

[Dstl Unveils UK's First Defence Wargaming Centre](#)

The UK's first dedicated, purpose designed wargaming centre has been unveiled by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl). The Defence Wargaming Centre (DWC) on Dstl's Portsmouth West site near Portsmouth is hosting wargames for all three services, with the RAF having conducted the first exercise, Eagle Warrior 19, last month (December 2019).

Dstl has a long history of delivering successful wargames on behalf of MOD and other government departments, conducted both at Dstl and at other sites in the UK and overseas. Wargame participants experience the rigour and implications of decision making in a "safe to fail" environment, without the risk, expense and disruption of live exercises or real operations.

The DWC has been established to respond to the increasing demand for wargaming as a tool both to support decisions and to develop insight into complex issues faced by Defence and Security now and in the future. The DWC will become MOD's only dedicated, purpose designed wargaming facility, and will bring together expertise and technology from across Dstl, wider Defence, industry and other partners.

The DWC can be configured to deliver a wide variety of wargames of different types and sizes for a range of purposes. The DWC is also intended to be a focus for research into wargaming methods, tools and techniques. Future upgrades are being planned to the physical space, computing and communications, as well as further expansion to the wargaming teams (including greater integration of industry) and the range of tools available to them.

Exercise Eagle Warrior 19 was designed and developed by Dstl and involved staff from across the RAF and other services. Eagle Warrior 19 initiates a series of wargames to evaluate warfighting Command and Control at the operational level and will provide a test bed for assessing structural, process and/or technological improvements. Eagle Warrior 19 also demonstrated the ability of the RAF to hold rapid and agile wargames which will be developed further in future years.

The Head of the Defence Wargaming Centre, Mike Larner, commented: "The DWC brings together the people, expertise, infrastructure and technology needed to develop and deliver a wide variety of wargames. It represents a significant step up in capability and signals our intent to keep developing in response to growing MOD and wider government demand for wargaming – which is, in turn, a response to the increasing complexity of conflict. Wargaming enables commanders to anticipate and rehearse future conflicts which, ultimately, increases the UK's capability to deter aggression and protect its interests."

Group Captain Christopher Platt, Dstl's Senior Air Advisor, commented:

“Eagle Warrior 19 was a genuinely ambitious experiment that challenged participants to think about Command and Control of the Next Generation Royal Air Force. Staying one step ahead of an information savvy adversary is a constant challenge, we will need to embrace a combination of information technologies such as cloud computing, edge processing, machine learning and automation, so this wargame was a good step towards understanding the pros and cons of different approaches.”