal is expected to sustain 125 jobs at Cook Defence Systems and supports a £5 million investment in advanced manufacturing techniques over the next 12 months. As the sole British designer and manufacturer of track systems for fighting vehicles, the company plays a crucial role in maintaining the operational independence of the UK Army and allied forces.

Minister for the Armed Forces, Luke Pollard, emphasised the strategic importance of the contract, stating, “This contract not only strengthens our Army’s warfighting capability but helps sustain skilled jobs in the North East. It is an example of defence spending supporting high-skilled employment across the UK, as part of the Plan for Change.”

Pollard added that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine demonstrates the need for a robust domestic defence industry. “That is why we are investing more in our own forces and working with UK industry to scale up production, support our allies, and secure long-term national resilience,” he said.

The contract aligns with the Strategic Defence Review published earlier this year and the forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy. By integrating national security priorities with economic growth, the government aims to ensure that defence spending not only enhances the country’s security but also strengthens domestic manufacturing.

William Cook, Director of Cook Defence Systems, welcomed the award, highlighting the company’s unique position in supporting the armed forces. He said, “As the only British designer and manufacturer of track systems for fighting vehicles, Cook Defence Systems is critical to the operational independence of the British Army and allied forces. This

latest contract directly supports 125 jobs at Cook Defence Systems and underpins £5 million of investment in new plant and machinery over the next twelve months.”

The deal also contributes to the UK’s support for Ukraine. Cook Defence Systems has supplied spare tracks for armoured vehicles used by the Ukrainian Army, reflecting the wider role of UK industry in international security partnerships.

This contract forms part of a wider strategy to strengthen the UK’s defence infrastructure, which includes investments in artillery, drones, and combat vehicle spares. The government’s Plan for Change aims to modernise the armed forces and ensure they are equipped to meet emerging threats while fulfilling global security commitments.

In summary, the £125 million agreement with Cook Defence Systems reinforces the UK Army’s operational readiness, supports skilled employment in the North East, and strengthens domestic defence capabilities. It demonstrates the government’s commitment to integrating national security priorities with industrial growth, while also supporting international allies in times of conflict.