

[Press release: FCO Press Release: Minister for the Middle East celebrates UK-Oman cooperation](#)

The Joint Working Group, which takes place on Sunday, will focus on the UK and Oman's partnership on areas such as trade, education and tourism. It will also be an opportunity to discuss regional issues such as the conflicts in Yemen and Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Minister's visit also coincides with the Saif Sareea military exercise, which will see Royal Navy ships, Royal Air Force Typhoons and British Army troops train alongside Omani forces in their largest joint exercise for 17 years.

While in Oman, Minister Burt will have the opportunity to see other areas of UK-Omani cooperation in practice. These include a venture between the UK Premier League and the Oman Football Association whereby UK Football Coaches from Bournemouth FC have travelled to Oman to train Omani football coaches. Minister Burt will also attend a roundtable with female alumni of UK universities now working in Oman to improve access to education.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Minister Burt said:

Cooperation between the UK and Oman continues to go from strength to strength. My visit this week is an opportunity to see some tangible examples of that cooperation – from the 5,500 UK troops involved in the joint UK-Oman military exercise, to British football coaches training their Omani counterparts.

Oman remains a lynchpin of relations in the Middle East region, and as ever I value their expertise on Yemen, Syria and wider Gulf issues. The 14th Joint Working Group between our countries is a chance to discuss these areas and build on the positive investment, trade and tourism relationship between the UK and Oman.

Further information

- Follow the Minister Burt on Twitter [@AlistairBurtUK](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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[News story: UK to send transport aircraft to provide relief to Indonesia](#)

The RAF A400M 'Atlas' aircraft, currently in the Middle East, will assist following the 7.5 magnitude earthquake and subsequent 3-metre wave that has so far left more than 1,500 people dead, missing or injured. She will be loaded with aid from the Department for International Development (DFID).

A small team of UK military experts are deploying this evening to assist with the mission.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Britain stands united with Indonesia as they recover from this devastating tragedy. An RAF transport aircraft and her crew will provide vital supplies to those who are in desperate need.

This shows that once again Britain and her allies across the globe can depend on us to provide support and assistance no matter the time, no matter the place, and no matter the problem.

The deployment of the Atlas follows the commitment of a team of experts and £2 million in UK aid from the DFID.

News story: Wedgetail is on the radar, Defence Secretary announces ahead of NATO conference

The E-7 Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) System is able to fly for long periods of time and manage the battlespace from the sky, providing situational awareness and tracking multiple airborne and maritime targets at the same time. It then uses the information it gathers to direct other assets like fighter jets and warships. It has already been proven on operations in the battle against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

Further discussions are set to take place before any investment decision is made, as the MOD follows a stringent approvals process to ensure the aircraft meets the military requirement and represents value-for-money. If selected, UK industry could be involved significantly with the programme, from modification work to through life support.

Speaking ahead of the meeting of Defence Ministers in NATO, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Wedgetail is the stand-out performer in our pursuit of a new battlespace surveillance aircraft, and has already proved itself in Iraq and Syria. Running air operations from the sky, it could be an excellent asset for the RAF and give us a real edge in this increasingly complex world.

Our future with Australia will already see us operate the same maritime patrol aircraft, world-class Type 26 warships and supersonic F-35 jets. Wedgetail may join that formidable armoury and help us work together to take on the global threats that we both face.

Following market analysis and discussions with other potential providers, the MOD has concluded that the potential procurement of the E-7 represents the best value for money option for the UK against need, whilst representing a significant opportunity for increased defence cooperation and collaboration with our key ally Australia.

The MOD will work closely with Boeing to ensure Britain's leading defence industry could also benefit from any deal.

Named after Australia's largest bird of prey, the wedge-tailed eagle, the high-performing aircraft has been proven on operations with the Royal Australian Air Force, having seen action against Daesh over Syria and Iraq and impressing US Forces in the 'Red Flag' series of large-scale exercises.

The Wedgetail uses a standard Boeing 737 airliner modified to carry a

sophisticated Northrop Grumman active electronically-scanned radar and can cover four million square kilometres over a single 10-hour period. If selected, it would replace the E-3D Sentry, which entered service in 1992.

It is a proven and reliable aircraft that has been in-Service with the Royal Australian Air Force for some time, with potential to considerably reduce the risk normally associated with acquiring a complex new platform of this nature. The aircraft is based on the Boeing 737 airliner family as is the P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft due to enter service in 2019.

The news represents a further development of the UK's increasingly close military capability and industrial relationship with Australia, who recently selected the British Type 26 design for its future frigate. That decision confirmed the UK's world-leading ship design capabilities, whilst strengthening collaboration in anti-submarine warfare and demonstrating the value of the global five-eyes partnership.

With its proven interoperability, the Wedgetail could also link up with the RAF's latest arrival, the F-35 Lightning, providing pilots with the latest intelligence and situational awareness demonstrating how a modernised next generation Air Force can fight and win in an increasingly complex and dangerous environment, characterised by high speed and low observability.

With Australia also a partner in the F-35 programme, the RAF and the Royal Australian Air Force will have further opportunities to work together across platforms and with other allies such as the United States to share and collect data and conduct joint training missions, all leading to faster, more effective and more integrated combat forces.

[News story: Exercise Combined Joint Atlantic Serpent 2018](#)

Personnel from 6 nations will spend a fortnight being put through their paces at the York Army Medical Services Training Centre. They will work alongside each other in a simulated field hospital environment practicing realistic deployed hospital scenarios. The medical teams that deploy on North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and other coalition operations are typically multinational teams; Exercise CJAS 18 provides an opportunity for these nations to work and train together to provide the highest standards of medical care when on operations.

Oberfeldwebel (Leading Field Usher) Schurman, a Radiographer from Germany said

So far I have been really impressed, we run similar exercises in

Germany but not always to the same level of detail as I have received today.

Maj Olvetti, an Emergency Medicine Consultant from Estonia said

I am really looking forward to achieving a deeper level of integration, building on the experiences gained by my Estonian colleagues who deployed to Afghanistan with the UK in recent years.



Reservists from 205 (Scottish) and 256 (City of London) Field Hospitals training with US Air Force medical personnel at AMSTC. MOD Crown Copyright.

The exercise that takes place from 22 September to 5 October 2018 will deliver a multinational field hospital supported by up to 400 medical personnel. Since 2014, UK and US medical personnel have been working closely together and this year the international participation has expanded to include up to sixty personnel not just from the United States but also from Canada, Germany, Norway and Estonia.

Personnel taking part from the UK include Reservists from 205 and 256 Field Hospitals with support from an Royal Air Force Medical Enhanced Response Team, a Critical Care in the Air Support Team, and an Aeromedical Support Unit from 612 and 4626 RAF Squadrons. Specialised clinical support to the exercise is being provided 34 Field Hospital, Headquarters Tactical Medical Wing and the Defence Medical Group to deliver induction training, department familiarisation, casualty managers and to conduct the exercise assessment.



Familiarisation training in the emergency department bay at AMSTC for troops from (left to right) Estonia (Defence Medical School), UK (205 Fd Hosp), US and Germany (Medical Regt 2). MOD Crown Copyright.

The Defence Medical Services is committed to delivering UK led multinational health service support. The ability to deliver a multinational health solution is a critical enabler to the overall success of NATO and coalition operations.

[News story: Wearable technology for injury prevention – market exploration](#)

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) are scoping the potential for an innovation competition addressing injury prevention in the British Army by means of wearable technology. We would like to engage the market to explore market interest and to aid the scope and design of a potential future competition in advance of launch. This will provide us with an understanding of what already exists for injury prevention that can be adapted for military use as well as truly novel solutions.

Background

A study in December 2017 showed that 19.8% of personnel were medically downgraded. Of the physical injuries represented in this figure the most common were musculoskeletal injury (MSKI), environmental injury (from heat and cold) and noise induced hearing loss (NIHL). As with any organisation requiring a physical presence there is an irreducible minimum. The best sports teams work with a 7 to 12% margin for all illnesses and this accords with Commander Field Army's target of 90% deployability. In addition to the human cost behind these figures the rehabilitation of manpower capability accounts for over £100 million per annum.

The British Army is seeking rapid innovations to improve the deployability and overall health of service personnel through the use of data science and technology. The aspiration is to employ practical sensors (wearable technology) that will provide indicators and warnings prior to injury; to allow for early intervention and prevention of injuries.

The three focus areas for this market exploration are:

1. MSKI prevention: MSKI is recognised as the leading cause of medical discharge in the British Army. The study showed that 61% of the Army's non deployable personnel were as a result of MSKI, of which the average soldier took 9.5 months to fully recover
2. environmental injury prevention: heat and non-freezing cold injuries (NFCI) accounted for 2.5% of downgraded service personnel
3. NIHL prevention: 5% of service personnel downgraded were due to NIHL, an increase on the previous year

All three areas are significantly impacting the operational effectiveness of the British Army notwithstanding the personal impact on our personnel.

What we want

We are interested in potential solutions that utilise science and technology as a means to prevent, not treat, injury in service personnel. We are looking for novel methods to provide early warning or prevention methods for physical injury, specifically using practical wearable technology.

We are also interested in ideas involving novel approaches to the data management and subsequent identification of issues using existing technology.

In the long term any technology must be scalable across the whole force, and should be compatible with the realities of military usage, such as robustness, and cyber security.

We are interested in potential solutions that aim to address any or all of the areas at any level of maturity, particularly those that are at a higher technology level which could be trialled within 6 months. Potential solutions should be presented by teams with the experience and knowledge necessary to establish sound scientific evidence for any potential technology.

By completing the Capability Submission Form neither the Government nor yourselves are committing to anything, but your submissions will be used to help focus the direction of the work and the requirements for a possible themed call in this area in the future.

What we do not want

We are not interested in literature reviews, paper-based studies, preventative medicine, non-technical solutions or marginal improvements to existing capabilities.

We are not interested in static scanning technologies or invasive technologies.

We are not interested in any novel theories for biomarkers or proxies for emerging issues which do not have a sound established scientific basis in the literature.

How to submit a Capability Submission Form

Complete the attached short form
[Capability Submission Form for Wearable Technology](#)
(ODT, 867KB)

, noting the word limits, and then email it to accelerator@dstl.gov.uk by midday 19 October 2018.

Please only provide details of one product or capability per form. If you have a number of potential solutions then please submit multiple forms.

If you have any questions then please email accelerator@dstl.gov.uk with Wearable Technology in the subject line.

How we use your information

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