

# RAF completes COVID support task at Kinloss

3 RAF Puma helicopters deployed to Kinloss Barracks to support the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) in the coronavirus fight are heading back to their Oxfordshire base today, nearly 3 months after being stood up in support COVID activity in Scotland.

The aircraft and crews from RAF Benson had responded to an urgent request in March from SAS to provide it with an interim ability to move infectious patients by air especially vital to remote highland and island communities during the coronavirus crisis.

RAF Puma just taking flight. MOD Crown Copyright 2020.

The support of the RAF has given the SAS the time to build its own infectious patient air-lift capacity, removing the need for ongoing support from their military colleagues.

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The Ministry of Defence can swiftly re-deploy the aircraft in support of the Scottish authorities should future circumstances require them.

While in Scotland, the RAF aircrews have taken advantage of the Scottish mountains and wilderness areas to train for their future operational deployment to Afghanistan.

Copyright RAF Benson.

Maj Gen David Eastman MBE, Commander Standing Joint Command (UK) said:

The deployment of the RAF Puma Task Force shows how quickly we have been able to respond to requests for support from our colleagues in the emergency services across the United Kingdom throughout the battle against the coronavirus.

Our crews have been on 24-hour call and successfully evacuated patients from some of the most remote areas of Scotland. I am extremely proud of the work the Task Force has done and we stand ready to support the Scottish people and Ambulance Service should they need us again.

Pauline Howie, Chief Executive of the Scottish Ambulance Service, said:

We really appreciate the rapid support from the Ministry of Defence and Royal Air Force during the coronavirus crisis. We trained regularly together to establish the best ways of moving adult-sized incubators, called epishuttles, by air.

During this time the Kinloss Pumas transported one critically ill patient from Arran to the mainland, while other fixed wing RAF transport aircraft have also move seriously ill patients from Orkney and Shetland to Aberdeen.

Deputy First Minister John Swinney said:

The Scottish Government is very grateful for the presence of the RAF Puma crews who have been able to assist in a number of operations to move patients in need of urgent medical care. I would like to extend the warmest of thanks to those involved with this deployment and I wish them well for the challenges that lie ahead.

On 18 March 2020, the Defence Secretary announced that 20,000 military personnel were on standby across the UK to support the Civilian Authorities tackle COVID-19. Today there are around 4,000 troops supporting the civil authorities across the UK on 60 separate formal Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA) requests.

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## [15-year vision set to revolutionise construction](#)

A digital revolution in the construction industry could dramatically increase productivity and save billions of pounds, while radically reducing disruption to the public and slashing the number of fatal building site accidents.

That was the rallying call to the sector today from Highways England as it spearheaded the launch of a 15-year plan to accelerate the use of technology in infrastructure.

Connected and autonomous plant (CAP) is already being used to transform activities across the UK construction sector, including for example the use of robotic trucks on Britain's biggest road project, the recently opened A14 improvement.

Now the Government company, with partners TRL and the Infrastructure Industry

Innovation Partnership (i3P), has set out a roadmap – a vision where the use of CAP techniques will become standard industry practice by 2035. It has been estimated productivity improvements achieved via CAP could exceed £400billion by 2040.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O’Sullivan said:

Connected and autonomous plant will make work safer and quicker. The Roadmap lays out the benefits and addresses the barriers to making this a reality. We are confident the Roadmap will help our supply chain to rapidly make this the norm on our worksites.

The CAP Roadmap was developed through collaboration with more than 100 industry stakeholders.

It predicts that adoption of this technology across the construction sector could:

- reduce fatalities in the construction sector by 37%
- improve productivity by up to £400Bn by 2040
- see annual savings of £53bn across new construction work
- assist with 47% of construction activities currently performed
- see road construction deliver benefits of >£3bn between now and 2035

Mark Thurston, CEO of HS2 said:

This work charts an extremely exciting and potentially game changing route as to how we operate our sites as we build Britain. My challenge to our industry is to take the steps we can take today to improve our future, moving forwards together to make our people more efficient, and safer than ever.

The Roadmap sets out nine workstreams focussing on key areas.

Alex Wright, Chief Technologist for TRL explained:

The CAP roadmap has been developed collaboratively with more than 75 organisations. Through a wide variety of questionnaires and workshops, we identified the actions required to overcome the various technical, business and legislative challenges to delivering the vision.

Overall, the Roadmap brings together nine pathways which have been identified to deliver success by 2035. This includes elements from legislation, regulation and policy as well as factors facilitating finance and investment and an understanding of the skills gaps.

Highways England is already trialling CAP plant in key areas. Automated dump

trucks were trialled on the recently-opened A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement in the East of England.

The trucks were programmed remotely to follow a pre-determined route and have the capability to detect and avoid obstacles and other vehicles, along the routes as they drive.

They provide the potential for round-the-clock working, helping to reduce the length of time roadworks are on the ground. And by being automated they reduce the risk of road workers being involved in incidents on site, allowing jobs to be moved to other skilled areas.

On the A14 and on motorways, a robot is saving drivers from hundreds of hours of disruption. It uses precise positioning technology to mark out where white lines need to be painted on new or resurfaced roads and puts roadworkers at less risk of an accident.

### **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## **[Defence Secretary welcomes Ukraine receiving NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status](#)**

News story

Ukraine has been granted increased access to opportunities that will help maintain and deepen cooperation between Allies and partners



UK troops deployed on Op Orbital

Ukraine has been granted Enhanced Operating Partner (EOP) status by NATO Allies on Friday 12 June 2020, a decision supported by the UK and welcomed by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

The status is part of NATO's Partnership Interoperability Initiative, which aims to maintain and deepen cooperation between Allies and partners that have made significant contributions to NATO-led operations and missions.

The decision means that Ukraine will benefit from increased opportunities to help sustain such contributions, such as enhanced access to interoperability programmes and exercises, and more sharing of information, including lessons learned.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It is excellent news that Ukraine has been granted NATO Enhanced Opportunity Partner status.

The UK already has a close relationship with Ukraine, where our soldiers have trained over 18,000 personnel, but we now look forward to deepening that cooperation on NATO exercises and operations. We will all benefit from closer association and increased interoperability – NATO is fortunate to have such a partner.

The UK currently has personnel deployed on Operation Orbital, which is the UK's training mission to Ukraine, established in 2015 following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia a year earlier. It is a demonstration of the UK's unwavering commitment to Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Since 2015, UK personnel have trained over 18,000 members of the Ukraine Armed Forces, making a real difference and saving lives. It was extended by three years to March 2023 by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace in November 2019.

## [Seminar with the OECD on regulation and Covid-19 \(26th May\)](#)

### News story

RPC Secretariat staff presented on “The use of regulatory management tools in times of crisis” at an OECD seminar



We represented RegWatchEurope, the best-practice sharing group of which the RPC is a core member, detailing the experiences of regulatory scrutiny in the last two months across Europe. The session was held online via videoconference at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Discussions included the difficulty of engaging key stakeholders, such as business representatives, at this time, and the different ways countries were preparing to undertake analysis of the actual effects of regulation that may not have been fully scrutinised when implemented as emergency measures.

Participants suggested that Covid-19's effects will be most pronounced not in the “fast-tracking” of regulation but in potentially undermining better regulation processes in the near-future. There will need to be concerted efforts to ensure that rules are followed when regulatory processes return to normal.

The discussions will be used to inform a paper that the OECD is preparing on governments' use of regulatory management tools in response to Covid-19.

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# RegWatchEurope (RWE) Board meeting (3rd June)

News story

This summary covers the latest regular Board meeting of the RWE network



RegWatchEurope is a network of independent regulatory scrutiny bodies that works together to exchange best practice, innovative ideas and emerging methodological approaches. A mixture of European Union and non-European members, it is a core component of the RPC's international engagement work and meets regularly at both board and technical/secretariat levels.

This June board meeting was originally to be a larger engagement in Berlin, including a technical workshop to exchange best practice in several areas of regulatory scrutiny. It was scaled down given the complications and disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Board members including our interim chair Stephen Gibson came together on WebEx and a very fruitful planning discussion was had.

RWE members, with Germany in the chair, heard a presentation from colleagues of the Danish Business Regulation Forum as part of their arrangements for joining the network. This included their work on "neighbour check", which assesses how Denmark's neighbours implement EU legislation. Digital solutions to questions of regulatory burden were also discussed, such as businesses inputting their issues directly to government.

RWE members further discussed the conclusions of various workshops on areas including ex-post evaluations held in recent months, and agreed to hold a further workshop in September on the issues of proportionality in evidence and analysis and stakeholder engagement. The different ways in which Covid-19 has affected scrutiny across Europe were also compared and contrasted.

The meeting also included a session with representatives from the European Commission's Regulatory Scrutiny Board, who updated participants on their

work expanding scrutiny of impact assessments in the UK style, and the lessons learned from this process.

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