

News story: Defence Minister thanks charity for helping disabled veterans into employment

On a visit today to The Poppy Factory in Richmond, Mr Ellwood saw first-hand the work the charity does to help veterans with disabilities into meaningful employment. The Poppy Factory, which also employs around 30 disabled veterans, produces poppies and wreaths for the Royal Family and The Royal British Legion's annual Poppy Appeal, something they have been doing since they were founded in 1922.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

The work The Poppy Factory does in helping businesses across the country provide employment for disabled veterans is hugely important and I'd like to thank them for all the work they do.

It's important that Government works with charities to provide comprehensive support to veterans, including the Armed Forces Covenant and the new Veteran's Gateway.

While most veterans successfully re-integrate into civilian life, a small number do face challenges after their military career. The Ministry of Defence and other Government Departments work with the charity sector to provide comprehensive support.

This support includes the Armed Forces Covenant, a promise from the nation enshrined in law to make sure that service personnel, veterans, and their families are treated fairly and receive the support they deserve. In June of this year, the MOD launched a new Veterans' Gateway, a single point of contact for veterans, allowing them to get the support they need. The initiative is backed by £2 million of Government money.

The MOD in July of this year also launched the new Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The innovative new strategy is designed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the Armed Forces, their families, veterans, and Defence civilians.

During the visit Mr Ellwood met with Poppy Factory staff working to help disabled veterans back into employment, as well as staff who produce the famous Poppies for Remembrance. As one of the UK's leading veterans charities The Poppy Factory has a tremendous record of getting disabled veterans back into employment, with 70% of veterans who the charity helps remaining in employment after 12 months.

Statement to Parliament: Hurricane Irma: Sir Alan Duncan's statement, 7 September 2017

Sir Alan Duncan's statement

Mr Speaker I am very grateful to you for this opportunity to make a statement on Hurricane Irma, which is already affecting and is set further to affect Caribbean islands and the south east United States with devastating effect.

Much as I appreciate the wish of the House perhaps to move on to start the second reading of the EU Withdrawal Bill, I am sure everyone appreciates the importance of informing the House about the latest position on this unfolding catastrophe.

As with any hurricane, one can never be sure of its ultimate effect until the extent and location of its inevitable damage is clear.

Its predicted force however, put everyone on the highest state of alert and preparedness, to which end the Foreign Office crisis centre and DFID planning were all put onto the highest state of readiness over 2 days ago.

The FCO crisis centre has 2 important functions. One is to organise the fullest possible consular assistance to UK citizens abroad, and the other is to monitor the path of the hurricane and coordinate every conceivable UK response, in particular to those British territories affected.

Mr Speaker, Hurricane Irma, having reached Category 5 – the highest possible category – hit 3 British Overseas Territories yesterday: Anguilla, Montserrat and the British Virgin Islands. Today, we expect the hurricane to affect a further UK territory: the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The hurricane yesterday also caused damage in the independent Commonwealth countries of Antigua and Barbuda, and St Kitts and Nevis. And we expect it to affect the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the Bahamas today. It will most likely affect Cuba and south eastern Florida tomorrow.

The hurricane is heading westwards and remains strong. We have an initial assessment of the severity of the damage it has caused, and I will outline for the House what we know so far.

Montserrat was swiped by the hurricane yesterday. But our initial assessment is relatively positive. Fortunately, the damage is not as severe as first thought.

However, in contrast, Anguilla received the hurricane's full blast. The

initial assessment is that the damage has been severe and in places critical. We expect further reports to make clear the full nature of the devastation and at the moment Anguilla's port and airport remain closed.

The British Virgin Islands were also not spared the hurricane's full force when it passed through yesterday morning. Our initial assessment is of severe damage and we expect that the islands will need extensive humanitarian assistance, which we will of course provide.

The hurricane is expected to hit another British Overseas Territory later today. The Turks and Caicos Islands lie in the hurricane's predicted path and officials in London and in the territories are working intensively on disaster preparedness and response. They are also liaising with their counterparts in the Cayman Islands for assistance.

The French and Dutch territories of Guadeloupe and St Maarten have also been hit and the initial assessments are of widespread damage. But the more detailed assessment continues and no British Nationals have yet contacted us to ask for assistance from these islands.

Two Commonwealth realms were affected by Hurricane Irma yesterday. Antigua and Barbuda's less populated island, Barbuda, was most severely affected. Antigua, and St Kitts and Nevis were less badly affected than many had feared, with only minor damage.

Now we expect that the hurricane will affect the Dominican Republic and Haiti today. It will sweep on through the South East of the Bahamas later, and tomorrow is predicted to hit Cuba and southern Florida.

Mr Deputy Speaker, officials in London and the territories have been working throughout the day and night to assess and quantify the needs of our territories, and to coordinate a cross-government response.

Officials in London are maintaining contact – although this is sometimes difficult – with our Governors' Offices in the territories. The Governors' teams are themselves working closely with the territories' governments to respond to this crisis.

The Royal Naval ship Royal Fleet Auxiliary Mounts Bay is already in the Caribbean and should reach the affected territories later today. The ship carries Royal Marines and Army Engineers and her primary task is the protection of our Overseas Territories. She is loaded with a range of equipment, vehicles, tents, stores and hydraulic vehicles specifically intended to respond to disasters like this.

In addition, DFID stands ready to charter flights to deliver additional supplies as appropriate.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I spoke last night to the London representatives of the British Virgin Islands. And I was in our crisis centre yesterday afternoon and again late last night, and have been based there this morning.

At 8:45pm last night, the Foreign Secretary spoke to Anguilla's Chief

Minister Victor Banks. The Foreign Secretary tried but was unable to contact the Premier of the British Virgin Islands last night, but my noble friend Lord Ahmad has been in contact with the Governor this morning.

We will be working in support of the Overseas Territories' governments to develop the best possible assessment of their immediate and longer term needs.

To that end, my Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Defence will chair a meeting of COBR at 2pm o'clock this afternoon.

Our priority is to support the territories' governments in meeting their immediate humanitarian and security needs, including shelter, water and accommodation. We have four UK aid humanitarian experts in the region, who are helping to co-ordinate the response.

We will assess, with the territories' governments, their long term reconstruction requirements, as we have done in the past.

And as the House will appreciate, the relationship between Overseas Territories and their parent countries differs. Whilst French territories are directly governed, that is not the case with our Overseas Territories. While this means our responses will, of course, be different, we will seek to achieve the same objectives and are taking immediate steps to do so.

The Prime Minister called President Macron this morning to discuss our respective response to Hurricane Irma. They agreed the devastation it had wreaked was terrible, with unconfirmed reports emerging of a number of fatalities.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Prime Minister updated the French President on our response, noting that DFID humanitarian advisers had already deployed to the region to conduct damage assessments and to provide humanitarian support, and that RFA Mounts Bay was already near the area.

They agreed to co-operate closely, including with the Dutch, to understand the extent of the damage and to coordinate our relief efforts.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we will all do our utmost to help those affected. I undertake to keep the House updated as required.

Find out more about the [government's response to Hurricane Irma](#).

[News story: Ambitious future for Naval](#)

Shipbuilding in the UK

Sir John Parker's independent report into British naval shipbuilding proposed far-reaching recommendations to transform the UK maritime industry and boost the prosperity of regions, shipyards and maritime supply chains across the country.

Today's Strategy sees the Government accept Sir John's recommendations and step up to what he called a prospective 'renaissance' in British shipbuilding. Building on the Government's industrial strategy, it outlines an ambition to transform the procurement of naval ships, make the UK's maritime industry more competitive, grow the Royal Navy fleet by the 2030s, export British ships overseas, and boost innovation, skills, jobs, and productivity across the UK.

It announces the government's plan to procure new Type 31e General Purpose Frigates. A price cap has been set of no more than £250M each for the first batch of five frigates. In line with standing UK policy on warships they will be built in the UK. They could be built in a way which could see them shared between yards and assembled at a central hub. The first ships are set to be in service by 2023. Shipyards will be encouraged to work with global partners to ensure the vessel is competitive on the export market.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

This new approach will lead to more cutting-edge ships for the growing Royal Navy that will be designed to maximise exports and be attractive to navies around the world.

Backed up by a commitment to spend billions on new ships, our plan will help boost jobs, skills, and growth in shipyards and the supply chain across the UK.

The Strategy sets out the government's commitment to work with industry to reinvigorate and maximise export success. The Type 31e will be designed to meet the needs of the Royal Navy and with the export market in mind from the beginning. This could see industry's customer become not only the Royal Navy but for the navies of Britain's allies and partners.

The MOD is committed to new ships for the Royal Navy through its rising budget and £178bn equipment plan. In July, at BAE's Govan shipyard, the Defence Secretary cut steel for the first of eight Type 26 frigates, HMS Glasgow. The £3.7 billion contract for the first three, the largest for naval ships this decade, will secure hundreds of high skilled jobs on the Clyde until 2035 and hundreds more in the supply chain across the UK.

Sir John Parker said:

I am very impressed by the courage that the Secretary of State has shown – and the Government – in adopting my recommendations, which were very extensive, and will change the shape of naval shipbuilding over the country in the future.

The next challenge is to come up with a world-leading design; one that can satisfy the needs of the Royal Navy and the export market. We have the capability to do that, the will is there and it is a tremendous opportunity for UK shipbuilding. I see no reason why industry will not rise to that challenge. There is an incredible keenness from around the country, from Scotland to Merseyside, to the South West and over to Belfast.

The option to build the Type 31e frigates in blocks reflects how the biggest ship ever built for the Royal Navy, the 65,000-tonne HMS Queen Elizabeth, was constructed. The aircraft carrier was built in blocks by over 10,000 people in six main British cities. She was then assembled in Rosyth, before commencing sea trials in June and arriving in her home port of Portsmouth last month.

Her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales, built in the same way, is also now structurally complete and will be officially named in a ceremony on 8 September. This method has also been tried and tested on the UK's new polar research ship, RRS Sir David Attenborough, with shipyards across the country collaborating in the block build.

The Strategy is an important part of the government's broader industrial strategy that focuses on increasing economic growth across the country and investing in a more skilled workforce.

The Government will work together with industry to provide the certainty and support the need to become internationally competitive. Such a move will not only boost the British economy and jobs, but it will also help to create a more stable and well-protected world.

[News story: Hurricanes Irma and Maria: government response and advice](#)

Updated: Foreign Secretary's ministerial meeting support to UK Overseas Territories added

Travel advice for places affected by Hurricanes Irma and Maria

Hotline for British people affected or concerned about others in Dominica:
+44 (0)20 7008 0000.

Hurricanes Irma and Maria affected large parts of the Caribbean. The Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) updated travel advice to provide guidance for British nationals in the countries and overseas territories affected:

- [Anguilla](#)
- [Antigua and Barbuda](#)
- [Bahamas](#)
- [British Virgin Islands](#)
- [Cuba](#)
- [Dominica](#)
- [Dominican Republic](#)
- [Guadeloupe](#)
- [Haiti](#)
- [Martinique](#)
- [Montserrat](#)
- [St Eustatius and Saba](#)
- [St Kitts and Nevis](#)
- [St Lucia](#)
- [St Maarten](#)
- [St Vincent and the Grenadines](#)
- [Turks and Caicos Islands](#)
- [USA](#)

See also the guidance on [what to do if you're affected by a crisis overseas](#).

Keep up-to-date with changes to travel advice

- subscribe to [e-mail alerts for GOV.UK travel advice updates](#).
- follow [@FCOtravel on Twitter](#) or [FCOtravel on Facebook](#)

Government response

27 September

- [Foreign Secretary chairs ministerial meeting on support to UK Overseas Territories](#)

24 September

- [International Development Secretary: extra £5 million UK aid to Dominica](#)

22 September

- [HMS Ocean arrives in the Caribbean](#)

21 September

- [International Development Secretary's update on Hurricane Maria](#)

20 September

- [Sir Alan Duncan's interview on the Today programme](#)

18 September

- [First Secretary of State's update on government response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria](#)
- [International Development Secretary: UK ready to respond to Hurricane Maria](#)
- [Sir Alan Duncan's post-COBR meeting statement on Hurricane Maria](#)
- [Foreign Secretary's United Nations General Assembly meeting on Burma and also Hurricane Irma](#)

15 September

- [Overseas Territories Minister visits the Turks and Caicos Islands](#)
- [Over 60 tonnes of UK aid has now reached the Caribbean](#)
- [Public Health England experts to aid recovery on storm-hit Overseas Territories](#)
- [UK government response in numbers: 15 September](#)

14 September

- [Foreign Secretary's press conference with Rex Tillerson](#)
- [£1.3 million raised for Hurricane Irma British Red Cross Appeal](#)
- [Bermuda's support for the hurricane relief effort](#)

13 September

- [Foreign Secretary's visit to the UK Overseas Territories](#)
- [Foreign Secretary to host high level talks on Hurricane Irma](#)

12 September

- [UK continues to urgently deliver vital aid](#)
- [International Development Secretary's update on the UK response](#)
- [Sir Alan Duncan's statement to the House of Commons](#)
- [Foreign Secretary to visit hurricane-hit islands](#)
- [UK government response in numbers: 13 September](#)

11 September

- [Foreign Secretary's interview with media](#)
- [COBR meeting: Foreign Secretary's statement](#)

- [Foreign Secretary's interview on BBC Today Programme](#)
- [UK government response in numbers: 11 September](#)

10 September

- [Foreign Secretary's post-COBR meeting statement on support for the UK Overseas Territories](#)
- [Their ordeal is not over but UK is doing everything it can to help Hurricane Irma victims: Boris Johnson's article](#)
- [UK government actions update](#)

9 September

- [UK military provides relief to the Caribbean through Operation Ruman](#)
- [UK government matches public donations to British Red Cross Appeal](#)

8 September

- [Prime Minister's statement following the COBR meeting](#)
- [International Development Secretary: more than 20 tonnes of UK aid on its way to the Caribbean](#)
- [Foreign Secretary's update](#)

7 September

- [Prime Minister announces £32 million support](#)
- [International Development Secretary's update on UK support](#)
- [Sir Alan Duncan's statement to the House of Commons on the UK government response](#)
- [Foreign Secretary's statement on Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands](#)
- [Prime Minister's call with President Macron](#)

6 September

- [International Development Secretary's statement on support from UK aid experts and British naval ship RFA Mounts Bay](#)

Overview of how the UK government has supported Anguilla after Hurricane Irma

[Anguilla overview](#)

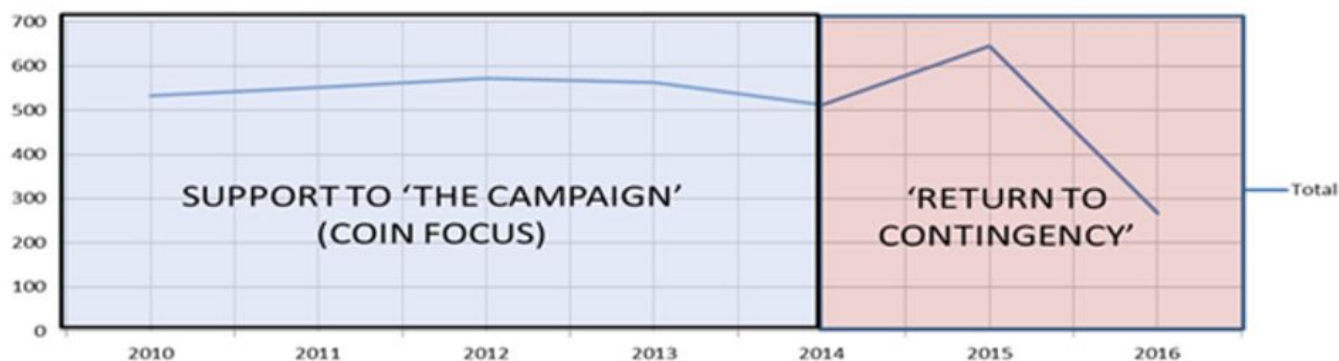
[News story: Aviation support to](#)

exercises

It won't surprise air aware readers that, whilst deployed on or supporting an exercise, an increased level of risk is often found in relation to normal home base activities. An internal Military Aviation Authority (MAA) study into joint exercises in early 2016 concluded that the MAA should conduct detailed analysis of available exercise data – to further investigate why hazards are increased when conducting exercise activity.

A military exercise can be defined as the employment of military resources in training for operations, either exploring the effects of warfare or testing strategies without actual combat. In recent years Aviation has been critical to the success of such exercises whether supporting Counter Insurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan or, more recently, supporting defence as it returns to more contingent style operations. The aim of military exercises is the creation of professional resilient aircrew and support staff who can successfully perform in the complex battlespace of the 21st Century; whilst also ensuring the combat readiness of deployable forces prior to deployment. Exercises provide the means to practice, develop, and validate, within constraints, the practical application of a common doctrine: from small single aircraft individual training exercises, to Squadron collective training events right through to larger Tier 2 and 3 exercises such as the JOINT WARRIOR series, RED FLAG and COUGAR deployments. The MAA study found a healthy reporting culture from units deployed on exercise returning around 500-600 exercise related Defence air safety occurrence reports (DASOR) per year from 2010 to 2016. The analysis also found that the level of pre-exercise planning and preparation and first party assurance, whilst deployed, was of a high standard -with air safety risks captured and exploited in detailed post exercise reports across the three services. Nevertheless, aviation exercise planners and support staff should remind themselves of [Regulatory Article \(RA\) 2305\(6\) 'Air exercise planning and airspace integration](#) regulation'.

Total Ex D-ASORs 2010-16



To capture and understand air safety issues on exercise it was decided to bracket the data by time, and to identify air safety issues from aviation exercises between 2010 and 2016. This time window is of particular interest as it focuses on both aviation exercises supporting Op HERRICK 2010-14 (MST and environmental) and aviation's switch to more contingency era operations from circa 2014 to date. Given the increased importance of Air Land Integration (ALI) capabilities post Op HERRICK, Op ELLAMY, Op TELIC and a focus on the 'whole force' approach to operations (CJIM-Combined Joint, Inter agency and Multinational), a broader and more complex set of exercise scenarios has developed which may suggest the spike in reporting from 2014. It was also noted that due to continuing operations such as Op SHADER not all forces have been able to return to contingency, which may account for gaps in exercise reporting from some force elements.

All readers will be aware that military exercises pose additional risks and hazards to personnel across the four worlds and the 3700 DASOR identified in this 6 year time bracket identified certain themes. The list below, whilst not exclusive, for those not already familiar across the aviation environment will serve as a useful refresher.

PRESSURE

FATIGUE

AUSTERITY

POOR TECHNICAL
ACCOMMODATION

CONGESTED
AIRSPACE

ENHANCED APPETITE TO TAKE RISK

MISSION CREEP

IT INFRASTRUCTURE

UNFAMILIAR
OPERATING
ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATIC
EXTREMES