



techUK’s Defence Research & Technology Forum – Chair/Vice-chair nominees 2024

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Chair

Matt Albans

Job title: Technical Director

Company: L3H

Nomination for: Chair nomination

Please write a short biography/Profile

I've spent the last 24 years in the Defence Industry, making things go 'Woosh!', 'Beep!', and 'Bang!' sometimes all at the same time and occasionally actually on purpose.

I've worked on a huge range of Defence Research, from missiles, submarines, fast jets, radar, sonar, data, energy and support. Some, ground-breaking, some just breaking, but all of them interesting and a pivot point for advancing the UK's competitive edge.

I've been involved with fantastic research that originated from an idea, in a literal shed, to start-ups and small businesses with amazing ideas, to multimillion-pound strategic research projects. Championing some of those with senior government leaders.

Through all of this I've learnt two things, to listen and to always be appreciative of that all ideas have merit, but it may not be immediately obvious.

Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme

I would like to continue to grow our DRTF engagement with wider government to the benefit of TechUK and their membership.

Defence Technology is a bit of a misnomer, what we have found is that the scientific foundation of specific defence technology is as applicable to defence as it is to solving some of the most important and significant problems in civilian arena.

Defence's ability to spot an anomalous signal in an enemy transmission, uses the same principles as finding an anomalous heart-beat in a new born baby. An ability to use sensor fusion to operate in a GPS-denied environment, could equally be applicable in a crowded urban environment for the emergency services.

My pledge to our membership would be to unlock opportunities to not just defence activities but to other areas of Government, by making connections and promoting their products and services. This way we can sustain both the company's financial security and, the security of the UK.

Vice-chair

Stephanie Eden

Job title: Head of Global R&T Cooperations and External Funding

Company: Airbus Defence and Space Limited

Nomination for: Vice-chair nomination

Please write a short biography/Profile

Stephanie is the Head of the Design Authority and Technical Governance Department within Connected Intelligence which is a Program Line within Airbus Defence and Space Division and she is the Airbus Defence and Space representative on the Executive team for Airbus Endeavr Wales. Airbus Endeavr is a joint venture between Airbus and the Welsh Government which aims to develop early stage research relevant to Airbus Defence and Space through the Welsh Eco System.

Stephanie joined Airbus in 1999 as a Business Graduate and has worked in numerous departments within the company including Marketing, the System Design Centre, Engineering, Innovation and Research and Technology, she was also seconded to NITEworks in 2003 until 2006. Currently based in Newport, Stephanie now manages a transversal Architecture department based across the UK, France and Germany.

Stephanie holds a 2:1 Batchelor of Science Degree in Technology Management form the University of Bradford

Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme

I have been the vice chair to the UK DRTF for the last two years and during that time I have worked with the Chair to provide insight to the members on technological challenges being faced across government which are similar to the Defence challenges. Given the current governmental financial situation we see today this work is even more important as identifying synergies to resolve future technology challenges will be both beneficial to the DRTF members and government departments.

In addition Airbus in the UK invests approx £290m annually for Commercial Aircraft, Helicopters and Defence and Space technology developments. Our technology developments are transversal and beneficial to all divisions, and includes topics such as Connectivity, Autonomy and Clean Aerospace. Our technologies are prioritised in order to maximise synergies across the portfolio. As Vice Chair I can bring the global view of the investment areas being made by Airbus and how these investments are prioritised, I can also provide insights into none defence organisations Airbus works with to deliver the R&T portfolio. This includes SMEs, Academica, RTOs and other government organisations such as BEIS.



Manish Garg

Job title: Managing Director

Company: VE3

Nomination for: Vice-chair nomination

Please write a short biography/Profile

Manish Garg is a visionary leader in AI, cybersecurity, and digital transformation, with over two decades of experience driving innovation across defence, public, and private sectors. As a Director at VE3, he spearheads cutting-edge projects, including AI-driven data integration platforms, Zero Trust Architectures, and solutions tailored for secure and resilient defence systems.

Manish is a Governing Board member at the Coalition for Secure AI (CoSAI) and a contributing author to the OWASP AI Exchange, where he develops frameworks for ethical AI and strategic governance. His collaborative work with organizations like techUK, MOD, and other stakeholders has solidified his role as a trusted advisor on emerging technologies in the defence sector.

With a proven track record of delivering impactful outcomes, Manish is committed to fostering innovation, shaping forward-thinking R&T policies, and ensuring the UK remains at the forefront of defence technology and research excellence.

Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme

As Vice-Chair of the Defence Research & Technology Forum (DRTF), I will bring visionary leadership, technical expertise, and a proven ability to foster collaboration between government, industry, and academia. With experience as a Director at VE3 and active roles in organizations such as the Coalition for Secure AI (CoSAI) and OWASP AI Exchange, I am well-versed in delivering innovative solutions in defence technology, including AI, cybersecurity, and quantum computing.

I will prioritize advancing the forum's engagement on cutting-edge technologies, with a particular focus on quantum research and its application to secure communications, cryptography, and enhanced defence capabilities. Recognizing the transformative potential of quantum technologies, I aim to position the forum as a leader in driving their development and integration into the UK's defence strategy.

By leveraging my experience in delivering high-impact defence projects and shaping strategic frameworks, I will work to identify critical gaps and advocate for the adoption of next-generation technologies. My focus will include fostering industry-government collaboration, enabling SMEs to contribute effectively, and ensuring the Defence Programme aligns with evolving national security needs. Together, we can secure the UK's leadership in defence R&T, ensuring readiness for future challenges and opportunities.

Chair and vice-chair

Andy Mclannahan

Job title: Defence and Space Director

Company: Made Tech

Nomination for: Chair nomination; Vice-chair nomination

Please write a short biography/Profile

I have worked in the military and defence industry since 1996, initially as a soldier in the Territorial Army, before attending RMA Sandhurst and commissioning into the Infantry and served for 22 years; including two years on exchange with the US Army in Europe working as part of NATO after Russia's Crimea invasion. I retired from Regular service in 2021 and have since worked in digital consulting and business development within the Army, Royal Air Force, Defence Digital and NCSC. I remain an active member of the Army Reserve.

I have an academic background in Business Administration (BA hons) and masters in Defence Studies (MA) and Information Management and Technology (MSc).

I have had a varied career with operational service in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe. Increasingly the focus of my efforts has been on the adoption and use of technology in Defence having built software in the Army, trialled new technology in Eastern Europe (Counter UAS, 30mm cannon on Stryker, digital soldier solutions, and mobile digital command posts) and worked as Army Capability Plans in Finance and Military Capability, in Whitehall during the last Integrated Review.

Since leaving the Regular Army I have worked in a large defence consultancy and more recently have joined Made Tech, a scaling digital solutions company that is in the process of entering the defence market, having established itself as a provider in the wider public sector.

Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme

I bring extensive knowledge of the complexity of delivering capability across the sector, from the perspective of a user, acquisition staff officer and industry representative. Having worked with the US Army and NATO I have an additional international perspective which often challenges the UK approach, and have worked with innovate smaller defence forces who have a different approach to technology adoption.

From an industry perspective I can relate to the challenges of large established defence industry companies and understand how they seek to use their size and experience to improve the industry; which I can juxtapose with my current experience as a smaller business attempting to enter the defence market for the first time. I think this will help me to bring balance to the committee and also provide a role as mediator able to find the common ground between conflicting view points.

I have an academic background that supports my practical experience. As a former infantry officer with a sound academic education in the application of technology I am well placed to encourage debate on the developing role of technology on the multi domain battlefield.

Finally I have board experience from chairing unit committees as a Commanding Officer, as well as sitting on the North-East Universities Military Education Council, and as a non-executive director of Arkbound. I have also regularly attended the MOD Investment Approvals Committee (IAC) in an advisory capacity on Army capability and helicopters! I have completed the INPD director's development programme and 'Getting on Board' trustee development course.

Focus Areas

- The adoption of emerging technology in the digitisation of Defence
- Defence procurement modernisation
- How sovereign technology can drive exports and diplomacy

Hamza Huda

Job title: Defence Lead

Company: Plexal

Nomination for: Chair nomination; Vice-chair nomination

Please write a short biography/Profile

As a board member representing Plexal, I would leverage my extensive defence technology background to ensure techUK's defence company membership is seen as a critical source of research and technological innovation for UK defence stakeholders.

With experience spanning over a decade of military service, Palantir, and now Plexal's Defence Lead, I specialise in translating complex technological challenges into actionable defence solutions. We have cultivated strategic relationships across academia, defence primes, and operational units, enabling us to identify and amplify emerging technological capabilities. Through targeted programmes like the Airbus Space Accelerator, we align emerging technologies with operational requirements, driving technological advancement in national security domains. We have a strong research and insights function that understands emerging capabilities and dual-use technologies with defence focuses, this is central to the Defence Research and Technology Forum where we can represent the emerging SMEs and provide them with a vehicle to discuss their products and proposals.

Please provide a short paragraph on what you will bring to the Forum and the wider Defence Programme

At Plexal, my role centres on bridging the gap between end-users and SMEs in the defence technology and wider ecosystem. My expertise lies in translating complex technological challenges into actionable solutions. In a recent project focused on AI applications for military decision-making, I demonstrated this skill by drawing parallels between medical imaging technologies and military-grade imagery analysis, highlighting innovative adjacent sector technology transfer opportunities, where we directly supported the UK StratCom ISR Spearhead. I have a comprehensive understanding of SMEs' journeys and their procurement routes into the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and we have strong relationships with Commercial X, jHUB, DASA, DIANA and the Futures Lab as well as other testing facilities such as the Battle Lab. Through our defence-focused programmes and accelerators, we support multiple SMEs in presenting their products to MoD stakeholders, ensuring they develop and scale technologies aligned with national security requirements. A recent example of my approach is the Airbus Space Accelerator, which I led the design of, by leveraging UK Space Command's priority areas. By engaging directly with end-users, I ensured that emerging technologies like hypersonic propulsion and advanced sensing for space domain awareness were directed to those who could most effectively leverage these new capabilities. My goal is to facilitate meaningful connections between innovative SMEs and defence stakeholders, driving technological advancement in critical national security domains.