

# THE BRITISH ARMY REVIEW

SPRING 2024 / ISSUE #186



## A MILESTONE BIRTHDAY & OUR SLICE OF THE ALLIANCE

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ARMY

# THE BRITISH ARMY REVIEW

ISSUE #186 / SPRING 2024

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Maryna Ponomariova, pictured at Ukraine's national children's hospital, is adjusting to life with a prosthetic leg having being wounded by a Russian shell

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# 'CONTRIBUTING IN STRENGTH' TO THE ALLIANCE IS VITAL

**W**ELCOME to the latest edition of *The British Army Review*, which will focus on the British Army's contribution to our primary strategic alliance: NATO. This issue is well timed, being published just ahead of the 75th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty; at a time when NATO faces a renewed strategic threat; and as the British Army therefore implements a new focus on NATO, through *Future Soldier* and the adoption of the Land Operating Concept. These realities signal and initiate a significant change in the British Army's relationship with NATO, including a reappraisal of readiness through a NATO lens and how we will be structured to deliver those capabilities. With NATO at the heart of the Army's offer to Defence, this edition of *The British Army Review* is an excellent opportunity to expand on our commitment to NATO and the implications and opportunities for the British Army and its people.

From my perspective as Commander of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC), the restatement of the importance of NATO is hugely welcome and not before time. From 1945 to 1991 the British Army was deployed at corps level on the continent, facing the forces of the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies alongside our American and European NATO allies. As we reorientate to the reality of the return of great power competition in Europe, we shouldn't be surprised that NATO's response has significant echoes of the past. Last time, the UK corps was deployed 'two divisions up, one back' on the inner-German border as part of NORTHAG (the Northern Army Group), with a German corps on our left flank and a Belgian corps on the right flank, beyond which was CENTAG and the US. Today NATO is a much larger, stronger

<sup>1</sup>NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on 3 Mar 22, [www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov), reiterated by President Biden on 13 Jun 22, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

<sup>2</sup>NATO's two main threats are defined in the 2022 Strategic Concept as Russia and terrorism. [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

<sup>3</sup>Defence Command Paper refresh p8.



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organisation, whose eastern border is longer and much further east. Some of our continental allies are rapidly recapitalising and, through its Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, NATO has a new, robust, rehearsed and increasingly resourced plan to "defend every inch of NATO territory"<sup>1</sup> be that from Russian incursion or terrorist groups.<sup>2</sup> The article by Major Generals John Mead and Mark Pullan, UK officers working in key NATO roles, is a fascinating exposé of the NATO strategic planning that led to this strategic framework (pages 6-9). It highlights areas in which the UK can further develop its role within the Alliance and challenges us to consider what those next steps could be.

The article by Brigadier David Bickers, Head Strategy, on the British Army and the new NATO Force Model reviews the UK's relationship with NATO from the UK perspective (pages 12-15). It reminds us that the 2023 *Defence Command Paper (Refresh)* drew an explicit link between the roles of Defence in protecting the UK and

our NATO allies: "The events of the last two years have underscored the centrality of NATO to our national security... The collective security provided by NATO is our strongest bulwark against state aggression, such that the sustainment of the NATO alliance, in part through our own leadership and increased contributions, is a strategic priority for UK Defence."<sup>3</sup> With the UK's geographical position at the rear of the NATO continental land mass (conscious that the maritime perspective is very different) it makes great sense that the UK has volunteered to fulfil Supreme Allied Commander Europe's Strategic Reserve Corps role. Along with our 2\* commitments to the Allied Reaction Force and Special Operations Component Command, these are exciting roles that place the UK at the heart of NATO's enhanced deterrence, both in early stages (through the Allied Reaction Force) and (if we are forced to fight) potentially at the culminating moment as the Strategic Reserve Corps deploys to defeat the enemy and restore NATO's territorial integrity. Of course, this started in January this year for ARRC with its

assumption of the existing NATO Response Force Land Component role at high readiness.

It is also very welcome to see in the Land Operating Concept the importance placed in developing the capabilities we will need to conduct a multi-division fight at the corps level. *Future Soldier* offers a generational adjustment in the force structure to deliver the sustainment and combat support that the current order of battle lacks, along with the systems and processing power required to leverage the potential of the vastly increased amounts of data that we will be able to collect and which will be vital to achieve decision advantage.

The article by ARRC's chief of staff outlines some of the challenges and implications for the British Army of this change and of the requirement to be interoperable within NATO (pages 16-20). The new Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area plans described above have led to a reappraisal of the interoperability of NATO and US formations in Europe, with the US Army in Europe and Africa transforming itself to become an integral pillar of NATO's command and control in Europe. This will lead to a transformation in NATO operational effectiveness, enhanced by US convening of NATO training exercises in 2024 that will further increase the credibility of NATO's Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area plans. The UK will have a key role to play in this as we also increasingly focus our land capabilities on support to NATO. In 2024 the UK will deploy HQ ARRC on Exercise Avenger Triad and HQ 3rd (UK) Division in support of V Corps on Exercise

**“Through its Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, NATO has a new, robust, rehearsed and increasingly resourced plan to ‘defend every inch of NATO territory’.”**

Austere Challenge, whilst further developing the relationship between HQ ARRC and 3rd (UK) Division as the heart of the British Army's warfighting contribution to NATO. With its Allied Reaction Force role, 1st (UK) Division will also shift from force generating to training to deploy in NATO as a land component command or an operational division for rapid global effect. This provides an important opportunity to impose NATO-derived commonality of systems and processes throughout the land tactical hierarchy of headquarters, ensuring that multi-domain and data-driven opportunities are exploited at the right level for the right outcomes.

The article on the commitment of UK Special Operations Forces to NATO (pages 21-25) highlights an exciting new task for the country and the first time that UK Special Operations Forces have been formally contributed to NATO, which has a history of the use of Special Operations Force (as opposed to Special Forces) from which we may have much to learn, and to offer. In addition to the command contribution to the NATO Special Operations Force component,

there is also great potential for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability in the deep to contribute to the multi-domain counter-anti-access/area denial fight in support of the air component.

The vignettes by Major General Jez Bennett and Brigadier Chris Gent provide a valuable personal perspective on the realities of working in NATO at the highest level (pages 26-27). It shouldn't pass anyone by that the UK has a substantial number of officers and staff working from 1\* to 4\* in the NATO command structure and so this represents both an individual and organisational opportunity to make a tangible and valuable contribution towards meeting the pacing operational threat to the UK by volunteering for employment in NATO positions. It is also an increasingly rare opportunity for the international travel and immersion that the Army prides itself on offering.

Finally, a lesson learned by all of us working in NATO appointments is that the strength of the Alliance is the genuine commitment of all the participants and the political and military unity that this results in. Just being in the Alliance is important, but contributing in strength and actively exercising together is even more important as it gives substance to the capability offered by the force structure. So I am delighted that UK Defence and the British Army is now doubling-down on its solid commitment to NATO, backing up the leadership it has always provided, to ensure we play our part alongside our allies to protect the North Atlantic area. – **Lieutenant General Sir Nick Borton, Commander ARRC**

## FROM THE EDITOR

**An institution renowned for the quality of its leadership – a wealth of ‘captains’ spread across the ranks with a seemingly ingrained ability to ‘coach’ the best out of individuals and collectives, and consistently grind out positive results – probably doesn't need telling that Defence is the very epitome of a team sport.**

And having only ever been applauded off a football pitch once (a consolatory nod to the stretcher I was being carried on rather than by virtue of any deft touches displayed), I have little in the way of expert insight on the subject of sporting synergism to proffer. Forgive me, therefore, for stating the startlingly obvious. Protecting the United Kingdom by being ready to fight and win wars is a purpose best served in the company of others. No single Service has the necessary strength in depth

to consistently match the security challenges posed by an increasingly dangerous and unsettled world. Stove-pipes need shattering and – from a domestic perspective – joint thinking is a necessity and cannot be the sole preserve of those in uniform. As argued by Lieutenant General (Retired) Sir Paul Newton later in this issue of *The British Army Review* (pages 34-38), the rhetoric of the ‘Whole Force’ concept must become a reality so that relationships between Service personnel, civil servants, other government departments and industry can be relied upon in any future hour of need faced by the country.

You really can't surge trust, so it is also encouraging to read on the pages that follow that the British Army is very much on the front foot when it comes to nurturing and committing wholeheartedly to its partnerships

with international allies. Whether in the form of NATO, the Joint Expeditionary Force or other multinational coalitions, significant effort is being exerted to enhance the interoperability that will inevitably be demanded by tomorrow's operations. The need to be part of a multi-domain team – united in cause and with a shared understanding of each other's tactical strengths and weaknesses – has never been more critical.

Despite being an habitually disappointing defender during my playing days, I have always been acutely aware that teams that talk have a competitive advantage. So I leave you with this closing thought – do not dismiss out of hand the ‘marginal gains’ that contributing to this publication may realise. A good idea can only evolve to become a match-winning strategy if it is socialised. – **Andrew Simms**



**AUTHORS**

**Major General John Mead**, Deputy Chief of Staff Plans, Allied Joint Force Command Naples.



**Major General Mark Pullan**, Deputy Chief of Staff Plans, Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum.



# THE UK & NATO: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

**H**ISTORY doesn't repeat itself but it often rhymes.<sup>1</sup> A story of Britain and NATO in a sentence could be summarised as: 1949 founding member; Cold War; 'end of history' and peace dividend; 9/11 and forever wars; 2014 'return of history'; 2022 strategic shock – not ready. And so, as NATO approaches its 75th anniversary this spring, there is a sense of history rhyming in terms of threat, uncertainties and the choices for Britain. In 1949 – and for its first two years – NATO was headquartered in Belgrave Square, London and although much has changed, we retain a global network and global ambitions, we remain a natural conduit between the US and Europe and, we would argue, need

NATO more than ever. This short article will therefore take the key lessons from regional planning and the warfighting changes underway in NATO's Command Structure to posit the UK's place in the Alliance is 'not in the bag' yet and now is the time for boldness. We will make some recommendations along the way; 'how much NATO?'<sup>2</sup> is a strategic choice for the Army, as well as Defence.

With two gunner generals as architects for two of the three NATO operational level regional

<sup>1</sup>A quote often, but probably incorrectly, attributed to Mark Twain.

<sup>2</sup>The current Chairman of the Military Committee's challenge to a joint MC/JFCNP forum on RP-SE.



plans, what could possibly go wrong? Quite a lot actually, not just owing to our ability, but because accelerating regional plans as NATO's first collective defence plans since the Cold War was always going to be a close-run thing. The plans are innovative (President Macron's 2019 'brain dead' was a useful challenge though), are integrated to an unprecedented level with nations and across domains and take an asymmetric approach to pit strengths against weakness. Endorsed at the Vilnius Summit, now comes the difficult bit – delivery. Making the plans executable will be judged on four criteria – plans alignment, command and control, forces and authorities. To meet the challenges, the changes now underway across Allied Command Operations

are more revolution than evolution, but reliant on nations' support and will. Our first recommendation, therefore, is the UK and British Army should, from first principles, assess and lead the charge in being 'NATO by design' over the next decade.

Looking first at the executability criteria, the adage 'you've got to have a plan' is one where many nations, and the Alliance as a whole, were not in a comfortable space in February 2022. In the preceding months, we planners argued vociferously for the refresh and implementation of the graduated response plans noting political consensus across NATO was likely to come late. And so it proved when the nature of the Russian threat was finally agreed upon in the week of the actual invasion. A salutary lesson, but a useful forcing function in NATO's drive to develop a coherent family of plans – there is now consensus on the threats – both Russia and terror groups. Before Russia's invasion of Ukraine there was a clear divide within the Alliance as to the degree that Russia posed the greatest threat. Indeed, for some nations it was deemed more likely that terror groups would drive instability across the Alliance. Once agreed, however, the challenge for nations was then to re-imagine their own national defence plans within a NATO planning architecture. And for us planners, it was our task to converge NATO planning at the operational level with national plans, to ensure that we were maximising the forces and capabilities in a way that nations could see themselves, their own priorities and assumptions. This proved to be a vital forcing function for many departments and ministries of defence, as their national defence plans were at varying degrees of maturity; some were more Article 3 in construct and light on Article 5 perspectives. And some, quite frankly, did not exist. As the UK develops and refines its own national defence plan, we remain closely engaged, including sending regional planners to the Ministry of Defence to bring meaning to 'NATO by design' and hopefully learn from the lessons and mistakes we made along the way.

From a UK perspective the choices are complex. It could be argued that the tyranny of our geography (and history) coupled with our political global ambitions drive risk into our national military capability development programme – we are trying to do too much with too little, and we have too many priorities. The timing is perfect for putting NATO at the heart of what we do, and for us to resource it accordingly. Only through NATO can we adequately defend ourselves given the changing nature of the threat, and only

**“Only through NATO can we adequately defend ourselves given the changing nature of the threat, and only through NATO can deterrence be capable, credible and properly communicated.”**

through NATO can deterrence be capable, credible and properly communicated. NATO has taken a huge step forward to align operational planning with capability planning. Nations will fall short of delivering against the capability and forces demand signal created by the regional plans in key areas such as ground-based air defence, long range fires and logistics,<sup>3</sup> which will then usefully signpost where the Alliance needs rapid growth. The UK's capability priorities detailed in the refreshed *Defence Paper* remain aligned with NATO's priorities – we just need to accelerate. And perhaps the UK's robust commitment of forces to the new NATO Force Model will provide assurance to our allies that we mean what we say.

The second recommendation, in the more immediate timeframe of the next three to five years, is to harness UK Defence's training programme, operational mindset and global defence network to act as an accelerator to Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (see page 10) implementation. There is a necessity to enhance deterrence activities against Russia, to better understand terror groups and NATO's flanks, exploit partnerships and develop a clearer way forward in areas such as North Africa. Permanent Joint Headquarters' role and links with NATO are, somewhat surprisingly, a relatively new development spanning only a few Chief of Joint Operations. And yet the integration benefits have been clear. Hitherto reluctance to place forces routinely under NATO command and control for deterrence activities is now being replaced by a bolder approach. In November 2023, HMS *Queen Elizabeth* was operating in the North Sea under NATO command and control on the complex Neptune Strike exercise, while along the Administrative Boundary Line between Kosovo and Serbia, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment Battlegroup, a strategic reserve deployed under the Kosovo Force, maintained overwatch, supported de-escalation and held the line. The more routine

<sup>3</sup>*The battle of the warehouses' to quote the Swedish Defence Minister.*

we can make command and control changes (transfer of authority) and the further out we can design it into NATO's training and exercise programme, the more interoperable, capable and, indeed, influential we become.

On operations, the UK plays a crucial role on NATO Mission Iraq and has the biggest number of senior advisors (seven colonel equivalents) under a 1\* civil servant. We're on plan, but the long-term relationship between NATO and Iraq is a conversation to accelerate. NATO is into its fifth rotation of the mission, the sixth will be led by the Netherlands in 2024 and the UK really should look at the right time to lead – this moment may be approaching as the US considers changes to the coalition. As for the Western Balkans, well known to those serving in the 90s, unfortunately it's not job done, and the political situation remains gloomy. The UK's foreign office and defence levers are considerable and in high demand, as we look afresh at reshaping theatre level plans for the Balkans, testing their underpinning assumptions and adjusting posture.

The training and exercise programme is now the vehicle through which peacetime deterrence activity can be organised into an opportunity to rehearse plans and demonstrate the strength and cohesion of the Alliance. Before Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, 85 per cent of military activity in peacetime was national activity, uncoordinated with NATO. The Supreme

Allied Commander Europe had no visibility of either the purpose of the event, or the outcome. He was unable to assess or measure whether deterrence was effective. However, we are now gaining real traction with nations on turning national and NATO collective training events into the opportunities we need to demonstrate our ability to deliver effects and actions (such as joint fires), test the plans, and drive interoperability between nations who are likely to fight side by side. In Joint Force Command Naples, we're seeking to concentrate such activity into discrete windows or so called 'clusters', although we might have chosen a better term!

The UK is already starting to take a lead in some areas of the training and exercise programme. The often misunderstood Exercise Joint Warrior was one of the first exercises that pivoted to NATO and the new family of plans. A clear demonstration of NATO's ability to block the Greenland/ Iceland/UK and Norway gap. And a fantastic multinational opportunity for the nations to work alongside one another. From a land perspective we have also made significant progress. Our commitment to Exercise Steadfast Defender 24 (the largest NATO live exercise for generations) under Joint Force Command Brunssum is a great example of demonstrating our ability to project land capability onto mainland Europe.

Our global outlook (global campaigning as it's put in the UK *Defence Paper*) should also join

the dots more with NATO. Firstly, the UK has a strong network in the Balkans and in countries NATO terms 'partners at risk' – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Georgia. There is definitely more we can do to unify efforts by, for example, sharing intelligence more routinely (harder than it sounds), visiting His Majesty's ambassadors/defence attachés during NATO visits (getting better there), and supporting NATO Defence Capacity Building packages. These are countries with fragile institutions and they need our support to counter malign Russian influence. The Armed Forces of Bosnia are one example of where cooperation between ethnic groups can work, but their resourcing problems are myriad and morale is low. By way of example, Air Chief Marshall Stuart Peach as the UK Prime Minister's special envoy to the Western Balkans has regular engagement with Joint Force Command Naples, and these networks are win-wins.

The third observation concerns multi-domain operations, for some time now heralded as the key to challenging emerging threats. Our journey to being match fit in the execution of multi-domain operations at NATO's operational level is just beginning. Exercise Steadfast Jupiter 2023 was the first run out of this new concept, which usefully highlighted the areas where we need to accelerate our thinking. At the very core of multi-domain operations lies targeting and joint fires. More work must be done in designing and delivering a joint fires live exercise so that we can start building the understanding of executing deep precision strikes and integrating joint fires in a multi-domain environment at scale. The UK has been making significant progress in this area for several years now. Since 2018 the British Army has invested resource in the development of the Joint Air Ground Integration Cell at both the divisional and corps levels. Integration of 3rd (UK) Division and HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps into US live exercises and command post exercises (including Exercise Warfighter), has demonstrated the power of synchronising multiple effects in time and space, whilst concurrently enabling time sensitive targeting of priority assets. Joint Air Ground Integration Centres are now being copied across the NATO force structure and it's a good example of where UK leadership can really act as an accelerant and also bridge between the daunting scale of US change. Our third recommendation is, therefore, for the UK to further build NATO interoperability into its multi-domain approach, especially through exploiting targeting and joint fires expertise to enhance Alliance tempo.

Having taken risk on targeting for over a

**Under NATO command and control: HMS Queen Elizabeth flew a NATO flag as she sailed from Portsmouth to take part in Exercise Neptune Strike 2023**



**“The more routine we can make command and control changes (transfer of authority) and the further out we can design it into NATO's training and exercise programme, the more interoperable, capable and, indeed, influential we become.”**





**“The changes now needed require the application of prioritised deep precision strike, joint fires and the integration of high-end space and cyber effects. This is degree level warfighting – far more complex than the GCSE level air land integration of the Iraq and Afghanistan deployments.”**

decade, NATO has woken up with a targeting knowledge, skills and experience hangover. We now need to put our targeting capability onto an industrial footing.<sup>4</sup> If Russia hold the first strike advantage against NATO then we must do everything we can to regain the initiative. There has been a paradigm shift in the construct of our operational design from fire to manoeuvre, to manoeuvre to fire. Fires (especially the air component) are our asymmetric edge and the lessons from Ukraine are legion. The changes now needed require the application of prioritised deep precision strike, joint fires and the integration of high-end space and cyber effects. This is new. And this is hard. This is degree level warfighting – far more complex than the GCSE level air land integration of the Iraq and Afghanistan deployments. We must acknowledge the challenge and start doing something about it. From a NATO perspective the driver for getting this right has been (not on its own) finding a way to overcome the anti-access/area denial capabilities that exist across Russia. These sophisticated and difficult target sets give Russia a time, geography and domain advantage over the Alliance and their degradation must be a priority.

The development, testing, modelling and rehearsal of achieving rapid success in joint fires and targeting is well underway, but not without its challenges. For instance, when and how can cyber and space effects be

brought to bear? Who owns those effects if the capabilities are retained by nations? Which commander is responsible for calling the H hour? Who is responsible for the battle space management at the strategic and operational levels? How is this deconflicted with national plans and national activity (such as special operations forces)? We are getting there and taking the Allied Command Operations and nations with us. If we are working up critical target packs post Article 5 declarations, then we will find it difficult to take the initiative. Operational level target boards require experienced and capable personnel who can think in terms of effects, actions and synchronisation. We are seeing progress. The numerous rehearsal of conflict drills, wargames and exercises that have been delivered are identifying lessons, which is driving positive change. Indeed, this year there will be a theatre-wide counter-anti-access/area denial and joint fires tabletop exercise being run in Joint Forces Command Brunssum to baseline everything we have learned. This seminal event is an important step in agreeing how, in detail, the Alliance military architecture will degrade Russian anti-access/area denial targets. We know how to do this now; it's now all about the details.

By way of summary it's worth reflecting on Bill Slim's advice: "When you cannot make up your mind which of two evenly balanced courses of action you should take choose the

bolder." The UK's offer in NATO's Defence Planning Process is bold, we also have highly influential people across the command and force structure and retain significant influence often by dint of history (and accident). So, one perfectly reasonable course of action is to pursue current positive NATO language and policy and eventually, in distant epochs, really be NATO by design. The bolder course of action is to reassess where we can, from first principles, lead the way across defence lines of development, while concurrently accelerating Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area in every way possible through our training programme, partnerships and global defence network. We need to understand NATO better, while NATO also has to improve (and is) in areas such as non-commissioned officer development and their say in Alliance business. The UK's future influence is 'not in the bag' and UK leadership as an accelerant to multi-domain change and as a bridge between Europe and America is of fundamental importance. As General Sir Richard Barrons has said, there are only ever three courses of action – "do nothing, do a little, or do a lot". Now is the time to do a lot with NATO in word and deed to secure the UK's vital national interests and place in the world at a time of multiple threats.

<sup>4</sup>At RAF Molesworth, the UK hosts NATO's Intelligence Fusion Centre and Centralised Targeting Capacity – growth areas and worthy of closer attention.

# 'A NEW CREDIBLE APPROACH'

**T**HE NATO Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA) was approved in 2020 and delivered a new, credible, threat-based approach for the coherence of Alliance forces across multiple domains from peacetime, through crisis, and into conflict. General Tod Wolters was Supreme Allied Commander Europe at the time, though a principal architect of the concept was his strategic and international affairs advisor Stephen Covington, who remains in SHAPE now working for the current commander, General Chris Cavoli. That Mr Covington has remained in post through successive incumbents has delivered depth of continuity and assurance to DDA as it operationalises as NATO's capstone strategy. If any aspect of Alliance work is not aligned to DDA, then the first question is usually 'why not?'

My aim within this short article is to provide readers with an introduction to DDA. What some often do not realise (largely as a result of limited connectivity into NATO networks) is that DDA is actually a physical document, which sits atop several other key NATO strategies collectively known as the family of plans. DDA and the family of plans drive vigilance activity (largely through the vehicle of training and exercises), and are the single biggest strategic unifier within NATO, from which many nations are now looking to drive their own national programmes and approach. DDA has three key tenets around which NATO's strategy for deterrence and defence is formed: geography, domains and readiness.

**Geography.** DDA divides Supreme Allied Commander Europe's area of responsibility into three regions, each of which is commanded by a 4\* Joint Force Command headquarters and bearing its own regional plan. This clear delineation of boundaries, when coupled with a stable command structure and composition (i.e. the member countries) drives coherence in planning in both deterrence and defence. History tells us though the enemy seldom conforms to boundaries, and simply being grouped in one of those segments does not restrict a country from 'internal cooperation' or undertaking training and exercises within another. National priorities, bi-lats or membership of another regional security organisation – such as the Joint Expeditionary Force in the UK's case – create a multilateral approach across the area of responsibility spreading beyond the geographic extremities of any

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regional plan. Such multi-lateralism – and complexity – must only be seen as healthy as it constantly forces us to address the issue at all levels of interoperability, in the human, technical and procedural space. The ability to speak, operate, move and fight alongside others in Alliance terms is one of the greatest challenges we face. Finally, it will be of no surprise to hear that the accession of Finland and – hopefully – Sweden will create a shift to NATO's regional boundaries. This is not as simple as extending a particular line further east around a new member nation, and is dependent on many factors. How will the regional plan be affected? How do countries in the same region already operate together,

and so how to optimally group? Where are they best commanded from and is the span of command achievable? And of course, the most important single consideration, what are the political motives from each nation concerned? Remember NATO is an Alliance that works on consensus, and whatever plan NATO's senior leadership thinks is best for incorporation of new members has to be agreed by all nations.

**Domains.** NATO has taken significant steps to operationalise itself as a fighting force with multi-domain operations at the heart of planning and execution in both deterrence and defence. To achieve this it has a number of domain-specialist headquarters, known as the Theatre Component Commands, which are placed around member nations – readers may recognise that the UK hosts NATO Maritime Command at Northwood Headquarters; Türkiye hosts Land Command Headquarters in Izmir, and Germany and the US jointly host Air Command Headquarters at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany. Beyond these 'traditional' components of integration NATO also has new headquarters in the space, cyber and special operations forces domains, as well as a new

**"It will be of no surprise to hear that the accession of Finland and – hopefully – Sweden will create a shift to NATO's regional boundaries. This is not as simple as extending a particular line further east around a new member nation, and is dependent on many factors. How will the regional plan be affected?"**



“The ability to speak, operate, move and fight alongside others in Alliance terms is one of the greatest challenges we face.”

4\* headquarters for enablement, the Joint Support Enabling Command based at Ulm, Germany. The Theatre Component Commands deliver first-class, multinational and Alliance-focused advice into NATO’s headquarters at the operational and strategic levels. The UK are playing an active part in all of NATO’s development and discussion on multi-domain operations and have several officers in key Ministry of Defence-focused appointments across the Alliance.

**Readiness.** DDA demanded a new readiness profile for NATO both in terms of force structure and posture. Forces are now shaped by a structure known as the new NATO Force Model, which in-turn drove a force structure requirement; when combined the two resource each regional plan with the correct number of forces assessed to deliver that plan (across all domains), and at different tiers of readiness. The NATO Force Model also sees a significant uplift in the number of forces held at readiness within the Alliance at any time.



# THE ITALIAN JOB

**S**INCE its inception in 2001 the UK has had a prominent role as the lead contributing nation to NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy, which is based in Milan. Modelled upon HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, a reciprocal arrangement with the ARRC followed in which UK and Italy provided the deputy commander and a sizeable contingent for the other, and the start of a ‘special relationship’ began, which both armies cherish to this day.

Having twice led the NATO International Security Assistance Force campaign in Afghanistan, NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy is a highly capable multinational organisation, which – like the other NATO corps – has historically rotated through a number of different roles. Most recently we spent two years as NATO’s Joint Task Force at Readiness for land heavy operations beneath the Article 5 threshold. This role has given us unique insights into the importance of building relationships – from the political/military level, with and among components in the Joint Task Force and across the many non-governmental organisations which have such a key role in stabilisation operations.

Indeed, our two successive years of experience from Exercise Steadfast Jackal – NATO’s training and evaluation event for crisis management operations – emphasised how in stability operations the military role is to provide the security bubble in which the non-governmental organisations operate. Our analogy was that we were the scaffolding which enabled the contractors to work in the cathedral! We also realised how the traditional perception of ‘civilians on the battlefield’ was not quite right and that ‘fighting in someone’s house’ felt the more appropriate way of looking at the issue. This led us to revise our standard operating procedures to make human security a central planning feature rather than a J9 civil-military co-operation ‘add on’. In turn this facilitated our dialogue and co-operation with the non-governmental organisations who could see the shift in our approach.

It was largely due to our experience as a Joint Task Force that we were selected to become the first, interim 3\* command

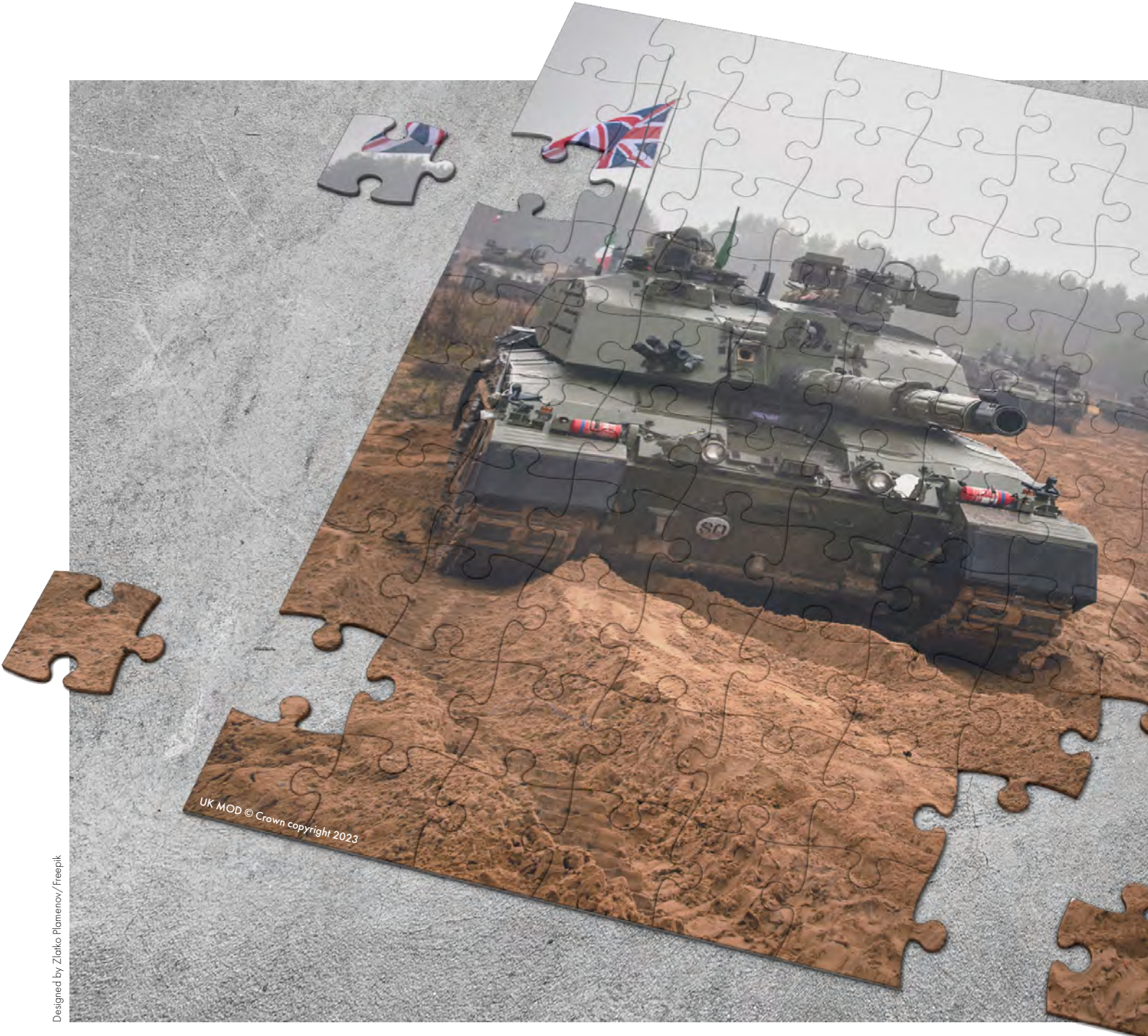
## AUTHOR

**Major General Jez Bennett**, Deputy Commander, NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy.



headquarters of NATO’s new Allied Reaction Force, announced at Vilnius last year. At the time of writing we are still getting into the detail of this, but the concept is for Allied Reaction Force to be more than a revamped NATO Response Force – meaning that it will work direct to Supreme Allied Commander Europe, have allocated components, force structure and pre-authorized authorities. There is also a greater appetite to use the Allied Reaction Force – within or outside the NATO joint operations area – emphasising how quickly NATO can act while leveraging multi-domain capabilities, in order to demonstrate, deter or even to restore.

Clearly, achieving this by the middle of this year has its challenges, but there is a real sense of purpose about making this happen from all stakeholders across the alliance. NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy will hold this operational level, joint role for several years before reverting to the ‘bread and butter’ warfighting corps role. But well before then the NATO Headquarters Allied Land Command plan to defend Europe will include allocations of troops to tasks, and we will find out in due course where we fit in. One option may be a rotation between NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy and other corps headquarters between the roles of NATO’s Strategic Reserve Corps and command of the Allied Reaction Force. If the intention is for the warfighting corps to be truly multi-domain operations capable then the structural gap between a joint, operational headquarters focused on land heavy operations and a higher tactical multi-domain operations capable land warfighting corps would not be much. But there would still be differences in roles and procedures, which means that staying in one of these roles for at least a couple of years would be important for continuity.



Designed by Zlatko Plamenov/FreePik

# PIECING TOGETHER A PICTURE OF OUR FUTURE ROLE IN NATO



## AUTHOR

**Brigadier David Bickers** is Head Strategy, responsible for formulating, setting and refining Army strategy within Army Headquarters

**C**HANGE brought about by the new NATO Force Model will be profound for the British Army. UK leadership of the land component of its Allied Reaction Force, the new 3\*-led multi-domain first responder replacing the Alliance's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force in 2024, is the first tangible sign of its impact. But more will follow, all of which sum to a fundamental reframing of the UK land domain offer to

NATO, its position within British defence policy and role in driving British Army strategy.

The NATO Force Model will impact the Army's strategic objectives and priorities, change our readiness commitments, and adjust both immediate efforts to enhance our fighting power and longer-term efforts to modernise. The NATO Force Model is driving optimisation of the Army under *How We Fight 2026*. It will also form the core of the Army proposition into the next Strategic Review, alongside pursuit of the new way of winning set out in the Land Operating Concept.<sup>1</sup> This

<sup>1</sup>Major General James Bowdler, *The Land Operating Concept, A New Way of Winning, The British Army Review 185, Autumn 2023*.



article will outline these changes and place them in context.

### BRITISH DEFENCE POLICY AND NATO

NATO has been prominent in British defence policy since the creation of the Alliance. The Integrated Review of 2021, *Global Britain in a Competitive Age*, reaffirmed NATO as the foundation of our collective security in the Euro-Atlantic Area and identified Russia as our most acute threat.<sup>2</sup> The subsequent Defence Command Paper, *Defence in a Competitive Age*, committed the UK to being the leading European ally within NATO, making a full spectrum contribution to the Alliance and a leading contribution to both its enhanced Forward Presence and the NATO Response Force.<sup>3</sup>

These Integrated Review 2021 policy ambitions were delivered in parallel with operationalising an increased emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific ‘tilt’ committed to an increase in diplomatic, security and economic engagement across the region, to build regional partnerships and realise opportunities there. This ambition, mirrored in Defence Command Paper 2021, was demonstrated by the inaugural deployment of the Carrier Strike Group in 2021.

By 2023 the Government had concluded that the threats and challenges the country faced had changed, highlighted most acutely by a land war in Europe. 2023’s Integrated Review Refresh<sup>4</sup> declared that global events of the previous two years required a clearer approach to deterrence and an acceleration of modernisation in some areas. It increased the political importance placed on NATO, with a pledge to integrate UK security policy with NATO’s new Strategic Concept.

A refreshed Defence Command Paper followed in 2023,<sup>5</sup> alongside increased investment of £5 billion in defence. The tonal shifts since Defence Command Paper 2021 included the generation of an integrated force more credible at deterring threats, and a clear priority to optimise this force to be able to warfight in the Euro-Atlantic Area against Russia within a NATO context. Its highest priority (protecting the UK and Crown dependencies) drew a clear link between protecting the UK and our NATO allies. It also committed to the UK playing a key part in NATO’s operational and strategic plans, and pledged to make a comprehensive force commitment to the Alliance through a substantial offer to the NATO Force Model.

Following this, at the NATO Leaders’ Summit in Vilnius in July 2023, the Prime Minister promised to commit “almost all of our Armed Forces and military capabilities to NATO under the new NATO Force Model”.<sup>6</sup> The Defence Command Paper laid out these commitments in more detail, which from a land perspective included: continuing to lead the enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Estonia, provision of the Very High Readiness Joint Taskforce (Land) in 2023, provision of the land component of the inaugural Allied Reaction Force and the strengthening of the UK-led Allied Rapid Reaction Corps for a potential future role as a strategic reserve for NATO’s land forces.

These public policy commitments have subsequently flowed through to the Ministry of Defence’s plans and planning assumptions. So as we begin 2024, and importantly as we

**“As we begin 2024 we see an increased emphasis in British defence policy on NATO, the Euro-Atlantic Area, generating credible warfighting capability and deterring Russia. In parallel, and most relevant to the British Army, we see an increase in the land offer to NATO.”**

enter the next strategic review cycle, we see an increased emphasis in British defence policy on NATO, the Euro-Atlantic Area, generating credible warfighting capability and deterring Russia. In parallel, and most relevant to the British Army, we see an increase in the land offer to NATO through the new Force Model.

### THE CHANGING NATO REQUIREMENT

NATO is undergoing conceptual and strategic renewal. Even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the Alliance recognised its conceptual basis for deterrence and defence had been challenged by Russia. Aligned to NATO’s Strategic Concept, the NATO concept of Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (described in greater detail in Brigadier Chris Gent’s accompanying article, page 10) gave the Alliance greater regional focus, emphasised deterrence by denial, and explicitly linked deterrence and defence. Options developed in response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine accelerated the implementation of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe’s Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area Concept.<sup>7</sup>

The transition to the NATO Force Model was approved by leaders at the June 2022 summit in Madrid. It was designed to increase the scale and speed of response of NATO

<sup>2</sup>HM Government, *Global Britain in a competitive age, The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy* (Crown Copyright, March 2021).

<sup>3</sup>Ministry of Defence, *Defence in a Competitive Age* (Crown Copyright, March 2021).

<sup>4</sup>HM Government, *Integrated Review Refresh 23, Responding to a More Contested and Volatile World*, (Crown Copyright, March 2023).

<sup>5</sup>Ministry of Defence, *Defence’s Response to a More Contested and Volatile World*, (Crown Copyright, 18 July 2023), P.10.

<sup>6</sup>Press release, “Prime Minister: NATO must learn lessons from Putin’s barbaric tactics in Ukraine”, Prime Minister’s Office, 10 Downing Street, 11 July 2023.

<sup>7</sup>NATO HQ, “Deterrence and Defence”, NATO, 10 October 2023.

forces held at readiness, resulting in a greater number of high readiness forces across all domains. These forces will be pre-assigned to specific geographical areas, enabling focused operational planning to take place to ensure the Alliance is better prepared to deter and defend.

Under its existing readiness initiative, the NATO Response Force, Allies can make approximately 40,000 people available at less than 15 days' readiness. The NATO Force Model, when fully implemented, will increase this to more than 300,000 at high readiness. These forces will be split between Tier 1 (up to 10 days and comprising over 100,000 people) and Tier 2 (around 10-30 days and comprising around 200,000 people). At least a further 500,000 people will be at Tier 3 (30-180 days).<sup>8</sup>

### **MATCHING BRITISH CAPABILITY TO THE NATO REQUIREMENT**

The significant reshaping of NATO's readiness roster presented opportunities for the British Army to re-align its NATO offer both physically and conceptually. A number of principles shaped the Army's initial NATO Force Model offer, including the need to meet policy and political imperatives, demonstrate relevance, and offer choice while remaining realistic and credible.

Opportunities presented by the NATO Force Model included:

- **Demonstrating the UK's policy ambition of being the leading European ally in NATO through its initial offer, including seizing opportunities to take framework nation status.**
- *Exploiting regional specificity to create the command and control and support architectures to offset Russia's first move advantage, focus intelligence collection and information operations, and give a clear context for training.*
- **Affiliating offset activity, better integrating Army activity that contributes to countering both hostile state threats and terrorist groups.**
- *Delivering an iterative offer that veers and hauls as our force structure and capabilities change over time.*

The British Army's contribution of a battlegroup as the enhanced Forward Presence in Estonia provided the foundation on which to build our NATO Force Model offer. The battlegroup can be reinforced to a brigade-sized formation (termed collectively as Forward Land Forces)<sup>9</sup> which demonstrates long-term commitment, builds strong relationships with key partners in Eastern Europe, and demonstrates UK



Picture: NATO

**“The [enhanced Forward Presence] battlegroup can be reinforced to a brigade-sized formation which demonstrates long-term commitment, builds strong relationships with key partners in Eastern Europe, and demonstrates UK leadership and burden sharing.”**

leadership and burden sharing. Strong land forces able to defend forward are essential for moral leadership in NATO and the litmus test of the UK's commitment to collective defence – the long-held golden thread of UK defence policy. The land investment and political equity invested in Estonia, as well as our logistic hub (NATO Forward Holding Base Sennelager), provided an initial central European focus.

The capability and capacity of the British Army's available formations, however, did not warrant a sole geographic focus in Estonia or the wider Baltics. The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, with an enhanced 3 (UK) Division, allows the UK to offer leadership within any corps-level strategic reserve. The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps is the nexus of UK authority and credibility in NATO's land component. Its utility and convening power are matched only by the US and its capability and multi-nationalism gives the UK the broadest range of intervention options during crises.

<sup>8</sup>NATO, “New NATO Force Model”, NATO press release, undated.

<sup>9</sup>NATO, “NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance”, NATO, 28 July 2023.

The presence of a second battle-winning division in 1 (UK) Division allowed us to also offer the first Land Component HQ of the new Allied Response Force. Meanwhile, the Army Special Operations Brigade, created as a result of *Future Soldier* in 2021 and recently elevated to component level under the Land Operations Command, meant we were also able to offer Army Special Operations Forces to NATO for the first time.

This ambitious offer maximised our contribution across the tiers of the NATO Force Model, from a logistic footprint in the centre, a major contribution to the Baltics, command of a strategic reserve corps and a substantial investment in the Allied Response Force (Supreme Allied Commander Europe's highest readiness force).

The offer defines the Army's major readiness outputs for the coming decade. If these are our ends over that period, then the ways will very much be driven by the Land Operating Concept, which is driving the British Army's conceptual renewal and informing force development decisions.

Published recently and the focus of issue 185 of *The British Army Review*, the Land Operating Concept is the most robustly evidenced conceptual work that the Army has produced in more than three decades. It defines five imperatives: redefining readiness, campaigning relentlessly, fighting and operating differently, adapting at pace and delivering cross-domain effect needed to win in the future. It conceives a tactical framework with a transformative emphasis on fighting by recce-strike at every level and maximising the advantages of defence. Importantly, it prioritises the British Army's role within NATO's mission, is conceived in a NATO operational construct, and is informed both by the Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area and NATO's Warfighting Capstone Concept.

### **ADJUSTING FUTURE SOLDIER FOR THE DEMANDS OF NATO**

Op Mobilise, launched by the Chief of the General Staff in 2022, was a mechanism to focus the Army on deterring and, if necessary, defending NATO against Russian attack. It recognised that Ukraine called into question some of the timelines and risk judgements inherent in *Future Soldier* transformation. It sought, as a result, to advance the most important aspects of its modernisation and reassess some of its force structural judgements.

From a capability perspective, around 140



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**“The NATO Force Model underpins the British Army’s return to warfighting, and with it the requirement for the Army to have a credible corps warfighting capability geared for the Alliance.”**

individual adjustments were made to the Army’s baseline plan and programme of record as a result of Op Mobilise, from investing in additional collective training, stockpiles and equipment, through to resetting the aiming mark for the Army Reserve.

In the summer of 2023 Army analysis highlighted some limited force structural adjustment to *Future Soldier* was also required. Such adjustment would ensure the Army was optimised to deliver on its NATO Force Model offer, realise the Field Army’s vision for *How We Fight 2026* and align with the Land Operating Concept’s early recommendations.

As a result, a number of *Future Soldier* adjustments were announced by the Chief of the General Staff at RUSI in June 2023 and codified in an Army Command Order released in September 2023. These changes included:

- **Enhancing HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps’ ability to conduct corps-level warfighting as a strategic reserve corps.**
- **Optimising 1 (UK) Division as a 2\* Land Component Command for the Allied**

*Reaction Force and a battle-winning division for rapid global effect. HQ 1 (UK) Division has reorganised, gained structural uplift and the reachback command and control capability required to be an agile and survivable HQ able to deploy at pace.*

■ **Resubordinating 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team from Field Army Troops to 1 (UK) Division to enable the Army to better deliver Response Force commitments in the future.**

■ *Reorganising and redesignating the Joint Helicopter Command as a Joint Aviation Command, to better manage and assure both crewed and uncrewed aviation capabilities.*

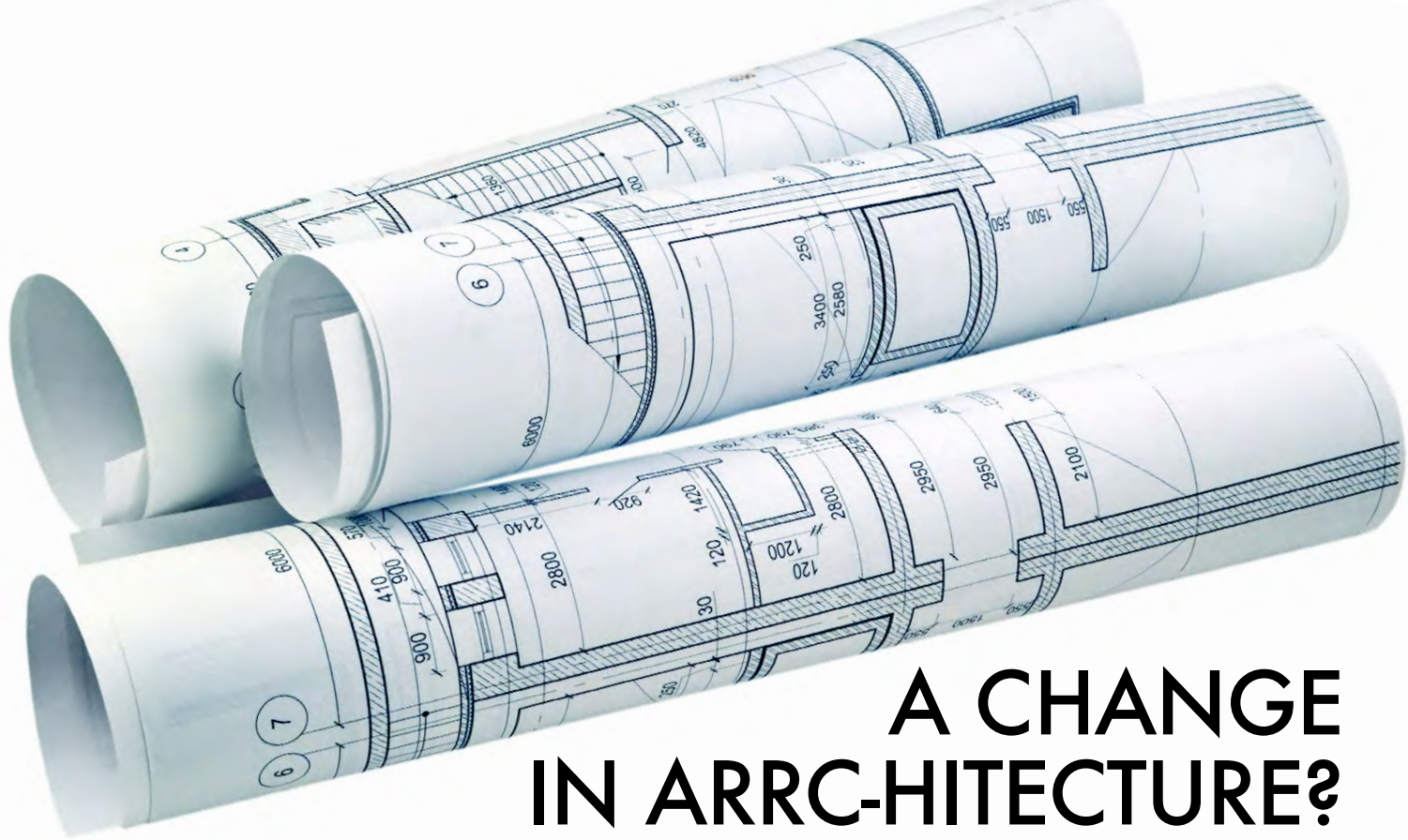
Beyond these 2023 *Future Soldier* adjustments, the NATO Force Model is providing the Army with the output headmark for its future force design and further iterations of *Future Soldier*. The NATO Force Model underpins the British Army’s return to warfighting, and with it the requirement for the Army to have a credible corps warfighting capability

geared for the Alliance. Alongside the NATO Force Model, the Land Operating Concept highlights the need to continue to invest in lethality and resilience, including depth fires, target acquisition, ground-based air defence, logistics and stockpiles.

Corps level capabilities will strengthen the multinational convening power of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps, allowing it to integrate allies and deliver multi-domain effects.

As a result they feature prominently in the baseline force design intent that the Chief of the General Staff has set for the British Army. While we must remain an army able to influence globally, campaign constantly, respond rapidly to crises and support homeland resilience, it is investment in corps level capabilities which will signal the greater warfighting focus and commitment to NATO that UK Government policy and defence strategy demand.





# A CHANGE IN ARRC-HITECTURE? NATO REMODELLING'S IMPACT ON CORPS WARFIGHTING

## AUTHOR

Major General Mike Keating is Chief of Staff of the NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Corps



THE Headquarters Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (HQ ARRC) is one of the key elements of the British Army's contribution to NATO. Under the NATO Force Model and Strategic Concept – described elsewhere in this edition – HQ ARRC is expecting to assume a new enduring commitment in 2024 as one of NATO's Strategic Reserve Corps, held at readiness under SHAPE and building on our experience as the NATO Response Force Land Component Command, which we assumed in January 2024. The detail of what the new Strategic Reserve task requires is being developed, but its role is likely to be similar to that of the NATO Response Force Land Component Command, namely: "To provide a rapid military response to an emerging crisis, whether for collective defence purposes or for other crisis-response operations."<sup>1</sup> A reasonable early assumption is that it will require the Corps to be enabled with the corps troops required to warfight; a second assumption is that one or both of the UK divisions will be held at readiness under HQ ARRC as part of that warfighting corps. The importance of the UK providing a

credible and resourced corps into the NATO Force Structure cannot be overstated. Not only is it a mark of the UK's commitment to its responsibilities as the framework nation and to the role and purpose of NATO, but it also buys the UK huge influence within NATO and credibility with our NATO partners that unlocks other opportunities. It is also significant that the ARRC is often viewed as an innovator within NATO, gaining us traction that helps to balance our relative lack of organic mass.

## INTEROPERABILITY

My conclusion from all of this, and specifically the expectations placed upon our Army considering the political commitment of our leaders at the NATO conferences in Madrid and Vilnius, is that much of the Field Army is necessarily committed to NATO in one form or another and is assigned, permanently or periodically, for an explicit and non-discretionary NATO task. So we need to think and 'do' NATO much more routinely (if not all the time, in fact) and become much better at NATO interoperability, an area we risk lagging behind when set against many of our NATO Allies. *Allied Joint Publication 1* describes three types of interoperability: human, technical and procedural and sets them within four levels (see table right).<sup>2</sup> With the ARRC's 30 years of experience as a NATO

<sup>1</sup>[nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_49755.htm#:~:text=Evolution-,Purpose,crises%20anywhere%20in%20the%20world.](https://nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49755.htm#:~:text=Evolution-,Purpose,crises%20anywhere%20in%20the%20world.)



HQ, we are fortunate to have a good feel for the challenges of interoperability and the opportunities of working in a multinational environment. As a multinational headquarters commanding a multinational formation, integration is integral to our planning and shapes every facet of our operational design methodology.

**Human interoperability.** The 21 nations represented in HQ ARRC bring enormous richness and breadth of experience that widens our perspective, enhances diversity of thought and improves our decision making, but it comes with some challenges. Many of the staff are not operating in their first language, which drives an absolute requirement for the clearest of communication, based on the use of simple language and NATO lexicon. This is a real challenge for UK officers who often don't use (or even know) the correct technical language and are fond of colloquialisms, jargon and acronyms. Relationship building, mutual trust, respect and cultural awareness are therefore all key to successful interoperability in an international environment.

**Technical.** Land formations are by design a system of systems; the technical interoperability required between these systems grow exponentially when additional countries are added with the greatest and most complex challenges appearing at the seams: of a Canadian company group within a UK battlegroup; a UK battlegroup within a US brigade combat team; a French brigade in 3rd (UK) Division; or an Italian division in the ARRC for example. The seamless sharing of the right data at the right time is becoming more vital than ever before. NATO's Standard NATO Agreements play an important role in ensuring that the systems we operate are designed to be technically interoperable – just look at the Artillery Systems Cooperation Activities as a good example of success here, in this case between national fire control systems. But it goes beyond technical agreements for the capability and acquisition folk... there are 20 NATO operational applications held on NATO Communication and Information Systems (so not MODNET), which UK staff must become increasingly familiar with if we are

<sup>2</sup>Based on original content from *Allied Joint Publication 1, Section 5, para 3.65.*

to establish and share a common operating picture, intelligence picture, sustainment picture etc. We must therefore find a way to more routinely and meaningfully navigate the 'Five Eyes' space and more comfortably default to a 'fitted for NATO' data architecture if we are to optimise our technical interoperability initiatives within NATO.

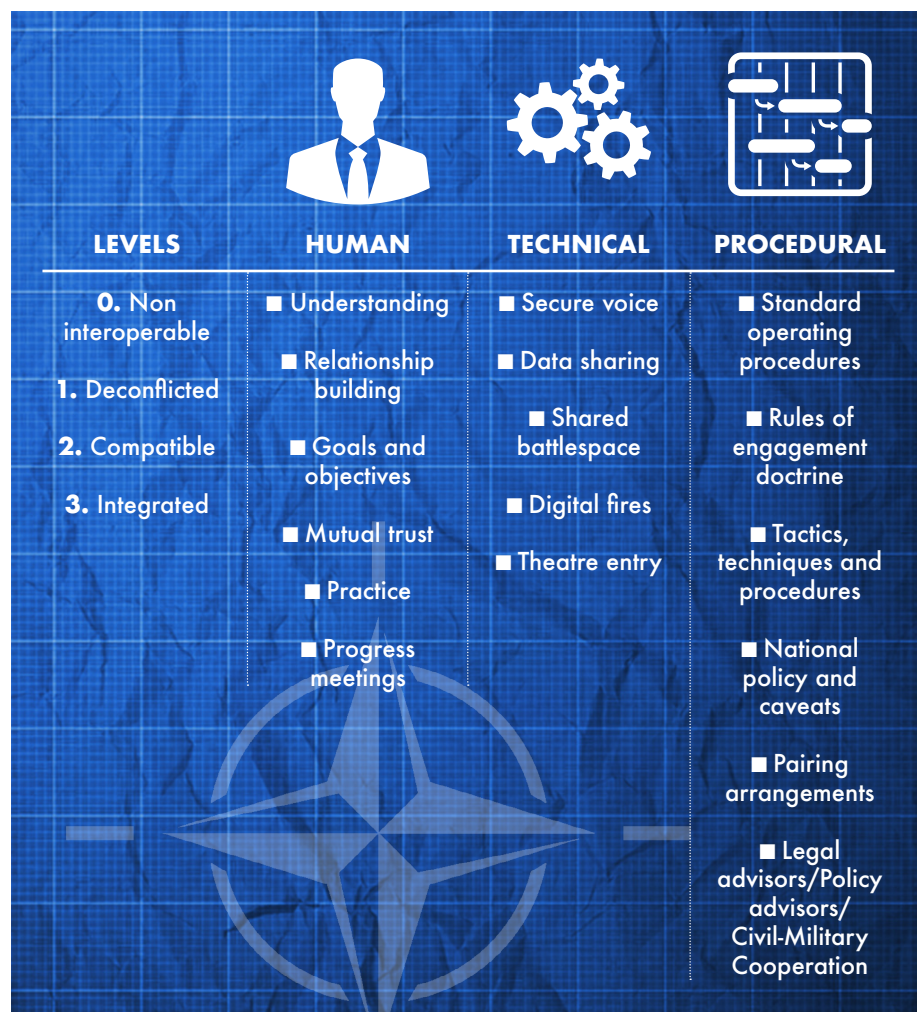
**Procedural.** Given the challenges of human and technological interoperability, rigid adherence to common standard operating procedures are one way in which frictions can be reduced. It is noticeable at HQ ARRC that our participating nation staff officers tend to be far more familiar with our standard operating procedures than the UK officers; as an Army we must have the humility to accept that Anglo-centricity is not a strength in a multinational HQ and to realise that if we deviate from our standard operating procedures, some of those participating in their second or third language will simply not understand what is going on

and will be unable to contribute. Standard operating procedures must be built on common doctrine, which means NATO by design, and so I welcome the work of the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre to prioritise and publish NATO doctrine, with accompanying UK commentary. Importantly though, we must read the doctrine and stick to it when planning and executing NATO operations.

Our ambition must be to get to Level 3 (Integrated) as soon as possible. That said, I acknowledge resource – money and time – necessitate prioritisation and therefore suggest command, control, communications, computers and intelligence; surveillance and reconnaissance; fires and sustainment are prioritised first and foremost.

### THE VALUE OF MULTINATIONAL FORMATIONS

Given the challenges of interoperability described above, the reader might well ask



**“The 21 nations represented in HQ ARRC bring enormous richness and breadth of experience that widens our perspective, enhances diversity of thought and improves our decision making, but it comes with some challenges.”**

whether overcoming the frictions of fighting with partners is worth it. The answer is an unequivocal yes, for several reasons. Firstly, only through fighting with partners will we achieve the mass we need to defeat any likely adversary. The Italian campaign of 1943-44 is an excellent example of how a coalition of 16 nations conducted high intensity warfighting together, achieving the force ratios required to defeat the common enemy.<sup>3</sup> Secondly, other nations will bring both niche capabilities and policy permissions that the UK lacks; for example HQ ARRC is fortunate to train closely with a Czech chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear brigade. These additional capabilities can be significant force multipliers. Additionally, our experience is limited to the deployments and exercises which the British Army has conducted; across NATO there is a huge range of relevant operational experience which we can and must bring to bear through our operational planning. But the most valuable characteristic of NATO is the political power that 31 nations acting together brings. As the Italian campaign shows, multi-nationality is nothing new, but interoperability requires investment of time and resource, with interoperability embraced and practised long before we cross the line of departure.

### A NEW ROLE FOR THE ARRC

As Chief of Staff ARRC, of particular interest to me are the implications for HQ ARRC, as it prepares to meet its expected new warfighting role as one of the NATO Strategic Reserve Corps. NATO has traditionally rotated its 3\* headquarters through different roles: a warfighting Corps HQ; the Land Component Command HQ for the NATO Response Force; and the Joint Task Force HQ. Noting also that NATO has been historically heavily committed to peace support operations in the Balkans and counterinsurgency in Afghanistan, warfighting at the 3\* level has not been the main priority: this has now changed decisively. HQ ARRC was fortunate to be focused on warfighting from 2018-2022, since when it has been preparing for its current role as the NATO Response Force Land Component Command HQ from January-June 2024. The transition back to warfighting has already begun however and will continue with Exercise Avenger Triad 2024, run by US Army Europe-Africa in September 2024, as the next waypoint.

### THE OPERATIONAL CHALLENGE

ARRC will therefore evolve as a warfighting headquarters at a time in which the character of warfare itself is changing rapidly. Our challenge is therefore to establish what sort of warfighting we must be prepared to conduct, how best to fight it and with what capabilities

to hand. These answers will help to define how the ARRC is configured, how it should be supported with corps troops and what processes it needs to fight effectively and win.

### WHAT SORT OF WARFIGHTING?

NATO is a defensive alliance and – under the NATO Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area – most NATO corps will be positioned on NATO’s eastern border with Russia and have a very clear defensive operational challenge. For the Strategic Reserve Corps the operational challenge is less clear. We might be put into the line in a defensive posture to bolster a linear defence against an expected axis of advance; or we might be committed in an offensive posture to retake territory that has been occupied by an aggressor; or to pose an enhanced strategic dilemma we might be deployed to a flank. So the deployment scenarios are more varied, with a 360 degree utility to NATO and will therefore require HQ ARRC to be competent at all the tactical tasks. It will also require us to be familiar with the ground, so ARRC will need to invest time in understanding the physical and human geography of NATO’s eastern border and other flanks, and to develop relationships with potential NATO host nations that are a critical part of the logistic system that will get us into theatre.

### THE ROLE OF THE CORPS HQ

“The future corps will not simply be a command echelon but will need to be actively engaged in the deep battle to enable victory in the close by its subordinate divisions... while indispensable as the echelon shaping the close battle through deep effects, corps must retain sufficient cognitive capacity to maintain awareness of, and fight across, the multi-domain battlespace.”<sup>4</sup>

**Fight the Deep.** As HQ ARRC prepares for its new role, we will continue the momentum (initiated in *Future Soldier* and continued in the Land Operating Concept) of shifting the fight from the close to the deep. Informed by over two years of experimentation on major NATO and US multi-domain exercises and observations from the fight in Ukraine, we will develop a corps-level ‘deep effects

systems architecture’ to fight the shaping battle as described by Watling and MacFarland as comprising “recce skirmishes, raiding, long-range precision fires, electronic warfare and cyber operations”.<sup>5</sup> This work will be developed through the Project Lewes deep battle forum and will evaluate the optimum command and control structure for the formations fighting the corps deep battle, aligned with the emerging lessons from the establishment of 3rd (UK) Division’s ‘deep recce strike complex’.<sup>6</sup> It reaffirms the long-understood, but oft neglected, reality that targeting through multiple layers of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, intimately digitally linked to the ability to strike, is how we must do business in fighting the future corps deep battle with our divisions; we choose to fight in the deep as it will protect and preserve our limited and valuable manoeuvre combat power for the close fight, which if the deep battle is successful, will be easier to win.

### Sustaining the force by enabling the rear.

We will also refine the process of sustaining the Corps. Doctrinally, combat service support is a national responsibility; this means there may be as many National Support Elements and rear supply lines as there are nations in the force. To help reduce the potential for huge complexity, NATO is evolving its joint and regional logistics structure to help simplify this, but particularly in our Strategic Reserve role, we will need the flexibility to deploy to any part of the NATO joint operations area and therefore cannot rely on fixed supply lines. To address this ARRC is already heavily engaged with organisations such as in-place multinational corps, the Joint Support Enabling Command, and NATO Force Integration Units to develop support ‘intelligence preparation of the battlefield’ across Supreme Allied Commander Europe’s area of responsibility. Greater understanding of capacity, capabilities and processes in transit and host nations as well as better use of logistics functional area services seek to enhance and test interoperability and drive combat service support simplicity – both of these will drive down our combat service support tail and are a must for future operations.

**Synchronising the close.** This is the third of the three key roles of the Corps, but in some respects the easiest, given the substantial planning capacity in the divisional headquarters. A greater focus on warfighting will drive the Corps HQ to think more carefully about the degree to which it can synchronise and layer the tactical actions of divisions within a corps level manoeuvre plan, creating more dilemmas for the enemy than independent divisional activity would.

<sup>3</sup>British, American, Algerian, Indian, French, Moroccan, Poles, Czechs, Canadians, New Zealanders, Nepalese, South Africans, Italians, Greeks, Belgians and Brazilians. *nam.ac.uk/explore/italian-campaign*

<sup>4</sup>RUSI Occasional Paper, ‘The Future of the NATO Corps’, Dr Jack Watling and Lt Gen (Retd) Sean MacFarland, Jan 2021.

<sup>5</sup>Watling and Farland, p.9.

<sup>6</sup>Reference: 1st DRS Warfighter PXR.



“Most NATO corps will be positioned on NATO’s eastern border with Russia and have a very clear defensive operational challenge. For the Strategic Reserve Corps the operational challenge is less clear.”

### HOW WE FIGHT

It is very difficult to predict the character of a future conflict, but a few assumptions and comparisons can be made. We can assume that Russia, our most likely adversary, will fight as it has in Ukraine, combining a willingness to commit (and lose) a huge quantity of personnel and materiel in a very attritional operational design, with an ability to fight asymmetrically, using all the levers of politics, economics and information warfare to fight in every domain, free from the constraints of compliance with international law or human rights considerations. This operational design will not be available to NATO forces, who will also operate within a far more complex resource environment. We will have to make best use of NATO’s three key strengths: the quality of our professional soldiers and officers; our technological edge; and the intellectual richness that comes from working in a coalition of 31 countries.

**Multi-domain.** To fully leverage every opportunity to fight and shape in the deep, and to take advantage of the additional time to think and act at the higher tactical level, the Corps must be multi-domain integrated by design, more than any other formation. At its most basic, the Corps must be able to leverage joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance from all components and national capabilities to build and resource a Corps Intelligence Collection Plan, through systems and applications that can harvest the huge quantity of data that we expect to be available from both military and national sensors, plus multiple commercial and open sources. Similarly we will layer and concentrate the effects of systems from across all domains and components to have an effect on the enemy at ranges and in dimensions previously unachievable by a tactical formation.

**Data-driven.** Those intelligence systems and applications will automate the processing of that immense volume of collected data through appropriate programming and ‘teaching’ by intelligence analysts alongside data specialists. This will generate a common intelligence picture, drive tempo and enable swift decision-making through visualisation of the enemy situation. Pattern analysis over time will accurately predict the enemy’s next move or find those mobile or well-hidden high pay-off targets in the corps deep battlespace. Building on our experimentation with Project Artemis in 2021, we will work closely with the NATO command structure and component commands, Permanent Joint Headquarters and the British Army to develop suitable processes and systems for employment at the tactical level and to define what target-quality intelligence needs to be.

### Command, control and communications as a capability.

Lessons from recent conflicts have demonstrated that the battlefield is increasingly transparent, and the geometry of the battlefield is also rapidly changing with respect to physical and virtual fires. Additionally, ARRC’s command posts are a high value target for our adversary and could be judged as a critical vulnerability. Project Centurion Watch is our response to *How We Fight 2026*, through which we treat command, control and communications as a capability. Seeking survivable, agile, resilient and interoperable solutions, we seek to generate tempo and decision advantage (deep, rear and close) in the face of the most relentless enemy pressure, setting up the divisions we command for success in the close fight. The project seeks to improve ARRC’s command, control and communications competitiveness through the application of

five interrelated principles: adaptability, integration, survivability, resilience and tempo. Self-evidently the threat will continue to evolve, keeping pace or outpacing our command, control and communications capabilities. Therefore, it is vital that the ARRC continues to learn and adapt, cooperating with NATO, allies and UK Ministry of Defence, to ensure our command, control and communications capabilities remain competitive and relevant – thereby achieving ‘survive to command – survive to control’.

### CONCLUSION

The current ‘pivot’ of the British Army towards NATO commitments presents a real opportunity to embed ‘NATO by design’ in our force structures and our procedures. It provides the British Army with a profound and tangible operational role, embedded in a wider military organisation and force structure that offers the mass and breadth of capabilities that we will need to conduct warfighting at scale in the future. It will require a change of mindset and the humility to adapt to the NATO language and to update some of our tactics, techniques and procedures to meet NATO standards, accepting that they might not be exactly how we would wish to operate, but that the advantages of being fully interoperable with our allies and fighting at scale counter-balance any downside. It also offers us all a rewarding professional experience with a richness to the culture and the opportunities for travel, both individually and collectively, that the British Army might not offer in the way it once did.

ARRC is proud to be at the heart of the British Army’s relationship in NATO and is excited about its place in the refreshed UK offer for NATO and for its role at the pinnacle of the British Army’s warfighting establishment.

# ARRC APPEAL

No publication on NATO and the Army's increasingly important role therein would be complete without a brief review of 'life in the ARRC' – the purpose being to paint a bit of colour into the organisation, our most recent exercises and activities and an idea of what lies ahead. I'd argue that there isn't another UK-led NATO organisation that is as culturally diverse as the ARRC. With representatives from 20 other nations, to include ranks from non-commissioned officer up to 2\* general officer, it seems that every week we celebrate a national day or other foreign holiday – and that brings a rich exposure of culture, history, food and drink. The highlight must be our annual International Families Day during which we bring out the very best of food, drink and culture by way of a whole-of-the-HQ celebration at Innsworth. It is fantastic!

On the work front, there is no shortage of things keeping us busy. The headquarters recently returned from our NATO Combat Ready Evaluation exercise in Romania. Exercise Steadfast Jupiter was the culmination of a year-long twin-track training pipeline which saw us prepare as both a Land Component Command and a warfighting headquarters. Now declared 'ready' by Commander Joint Forces Command Brunssum, we remain at readiness until 30th June 2024 to respond to any assigned mission and task from peace support operations to warfighting.

In September 2024 we will be tested in the

cauldron of a US Army Europe warfighting exercise, together with four other corps from across the NATO Force Structure. A highly demanding experience, much like the more traditional Warfighter exercises based in the US, the exercise will set a challenging pace in the face of a determined and relentless enemy. The competence, capability and confidence of the staff will be tested to breaking point; demonstrating ARRC's ability to fight, learn and win.

Looking further to the future, the horizon is very bright indeed. The centrality of the Corps (your Corps) to the Army's proposition and our commitment to NATO more broadly cannot be overstated. The Supreme Allied Commander Europe has demonstrated extraordinary trust in our ability to deliver by nominating us as one of a very small number of Strategic Reserve Corps. Employable joint operations area-wide (and beyond NATO's traditional boundaries if required), the ARRC remains a favoured tool of choice to fulfil the most demanding and complex missions on behalf of NATO – be that warfighting or anything below this threshold. That we will need to retain these competencies and deployability speaks for itself – readiness and a warfighting mindset will become routine characteristics of life in the ARRC henceforth. It's an exciting time to be part of the team.

One common strand throughout all of this is our appetite for conceptual development, innovation and experimentation. The convening power of the ARRC is huge and

we continue to exploit this to significant effect, not just in the UK but across NATO more broadly. In Romania, as part of Project Centurion Watch, we accelerated NATO's understanding of novel power technology significantly – an important issue as we look at Defence through the increasingly important lens of sustainability and the environment into the future. Through our network linkages into NATO, UK Strategic Command and Field Army, we are driving the agenda forward through exploitable initiatives to include, most recently, close engagement with industry partners who are delivering tangible products for us to explore and exploit during our command, control and communications journey and the digitisation of our headquarters more generally.

Beyond work, one of the great privileges is access to the wider NATO diaspora. Wherever we go, we are brilliantly hosted and our contributions are always received with immense gratitude. Our people are often the subject matter experts, be that on NATO's operational planning process, multinational fires and engineering capabilities, NATO intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance or the corps rear area and sustainment. The breadth of the team is a huge force multiplier and an enriching life experience. With plenty of sport, adventurous training and additional leave days thrown into the mix, it's hard to argue that HQ ARRC is anything other than the place to be right now – and that will remain the case for many years to come, of that we are certain.



# SHARPENING A SPECIALISM

## UK'S NEW SPECIAL OPS FORCE PREPARES FOR NATO SPOTLIGHT

### AUTHORS

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In May 2023, the UK indicated its intent to lead the Special Operations Task Force – part of the new NATO Force Model's Allied Reaction Force – in 2026. This offer demonstrates UK leadership in NATO and provides a significant waypoint as the Army, and Defence, develops its special operations capability. Leading the Special Operations Task Force will be a key early test for the Army's Land Special Operations Forces (Land SOF), established on 1st December 2023, and a milestone on the way to delivering the Chief of the General Staff's intent "to be a world class special operations capability".<sup>1</sup>

Land SOF, held at the Land Component Command level, designs and delivers special operations, across the continuum of conflict, on behalf of the Army. It is also the focal point for coherent force development for Army special operations in tandem with UK Special Forces and other single Service special operations capabilities.

<sup>1</sup>General Sir Patrick Sanders, KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC Gen, Chief of the General Staff, RUSI Land Warfare Conference Speech, 26 Jun 2023.

As a minimum, the NATO commitment in 2026 will require the UK to provide a multi-domain special operations headquarters, land and maritime special operations task groups and helicopters. Where possible we will also seek to leverage international NATO special operations expertise – both in a staff advisory capacity and in terms of capabilities. With the Army set to lead the Special Operations Task Force 26, it will largely match the Land SOF capabilities; made up of the Army Special Operations Brigade, Rangers battalions, 77th Brigade, a multi-domain targeting and fusion centre, associated military intelligence battalion, cyber and electromagnetic activities and electronic warfare expertise, and a signals squadron. As part of Defence's special operations transformation, we are also well set to integrate key maritime and air capabilities from across the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force single Service cells.

The work starts now. With significant force preparation, integration, validation and training, it promises to be a busy yet rewarding on-ramp to the commitment in 2026. The benefits of doing so should be self-evident:

delivering world-class NATO special operations forces, firmly reinforcing the UK's leading status amongst NATO, and providing modern, tailored and effective deterrence dilemmas to our peer-adversaries.

**THE NATO HEADMARK**

NATO is undergoing a significant period of change, on a scale unmatched since the end of the Cold War. Driven by the invasion of Ukraine, NATO has re-examined its concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, with the new NATO Force Model being endorsed by nations at its June 2022 Madrid summit. The NATO Force Model is designed to increase the numbers of forces held at readiness, and also to hasten the speed at which they can be deployed. This includes the Allied Reaction Force, a very high readiness commitment assigned to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. The NATO Force Model and the Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area family of plans are discussed in more detail elsewhere in this issue.

Allied Special Operations Forces Command (formerly NATO Special Operations Forces HQ) has been undergoing its own

transformation, re-orientating from two decades of focus on expeditionary counter-terrorism, where its role was integrating European special operations forces and preparing them for operations, predominantly in Afghanistan, to a focus on warfighting and Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area. This transformation has seen special operations forces domain input into the development of SHAPE's new defensive plans, and a focus on an active campaigning approach to deterrence.<sup>2</sup>

Land SOF will leverage existing Ranger platforms, and 77th Brigade information operations in support of Supreme Allied Commander Europe's priorities. This will support Special Operations Forces Command's active campaigning and contribute across deterrence and into competition, conflict and crisis. This relationship will allow Land SOF to support

target development and contribute to NATO deterrence lines of effort. In addition, it will develop interoperability with key partners, contribute to – and benefit from – the NATO special operations forces network, and support the UK Land Component, and wider Defence through access, insight and influence.

The UK offer to NATO to lead the Allied Reaction Force's Special Operations Task Force in 2026 will provide a capability headmark to drive the development of the Rangers and other special operations capabilities. The UK's Special Operations Task Force, built around Land SOF and the Army Special Operations Brigade, will deliver a component command capable of multi-domain operations. It will incorporate staff officers from all three Services and international partners, and have the ability to provide command and control to other NATO special operations force elements if directed. It will work to NATO, through the Allied Reaction Force HQ, and provide Supreme Allied Commander Europe with a potent capability that can set the theatre for the arrival of other reaction forces, or for other crisis response operations.

<sup>2</sup>Brig Neil Grant, *Allied SOF Transformation*, Published 17 Oct 2023.



The UK will also contribute a Special Operations Land Task Group – built around a Ranger company, a Special Operations Maritime Task Group and a Special Operations Air Task Group. These headline capabilities will be supplemented with other special operations capabilities, making the Special Operations Task Force truly multi-domain. Land SOF will deploy a cell into the 3\* Allied Reaction Force HQ to build understanding and support targeting, and leverage Land SOF's existing regional networks, reaching back to the UK for support where required.

The UK's offer of a Special Operations Task Force provides leadership of a high profile NATO component command, complementing the Land Component offer in 2024, as well as contributing directly to the Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area, and, as a tri-service capability, building the joint special operations forces capability. It will, helpfully, serve as a vehicle to advance a range of projects – not least Project Lewes – as we develop the 'UK based command and

control network' central to Commander Field Army's How We Fight 2026 vision.<sup>3</sup>

Land SOF is well-placed to meet this NATO headmark. It is worth now outlining the recent development journey.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF LAND SOF

Since it created 77th Brigade and the specialised infantry battalions<sup>4</sup> out of the 2015 Defence and Security Review, the Field Army has been on the road to creating a special operations forces capability, and Land SOF

<sup>3</sup>See the *British Army Review Issue #183 '2026: How Will We Fight?'*

<sup>4</sup>Redesignated as the *Ranger Regiment, comprising four battalions under command of the Army Special Operations Brigade.*

should be considered part of this evolution, rather than a revolution. Land SOF was created from two existing entities, the Land Special Operations Cell (part of the Land Operations Command) and elements of 6 (UK) Division, whose outputs were elevated to Land SOF before being placed into suspended animation on 30th November 2023. Its subordinate formations, Army Special Operations Brigade and 77th Brigade, will now work directly to the Field Army, with Land SOF providing operational coherence, gearing with Army HQ, and strategic and joint headquarters, and the lead for force development for both formations, and the Land SOF capability as a whole.

Land SOF is a capability which is Defence driven, and synchronised with Defence, UK Strategic Command, and the other Services with whom it works closely. It continues the fielding of the capability initiated by the publication of the Defence Special Operations concept in 2021, developed through various iterations of UK Special Operations policy, and top-level Defence direction. Its development is coherent with the Defence Special



Operations Programme Mandate, which demands Joint Special Operations Forces (of which Land SOF is the Army component) that is interoperable to support UK Special Forces and is interoperable with NATO special operations forces by design.

This is not a future capability, we have Land SOF now, working closely with NATO and engaged globally on some of the most novel and contentious operations being conducted by Defence. It is worth now going into further detail to understand what Land SOF does, how it fights, and, importantly, what it will provide as the Special Operations Task Force commitment looms.

### WHAT IS A LAND SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCE?

Special operations are not defined by the forces that conduct them but rather by their novel and contentious nature, risk profile and by the levels of assurance required. The benefit of this approach is that any part of the Army can be task organised to support a special operation. However, to deliver against the Special Operations Task Force commitment, and wider Defence demand, the Army will also need to hold a NATO, and UK, accredited core of special operations forces and specialist capabilities. The Army Special Operations Brigade and 77th Brigade will form the standing contribution to Land SOF, around which others will task organise. Land SOF can be employed independently but is designed to be interoperable with special forces, and a range of specialist partners. Other reference armies similarly group them in Multi-Domain Task Forces (US Army) or a CAS-T (French Army).

Land SOF capabilities are multi-domain and require integration with capabilities “at the level of command most effectively able to synchronise their application”.<sup>5</sup> Whilst this systems approach may be taken by tactical formations, especially when allocated capability and permissions, operational and component headquarters may be better placed to integrate Land SOF effects across the temporal, physical and virtual deep.

### HOW WILL LAND SOF FIGHT?

Whether in conflict, crisis or competition, three mutually supporting elements – platform, cell, and reach back – are required to fight the capability.

■ **Platform** – A platform is a forward partnered and stand-off relationship with host nation special operations forces, specialist partners or directorates that provides access and generates insights. It is

**“This is not a future capability, we have Land Special Operations Forces now, working closely with NATO and engaged globally on some of the most novel and contentious operations being conducted by Defence.”**

designed to be built out to a broad network, to act as a surrogate to other specialist activity, to conduct intelligence preparation of the battlefield and intelligence preparation of the operating environment ahead of crisis and to help set a theatre for conflict.

■ **Cell** – Land SOF platforms will share multi-domain start points, some derived from partners, that will need to be put through a formation targeting cycle in an operational headquarters. A deployed cell will deliver this within the appropriate headquarters’ joint effects cell.

■ **Reach back** – Consonant with a drive to reduce the size of headquarters, platforms and cells will reach back to the Land Operations Command’s targets and effects cell for support. This will include target systems analysis teams who will interrogate vulnerabilities within a military system and identify multi-domain vectors to target them. Target packs, put through the full Defence targeting process, will contribute to military advantage and create choice for policy makers, both in the UK and through Allied Special Operations Forces Command.

**Conflict.** The transition from competing with an adversary below the threshold of conflict to warfighting may happen gradually or suddenly. Readiness across Land SOF is less about cross-workforce, equipment, training and sustainability measurement and more about the time taken to operationalise an existing relationship in strategically prioritised countries. In conflict Land SOF platforms will leverage their access, insights and partner

<sup>5</sup>ADP Land Operations, Part 1: Competition and Conflict, 2-2.

<sup>6</sup>The Land Operating Concept A new Way of Winning, pages iii-xi.

<sup>7</sup>AJP 3.5. Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations. Page 9, Para 2.2a.

<sup>8</sup>AJP 3.5 Page 10 2.2c.

<sup>9</sup>AJP 3.5 Page 15 2.3g

mass, and be prepared to conduct these activities in sovereign territory under temporary hostile control. This will help set conditions for theatre entry, and for the Army’s first echelon to project, survive and blunt.<sup>6</sup> This could include the following tasks.

■ **Military assistance** – This involves building the capability of friendly security forces, national leadership, and other organisations, through advising, mentoring, partnering and enabling activity.<sup>7</sup> This will generate understanding of partner force capability and understanding of national defence plans to interoperate with them.

■ **Special reconnaissance** – Collect the commander’s (UK or NATO) priority intelligence requirements by employing unique, physical and/or technical capabilities. This will provide specific, well-defined and possibly time sensitive information of strategic or operational significance, including targeting data.

■ **Direct action** – Delivered directly or through partners, this is defined as: “A short-duration strike or other small scale offensive action by SOF [special operations forces] to seize, destroy, capture, recover, or inflict damage to achieve specific, well-defined and often time-sensitive results.”<sup>8</sup>

■ Act as a stay-behind force within sovereign territory to conduct clandestine operations against adversary or enemy invading forces.

■ Conduct military assistance, special reconnaissance and direct action tasks in partnership with, or in support of, an underground conducting spontaneous or planned resistance as part of a nation’s defence and deterrence measures.<sup>9</sup>

■ Conduct sovereign and partnered information operations, including deception, using forward and stand-off capabilities to influence behaviours and shape narratives whilst identifying, exposing, countering and attributing adversary grey zone activity.

Concurrently, and as the Allied Reaction Force 3\* headquarters is established, Land SOF will deploy a small cell into the Joint Effects Team to help develop start points provided to them by deployed Land SOF platforms. When not committed to the Special Operations Task Force, Land SOF will establish a forward platform within the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps’ (ARRC) area of operations and small cell within the Corps headquarters’ Joint Effects Team. Building on mature host nation special

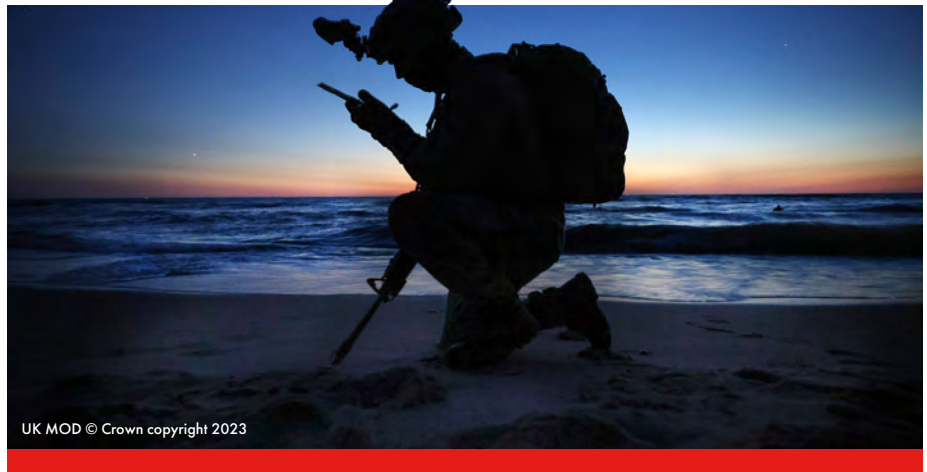


operations forces relationships to develop start points, the cell will reach back to the Land Operations Command and wider intelligence enterprise to conduct advanced target development. This will present adversaries with “multiple threats simultaneously, undermining any advantage they enjoy in a single domain”.<sup>10</sup> This approach will ensure that the deep battle is as decisive as possible and give substance to the Army’s recce-strike theory of winning, as described in the Land Operating Concept, *A New Way of Winning*.<sup>11</sup>

**Crisis.** The Land SOF platform will operate to help seize the initiative, including in the information environment, to “constrain the malign activity of state adversaries below the threshold of conflict”.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, Land SOF activities may escalate beyond training, advising and assisting to include regional lethal aid facilitation and enabling partners to act unconventionally and offensively. This could include delivery of complementary deep and offset effects to support the projection of NATO forces designed to bolster deterrence and prevent conflict. Where an operational headquarters is present, Land SOF will establish a cell in the Joint Effects Team. Operating within a carefully calibrated policy and permissions envelope to attenuate escalation risks, it will perform the same functions as in conflict, but likely at reduced levels of attribution. It will continue to reach back to the UK for intelligence, targeting support and sovereign permissions as it would in conflict.

**Competition.** While Land SOF could carry out their roles from a standing start, they will be more effective if they have created platforms below the threshold of conflict. Land SOF platforms will operate to help secure access and influence in UK and NATO priority countries and where we might have to fight. Initiated by any Land SOF, the platform will build out to seize opportunities to conduct partnered train to operate activity with special operations forces, territorial defence forces, resistance forces, strategic communication directorates, military intelligence directorates and cyber and electronic warfare units. This will build host nation specialist capability and resilience to make them more effective whilst increasing interoperability. Relationships and deployments will also enable the Army to inform its intelligence preparation of the battlespace and answer information requirements. This will generate baseline understanding from which indicators and warnings can be drawn.

Platforms will also offer surrogate opportunities to enable sensors to gain physical access at the point of relevance. Forward and stand-



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**“Leadership of the NATO Special Operations Task Force will provide the ideal forum for development, building interoperability and shared experience between Land SOF, the Army Special Operations Brigade and the Rangers, and other Service’s capabilities.”**

off sovereign and partnered information operations will conduct polling to generate sophisticated understanding of target audiences whilst generating products to build resilience in audiences susceptible to dis-, mis- and malign information. Similarly, Land SOF will conduct counter-network operations to limit hostile state freedom of action, expose links to bots and support legal options to work with big tech companies to remove deep fakes. Land SOF engagement is focused on areas of the world at greatest risk of crisis generated by either hostile states or violent extremist organisations. In competition, a cell will not be required, unless an operational 3\* headquarters deploys. However, Land SOF will maintain a live relationship with a number of NATO headquarters, Allied Special Operations Forces Command, ARRC, NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy, and US partners from US Army Special Operations Command. Land SOF’s networks, relationships with indigenous forces and access to reach-back capabilities will enable NATO decision making, shaping the battlefield for the arrival for the Allied Reaction Force, or for activation of crisis response measures.

### CONCLUSION

Land SOF and being at the forefront of a new NATO special operations Allied Reaction Force capability is an exciting prospect that will catalyse UK special operations capability, in lockstep with the Navy and Air Force. Leadership of the NATO Special Operations Task Force will provide the ideal forum for special operations development, building interoperability and shared experience between Land SOF, the Army Special Operations Brigade and the Rangers, and other Service’s special operations capabilities.

The Special Operations Task Force will drive interoperability between Land SOF and NATO Special Operations Forces with NATO evaluation becoming routine for Land SOF force elements. A close relationship with Allied Special Operations Forces Command will enable this, with Land SOF’s targeting capability working closely alongside the Command’s Multi-Domain Operations Centre, as well as providing reach-back to UK capabilities. This multi-domain focus allows Land SOF to realise the power of combinations, efficiently leveraging existing Field Army capabilities (cyber, information operations, electromagnetic warfare, intelligence) for special operations outputs in support of both the UK and NATO.

There is a pressing operational need for Land SOF, both for the UK and to offer to NATO. We must continue to leverage the regionally-aligned Ranger battalions and invest into platforms in strategically prioritised countries where we might have to fight, seizing every opportunity to task organise and build out from them so that they offer more than the sum of their parts. As we do so, Land SOF will leverage partner mass and capability and offer a platform for others. It will integrate special operations in a manner that does not simply free up special forces for other tasks, but which adds genuine military advantage by helping to make the deep battle as decisive as possible, whether in conflict, crisis or competition.

<sup>10</sup>JDP 0-20 Land Power, 4.7

<sup>11</sup>The Land Operating Concept *A New Way of Winning*, pages iii-xi.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

# NUANCES OF NATO SERVICE FROM THOSE IN THE KNOW

**S**O what are the pros and cons of living in Italy and working in NATO? The pros include being based just outside Milan, in the Italian lakes and a couple of hours from mountains, beaches and world heritage cities. The people are very welcoming, the military are highly effective and they view the Brits as the reference army within Europe. They are better than we are at basing decisions on doctrine and their ability to keep up and sometimes surpass us in our own language is pretty humbling. For this and other reasons I think it's also the case that one doesn't really understand NATO or multi-nationality fully until you serve in a non-UK or US-led organisation.

Downsides? You don't get much direction and guidance from the UK on what effects you are to provide, but is this really a constraint? You are also 'out of sight, out of mind' and can lose touch with the detail of what is going on in the UK. Again, the same question applies! What is key though is that the narrative surrounding NATO being at the heart of UK Defence is reflected by acknowledging the value which UK staff officers provide – both

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## AUTHOR

**Major General Jez Bennett**, Deputy Commander, NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy.



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collectively and individually. Collectively I am clear that we punch well above our weight as a combination of the selection, training, education and experiences which we receive, and the terms and conditions of service we operate within. Taken together this combination is in my view unequalled across NATO nations in the way it enables us to perform, adapt, commit at short notice and then to 'go again'. But the risk is that some are worked too hard as a result, which is potentially exhausting. We need therefore to acknowledge and manage this. Individually I see UK people of real quality across NATO, but few are perceived by the UK system as

being real stars. Perhaps the 'cigarette paper' analogy is especially true for many who serve in NATO abroad. If so it is important to recognise the commitment, sacrifice, diplomacy, patience and lateral thinking that is often more prevalent in those serving abroad in NATO than those serving at home.

So to my mind we should work to create a genuine 'two-way valve' for people to move into and back from NATO roles, including on promotion back to UK. This would help take lessons from UK and NATO experiences into the other sphere. To assist this approach, we have created a 'NATO Overseas Land Domain' cohort for annual reporting purposes in order to help generate 'mass' and thereby greater career effect. So officers serving in the NATO Force Structure will now be viewed in the context of this larger cohort, to help add weight to gradings and recommendations.

In sum, it's a great adventure and development opportunity on so many levels, and one which many families also enjoy. If we can de-risk it from a career perspective it could prove a real asset for retention too.



HAD the privilege of working with Supreme Allied Commander Europe's strategic and international affairs advisor and his small team on occasion during my time in SHAPE. The professional opportunity to work alongside such knowledge and experience must surely rank as a strong prospect for anybody considering a role within NATO. Once trust is gained – which as a British officer thinking and working in one's first language is usually via a willingness to lean-in on all available fronts – one really can push the limits to operate and influence strategy and key outputs of the Alliance, all whilst working alongside international colleagues who bring new perspectives and military breadth.

I began my NATO journey as a member of the senior course at the NATO Defense College in 2021 (which I later learned was referred to in Army career management circles as the 'Long Cappuccino Course', by virtue of its location in wonderful Rome, Italy). The emphasis at the College is not, as some might expect, on the strategic and operational outputs of NATO, but is rather more focused on developing students' Alliance breadth

**Service and scenery: A view over Lake Maggiore, which is a short drive from NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy's HQ**



## AUTHOR

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and 'NATO quotient'. It is this latter aspect that, in my view, is most critical in NATO terms: as military practitioners we all recognise the essential function of interoperability in whichever sphere we serve, but in NATO it is arguably human interoperability that sets the conditions for everything else to succeed. National awareness, cultural sensitivity and even the most basic standard of language competence all go a long way to achieving effect, and any person of any rank within a NATO organisation is immediately judged as an ambassador for their home nation. I hope in this sense we, the Brits, get it right.

Much work has been undertaken by the UK National Military Representative to NATO

alongside the Euro-Atlantic Security Policy Unit in London to streamline UK military posts within NATO and ensure we put our workforce into the best, most influential posts across the Alliance.

There is significant opportunity to be had in career terms within a rewarding and enjoyable area, coupled of course with the opportunity to serve overseas. It is this latter point that can be the sticking point for many, particularly around the OF4 and OF5 stage which can be a key point in life for children's education. It is also true that there are some challenges serving overseas in the post-Brexit environment, particularly around important areas such as spousal employment. But, we all balance our own opportunity and everybody's domestic and professional circumstances are unique.

Following the Gents' 10-day pan-European drive to our current posting in Türkiye, I would offer that service with NATO allows one to maintain adventure and a life less ordinary in the later career stages whilst taking pride as a national ambassador and directly contributing to NATO's military effectiveness in strategically uncertain and challenging times.





# AN ACTIVE EDGE<sup>1</sup>: THE BRITISH ARMY, NATO AND THE COLD WAR



## AUTHOR

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**Caught on camera:** The photographs accompanying this article were taken during various British Army of the Rhine training exercises, including Operation Spearpoint.

Courtesy of Soldier Magazine, © Crown copyright

A RECENT in-depth briefing produced by the Centre for Historical Analysis and Conflict Research provided an incisive examination of the implications for NATO as it moves forward in an increasingly complex and uncertain environment. The report referred to the British Army as one of NATO's "premier component militaries", a claim which remains just as valid now as it did in 1949 when Britain first committed significant forces to ensuring Europe's security.<sup>2</sup> The Cold War proved to be a transformative experience from which the Army emerged significantly smaller in size but well trained, highly professional and much better informed in terms of future purpose, function and needs than it had been nearly 50 years before. With its NATO commitment and providing security guarantees across a transitioning Commonwealth, there were competing claims on resources and the demands placed on the Army were sometimes difficult to balance. There were also concerns about how the British Army of the Rhine, the principal land component deployed to Germany, might fare in a Third World War and it was likely

fortunate that these were never tested in combat against the Warsaw Pact.

At the end of the Second World War there were approximately 75,000 British troops in Germany, mostly in Second Army and 21st Army Group, but this was only a small part of the 5.1 million men and women deployed in Europe, the Mediterranean and the Far East.<sup>3</sup> The British Army of the Rhine was stood up in August 1945, not as a combat but an administrative headquarters responsible for military support to the civilian authority within the British zone of occupation which included

<sup>1</sup>'Active Edge' was the term for periodical readiness exercises. British Forces Germany consisted of the British Army of the Rhine and the RAF Germany. The National Army Museum offers some excellent and easily accessible study resources covering this period; *Active Edge: The Army, Germany and the Cold War*, [nam.ac.uk/explore/active-edge-army-germany-during-cold-war](http://nam.ac.uk/explore/active-edge-army-germany-during-cold-war)

<sup>2</sup>Ben Tomlinson, 'NATO at 75: What It Means for the British Army', CHACR In-Depth Briefing #66, September 23, 1. The focus was what promises to be an authoritative account of the organisation's history to be published in 2024 to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the organisation's establishment; Peter Apps, *Detering Armageddon: A Biography of NATO* (Hachette, 2024).



all of the country north of a line running roughly from Düsseldorf to Göttingen and including Schleswig-Holstein. Lacking mobility and depending on German civilian labour to keep them even at a basic operational level, there was also little evidence of any effective planning and command and control were almost entirely absent. It was, at best, a nominal force which would from the outset depend entirely on an ability to send reinforcements from the UK.

A major wartime study had concluded the future Army would need to contribute to a range of commitments, including occupational troops and a standing force which would provide a basis for expansion in times of crisis.<sup>4</sup> There was no suggestion in 1944 of this becoming a permanent conventional deterrent which would remain in continental Europe for 50 years but this is what happened. The process began in March 1948 when Britain, France and the Benelux countries – Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – signed the Brussels Treaty, committing themselves to a military organisation known as Uniforce. With the Soviet blockade of Berlin and then the successful test of nuclear weapons the following October, the United States was convinced of the threat to European security. The result was NATO, which was formed on 4th April 1949 with founding principles of collective defence, with an attack against one member nation considered an attack against all, and the defences being mounted as far east as possible and including western Germany.<sup>5</sup>

**“With the Soviet blockade of Berlin and then the successful test of nuclear weapons, the United States was convinced of the threat to European security.”**

A sense of obligation resulted in an initial offer of seven divisions which was never reached but Britain’s contribution to the new structure was still considerable.<sup>6</sup> When SHAPE was activated in April 1951 there were seven corps-size fighting formations available and it was envisaged that conventional forces would reach 90 divisions with one-third ready in Central Europe. By the following year the British Army of the Rhine’s main combat force, the First Corps (I Corps) based in Bielefeld, was composed of the 2nd Infantry Division and 6th, 7th and 11th Armoured Divisions and also included Canada’s contribution to NATO, one mechanised brigade which until the 1970s remained part of the British Army of the Rhine. Along with a Belgian and a Dutch corps this formed the Northern Army Group.<sup>7</sup> To get anywhere close to the target size, it would require acceptance of German re-armament and admittance to NATO; Sir Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, reportedly only secured French approval for this after giving a solemn pledge that the British Army of the Rhine would remain in Europe for 99 years.<sup>8</sup>

NATO’s second strategic concept – MC 14/1, confirmed in December 1952 – had been based around its conventional forces holding long enough for the US to organise a nuclear counter-offensive to destroy the enemy’s

war-making capacity.<sup>9</sup> British planners, however, envisaged that following any attack there would be an immediate withdrawal north-westward to the United Kingdom. Even before the British Army of the Rhine had been established, the possibility of a conflict with the Soviet Union had been examined. Conducting ‘Operation Unthinkable’, a potential surprise attack to impose “upon Russia the will of the

<sup>3</sup>Robert Evans, *The British Army of the Rhine and Defense Plans for Germany, 1945–1955*; in Jan Hoffenaar, et al (ed.), *Blueprints for Battle: Planning for War in Central Europe, 1948–1968* (University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 204–205. Within three years the British Army had been reduced to 940,000; ‘Statement Relating to Defence’, HMSO, Cmd.6743, February 1946; ‘Statement Relating to Defence’, HMSO, Cmd.7042, February 1947; ‘Statement Relating to Defence’, HMSO, Cmd.7327, February 1948.

<sup>4</sup>P.J. Grigg, ‘The Post-War Army’, WP(44)575, 18 October 1944, CAB66/56/25, *The National Archives*, London.

<sup>5</sup>Diego A. Ruiz Palmer, *A Strategic Odyssey: Constancy of Purpose and Strategy-Making in NATO, 1949–2019*, NATO Defense College, NDC Research Papers Series 3 (2019), 16–72.

<sup>6</sup>Anthony Farrar-Hockley, *The Post-War Army 1945–1963*; in David Chandler, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 329–356.

<sup>7</sup>Ruiz Palmer, *A Strategic Odyssey: Constancy of Purpose and Strategy-Making in NATO, 1949–2019*.

<sup>8</sup>‘Defence’, *Hansard*, Volume 852, 15 March 1973, Cols. 1539–1541; this debate also revealed 700 nuclear weapons were targeted against Britain but it would only take 13 Hiroshima-size weapons to leave the country ungovernable.

<sup>9</sup>Ruiz Palmer, *A Strategic Odyssey: Constancy of Purpose and Strategy-Making in NATO, 1949–2019*.

United States and British Empire”, was quickly dismissed by the planning staff.<sup>10</sup> This, in large part, was based on the overwhelming Soviet manpower advantage which existed in May 1945 and nothing had changed in the intervening years. Hence an operational plan based on retiring to the west bank of the Rhine and, with there being deemed no reasonable chance of generating sufficient reinforcements, this meant there was no reasonable chance of conducting a successful defence of these positions.<sup>11</sup> A move all the way back to the Channel ports, much the same as the armies of Wellington and Haig had considered before them, was the most likely outcome for the British Army of the Rhine.

The situation deteriorated further following West Germany’s integration into NATO and in 1955 the creation of the Warsaw Pact, officially the ‘Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance’, intensified the scale of the threat. There had, however, already been a significant conceptual change in British strategic thinking as, following the first successful weapon test in 1952, nuclear deterrence was seen as a pathway to reduce military expenditures. In April 1957, Duncan Sandys, the Conservative Defence Minister, introduced a White Paper which formalised this thinking calling both for the phasing out of National Service by 1962 and a reduction in the size of the Army from 373,000 to 165,000 in five years. Described by one leading British general as a policy decision which “crippled” Britain’s defences, it was argued that this made conventional forces in Germany nothing more than a trip-wire with an attack against them triggering an American

nuclear response.<sup>12</sup> The priority given to the strategic deterrent mirrored broader NATO thinking and threats of massive retaliation rather than pursuing costly conventional rearmament.<sup>13</sup> A new strategic concept – MC 14/2 – approved in May 1957 provided official confirmation of intended large-scale use of nuclear weapons from the beginning of any future conflict which would be delivered by air platforms and missile systems. The British Army of the Rhine, now faced with a

decreased role and a reality in which it would fight a nuclear war, was reduced in strength from 77,000 to 55,000 to ease the national financial burden.<sup>14</sup>

One of the major challenges for planners during the post-war period was that, at the same time as trying to guarantee European security, the army was also “waging numerous little wars elsewhere”.<sup>15</sup> Some of these commitments were substantial such as the two divisions sent to Malaya. The Korean War forced Clement Atlee’s Labour government to extend National Service to two years and abandon plans to reduce defence spending. The contribution to the United Nations defence consisted initially of elements drawn from three brigades which had been earmarked for imperial duties. The Cyprus emergency in 1958 required two battalions to be withdrawn from the British Army of the Rhine; South Arabia and Borneo required one be removed in 1964 and two the following year. To this could be added the security operations an garrison duties in locations such as Kenya, Kuwait, Belize, Singapore, Hong Kong and Gibraltar, “the bloody commas of empire” all required some form of active service away from the passive deterrence of being posted to Europe.<sup>16</sup> There were also army operations in Northern Ireland from 1969 which needed a greater and more sustained level of commitment; as one writer put it, “deterrence in Ulster exacts a price from deterrence in Germany”.<sup>17</sup> Add to this a disastrous operation in Suez and the much more successful response to the invasion of the Falkland Islands. Each example exposed the manpower challenges of trying to reach the promised

<sup>10</sup> ‘Operation Unthinkable’, Report by the Joint Planning Staff, 22 May 1945, CAB120/691, National Archives, London; as the authors concluded: “The existing balance of strength in Central Europe, where the Russians enjoy a superiority of approximately three to one, makes it most unlikely that the Allies could achieve a complete and decisive victory in that area in present circumstances”.

<sup>11</sup> Evans, ‘The British Army of the Rhine and Defense Plans for Germany, 1945–1955’, 204-205, 214-215.

<sup>12</sup> Jeffrey H. Michaels, ‘Revisiting General Sir John Hackett’s *The Third World War*’, *British Journal of Military History* (Vol.3, Issue 1: November 2016), 97.

<sup>13</sup> Beatrice Heuser, ‘Victory in a Nuclear War? A Comparison of NATO and WTO War Aims and Strategies’, *Contemporary European History* (Vol.7, No.3; Nov 1998), 319-320.

<sup>14</sup> Ruiz Palmer, *A Strategic Odyssey: Constancy of Purpose and Strategy-Making in NATO, 1949-2019*; J. Vitor Tossini, ‘British Forces Germany - From the Cold War to the 21st Century’, *ukdj.*, June 20, 2018, [ukdefencejournal.org.uk/british-forces-germany-from-the-cold-war-to-the-21st-century](http://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/british-forces-germany-from-the-cold-war-to-the-21st-century)

<sup>15</sup> John Strawson, ‘The Thirty Years Peace’, in David Chandler, *The Oxford Illustrated History of the British Army* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 357-375.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Soldiering On’, *The Economist*, 10 August 1968, 14.

<sup>17</sup> ‘The watch beyond the Rhine’, *The Economist*, November 28, 1970, 3.



levels of security support in western Europe and highlighted the pressures this continued to impose on the British Army of the Rhine.

By the mid-1960s NATO conventional land forces in Europe consisted of five US divisions of the Seventh Army alongside which were 12 mostly armoured or mechanised German, four British, two Belgian, three Dutch and the Canadian brigade group. Opposing them, intelligence estimates of Warsaw Pact strength ranged from 140 to 175 divisions. The adoption of a further revised strategic concept, MC 14/3, in 1967 signalled a move to reducing reliance on an early first use of nuclear weapons in accordance with what was termed as the 'Flexible Response' strategy. In line with the NATO move, resources were now concentrated on defending a northeast axis extending from the United Kingdom northwards to Iceland and Norway and eastwards across the North Sea to Denmark and West Germany. When Labour took power in October 1964 defence spending was seven percent of gross domestic product but this had been reduced to five per cent and commitments East of Suez and imperial overstretch were reduced.<sup>18</sup> The focus was Europe and Denis Healey's 1969 White Paper had confirmed British security would be ensured "by concentrating our major effort on the Western Alliance". A change to a Conservative government did not see this policy revised and between 1968-1978 Army personnel deployed outside the NATO area were cut by 75 per cent.<sup>19</sup> By the early 1970s, at any one time nearly a third of the British Army was assigned to duty in Germany, including most of its armoured regiments. The

**"This was 'an army which in a military sense [wa]s probably the best trained that Britain ever put in the field' and it had a critical role to play in providing NATO with strategic mobility and a flexible response."**

1974 Defence Review once again restructured the British Army and within four years 1 (Br) Corps contained four weak armoured divisions and a light infantry 'field force' roughly the size of a brigade.

In part to adapt to the frequent structural changes but also to prepare for the anticipated inflow of reinforcements arriving from the UK, a lot of time was spent training. Once the crops had been harvested, the British Army of the Rhine was able to use the northern German plain to conduct large-scale armoured manoeuvres on the terrain in which they would be expected to fight in any future war.<sup>20</sup> A 1968 *Economist* article also highlighted the benefits that the decolonisation experience had provided for British troops who accumulated: "... a vast body of knowledge and doctrine on how to move troops over long distances, how to command a joint services force, how to keep it supplied, how to maintain communications and how to use the troops once they are there. Need created this knowledge. It is now very much part of the bloodstream of the army."<sup>21</sup> This supported NATO strategy, both in maintaining multi-national forces in Germany and also

moving troops and equipment as they arrived in Europe during a crisis. This was "an army which in a military sense [wa]s probably the best trained that Britain ever put in the field" and it had a critical role to play in providing NATO with strategic mobility and a flexible response.<sup>22</sup>

Exercises helped improve readiness but also provided cause for concern. The October 1962 Spearpoint was the British Army of the Rhine's biggest since Battle-Royal eight years before. Involving approximately 33,000 men, nearly four-fifths of the then operational strength, 'Redland' armoured forces advanced without any serious check as their commander "moved faster and farther than the defence ever accepted and refused to be intimidated by the prospect or the fact of nuclear in his path".<sup>23</sup> He also used mobile heliborne forces in a series of feints which confused his opponent and his assessment of the axis of advance. This proved key as, when 'Blueland' resorted to tactical nuclear weapons to blunt

<sup>18</sup>Right Hon. Denis Healey M.P., 'British Defence Policy', *The Royal United Services Institution Journal* (Vol.114, No.656; 1969, 18.

<sup>19</sup>Lawrence Freedman, 'Britain's contribution to Nato', *International Affairs*, LIV, 1 (1978), 35.

<sup>20</sup>Allan Mallinson, *The Making of the British Army from the English Civil War to the War on Terror* (London; Transworld Publishers, 2011), 574-579

<sup>21</sup>'Soldiering On', *The Economist*.

<sup>22</sup>'A Survey of the British Forces in Germany', *The Economist*, 28 November 1970, 22.

<sup>23</sup>Anthony Verrier, 'Strategic Thinking in Europe', *The Royal United Services Institution Journal* (Vol.107, No.626; 1962), 122-126.





the advance, the simulated attacks fell on territory which the enemy troops had already left as they continued to rapidly move forward. The conclusion was that the exercise raised serious questions about NATO reliance on using “a saturating nuclear fire”, not to mention an ability to conduct fire and manoeuvre.

This was not the only example of an exercise which offered more to the planners from the failings it revealed. Following Strong Express 72 – held in Norway and involving 64,000 personnel, 700 aircraft and 300 ships – Allied commanders acknowledged that the size and composition of NATO forces was nowhere near sufficient to withstand a Warsaw Pact attack.<sup>24</sup> There was also Lionheart 84 during which 8,500 men of the regular 1st Infantry Brigade embarked at ports in England and arrived 36 hours later in Denmark. No mention was made in the accompanying media coverage of either the lack of any simulated enemy interdiction as this move was made or the reliance on civilian equipment, especially dock facilities, to make it possible.<sup>25</sup> Nor did these scenarios really tackle the problem facing the British Army of the Rhine and the other land forces of very wide brigade frontages and the potential, even with improved communications available to the army commanders, of their forces being dispersed into penny packets.

The frequency of exercises reflected concerns about the potential for Warsaw Pact forces to launch a ‘bolt from the blue’ attack which could quickly overwhelm the British Army of the Rhine. In a 1967 tactical exercise without troops, in which the enemy had been able to cross the Rhine within three days, General Sir John Hackett, head of NORTHAG, had played the role of the Warsaw Pact commander. This experience reinforced his fears and he wrote to *The Times* the following year to warn against reducing NATO conventional forces.<sup>26</sup> Ten years later the threat had not improved, a Joint

Intelligence Committee assessment anticipated that only two weeks warning would be available of a Warsaw Pact attack and perhaps even as little as two days.<sup>27</sup> According to one analysis, NATO forces faced a similar problem to that of the British Expeditionary Force in 1940 during the retreat to Dunkirk and “had a breakthrough of the front line been created, the rear area troops would have been ill equipped to stop it”.<sup>28</sup>

This was the other great issue facing the British Army. As the Under-Secretary of State for Defence explained to parliament in 1973, the British Army of the Rhine was so vital that it needed to be “properly equipped in every sense within available resources to fulfil this role”.<sup>29</sup> The reality was different throughout

<sup>24</sup> ‘Exercise Strong Express in Retrospect’, *International Defense Review*, 6/1972, 661-664.

<sup>25</sup> Kenton White, ‘Mearsheimer’s Folly: NATO’s Cold War Capability and Credibility’, *Infinity Journal* (Vol.6, No.4; Summer, 2017), 22-31.

<sup>26</sup> Michaels, ‘Revisiting General Sir John Hackett’s *The Third World War*’, 92.

<sup>27</sup> White, ‘Mearsheimer’s Folly: NATO’s Cold War Capability and Credibility’.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Adjournment Debate, Mr. Peter Blaker (The Under-Secretary of State for Defence for the Army)*, Hansard, Volume 854, 5 April 1973, Cols.632-633.

<sup>30</sup> Neville Brown, *The Armies in Central Europe, The Royal United Services Institution Journal* (Vol.108, No.632; 1963), 341-348.

<sup>31</sup> General Lord Bourne, ‘*The Defence White Paper, 1966*’, *The Royal United Services Institution Journal* (Vol.111, No.642; 1966) 121.

<sup>32</sup> Eric Grove, ‘*The Army and British Security after the Cold War: Defence Planning for a New Era, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, Occasional Paper Number 20* (1996), 3.

<sup>33</sup> White, ‘Mearsheimer’s Folly: NATO’s Cold War Capability and Credibility’.

the initial decades, equipment was “rather uneven” and shortages in manpower were an “embarrassment”, in general throughout the technical support echelons but worst felt by the infantry.<sup>30</sup> Retired senior officer comments about the 1966 White Paper warned resources would continue to be badly stretched with pay and quartering cost far more than those for maintaining weapons.<sup>31</sup> To address this, it would be easier to save money from the largest garrisons overseas which made the British Army of the Rhine – “heavy with overheads for a corps and three division HQs” – attractive for reductions. Ammunition and ordnance were additional concerns, in 1981 the Chiefs of Staff warned the British government that there was insufficient capability for the British Army of the Rhine to sustain conventional warfare for more than four days with the greatest shortages being in anti-tank missiles and tank rounds which would be needed most to defeat Warsaw Pact armour. As one analysis, produced shortly after the Cold War’s end, concluded: “Despite doctrinal innovations and the promise of new ‘deep strike’ technologies the commanders of [British Army of the Rhine] always insisted that nuclear escalation was the most likely outcome of a major [Warsaw Pact] attack – if for no other reason than ammunition supplies giving out.”<sup>32</sup> Another researcher has offered the stark but entirely reasonable conclusion that in a long war in which nuclear weapons were not used, NATO could have been defeated “through attrition alone”.<sup>33</sup>

Analysis of exercises during the last two decades of the Cold War revealed a Warsaw Pact focus on offensive options ranging from the seizure of West Berlin through to the encirclement of Denmark or strategic envelopment either of northwest Europe isolating Norway or the same with Greece and Turkey. In exercises conducted from 1977 to 1984, the most tested option was a dash to the English Channel. The continuing attempt





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to halt this last possibility likely contributed to the final series of major changes to the British Army of the Rhine's structure which took place in the early 1980s. This put 1st and 4th Armoured Divisions in the front line defending against the Soviet 3rd 'Shock Army' with the two other divisions in a reserve and rear-area security role. Showing the fear of a rapid Soviet breakthrough, General Sir Nigel Bagnall, commanding NORTHAG, developed the doctrine of the 'counter-stroke', a counterattack to destroy enemy forces on the move.<sup>34</sup> This was not that different from the 1940 plan to form a strategic deterrent which would move rapidly to attack German invaders on British beaches. Despite such efforts to out-think the enemy, even as the Cold War drew to its conclusion, a German government report published in 1988 still highlighted the superiority of Warsaw Pact over NATO land forces. It noted that this conventional gap which had been "increasing continuously" and not just in terms of the quantity but also quality; in just one category, main battle tanks, NATO held 9,700 as opposed to 22,800 of comparable quality.<sup>35</sup>

Membership of the organisation had a significant impact and influence on the British Army. The British Army of the Rhine had been created at the end of a second European war to help prevent a third and remained throughout the Cold War as the most forward and exposed conventional deterrent forces. For the troops and their commanders, there were obvious benefits gained from extended collaboration with partners and exposure to shared tactics and techniques and strengthened standardisation in military equipment, procedures and logistics. Participation in exercises, joint training and military operations enhanced interoperability and improved overall military effectiveness. Ultimately, the experience of 50 years spent in northern Germany could be seen to have delivered capability benefits such as Multiple Launch Rocket System precision fires, a superior

armour platform in the Challenger, mechanised infantry transported in Warrior armoured cars supported eventually by Apache gunships and secure signalling which allowed for much improved command and control. The long commitment helped create a highly trained force with an expertise in mobile warfare; as a writer for *The Economist* put it in 1970: "If the Russians ever were to come, some in BAOR like to brag, they would much prefer to cut round the flanks of 1st British Corps rather than engage it head-on. This is not an empty boast. It has the look of a rational, military calculation."<sup>36</sup> Whilst not every commentator agreed, the level of accomplishment was demonstrated during the first Gulf War, "a sort of curtain call for the victorious BAOR".<sup>37</sup>

The British Army of the Rhine provided some agility and flexibility for NATO strategic thinking. According to one view, the troops, despite an at times "rigid, almost inbred, habit of thinking", "became proficient, if somewhat entrenched, in high-intensity war preparations: sophisticated cooks who were never required to supply the banqueting table".<sup>38</sup> In providing 'peacekeeping by military presence', they made the nuclear deterrent credible.<sup>39</sup> At the same time, if political leaders "decided for one reason or another – moral doubts, political uncertainty or simply fear of reprisal – that atomic weapons could not be used", along with their other partner land forces, they formed the only barrier to a Soviet dash across Europe.<sup>40</sup> The counter-point was to question the value of an army which, whilst not quite forgotten, existed "on the margin of political consciousness and active debate in Britain".<sup>41</sup> To one writer in the early 1970s, it was "a trip wire, a demonstration force" which depended on American support and would only survive three days of combat.<sup>42</sup>

In his fictional assessment of how it would have performed in a Cold War setting, General Sir John Hackett wrote bitterly about

the limitations imposed upon the British Army of the Rhine by questionable equipment and operational capability and the draining effects of providing troops to Northern Ireland.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, in his version of the Third World War, and perhaps not unsurprisingly for a soldier who had helped bring about the eventual defeat of Nazi Germany, ultimately the Warsaw Pact collapsed and NATO prevailed. If, however, fiction had become a reality there was a distinct possibility, as some warned, that the British Army would have faced a repeat of 1940's defeat. A conflict that was never fought echoed an enduring constant – fighting on distant shores against an opponent fighting closer to home will always carry risk and uncertainty.

<sup>34</sup>White, 'Mearsheimer's Folly: NATO's Cold War Capability and Credibility'.

<sup>35</sup>Force Comparison 1987 NATO and Warsaw Pact', Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, Bonn (5/1988), 14-15.

<sup>36</sup>A Survey of the British Forces in Germany', *The Economist*, 28 November 1970, 22.

<sup>37</sup>Allan Mallinson, *The Making of the British Army from the English Civil War to the War on Terror* (London: Transworld Publishers, 2011), 579. For another commentator, it was the British Army's "first real test in 45 years but it could only put a single reinforced division in the field"; Antony Beevor, *Inside the British Army* (London: Corgi Books, 1991), 207.

<sup>38</sup>Farrar-Hockley, 'The Post-War Army 1945-1963'.

<sup>39</sup>Professor Michael Howard M.C., *British Defence Policy and the Future of the Armed Forces*, *The Royal United Services Institution Journal* (Vol.113, No.652; 1968), 289.

<sup>40</sup>'Weapons to End War?', *The Economist*, 6 February 1954, 369.

<sup>41</sup>'The watch beyond the Rhine', *The Economist*; *ibid*, 'Soldiering On'.

<sup>42</sup>'Defence', *Hansard*, Volume 852, 15 March 1973, Cols. 1539-1541.

<sup>43</sup>General Sir John Hackett and others, *The Third World War* (London: Sphere Book, 1979), 403.



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# ARE YOU LOOKING AT THE 'WHOLE' PICTURE?

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## AUTHOR

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*The Whole Force concept aims to deliver a balanced, resilient, and fully integrated force structure. It brings together Service personnel (Regular and Reserve) and civilians (MOD civil servants and contractors). It is a plan to optimise the human component of Defence's operational capability at declared readiness and defined risk, in the most cost-effective way. The Whole Force concept enhances operational effectiveness and resilience by pulling together a rich set of skills and expertise, and by bringing together the flexibility of the military rotation system, the institutional memory provided by the civil service, and the specialised expertise of contractors.<sup>1</sup>*

**C**OMMANDER-led action is needed urgently to turn the rhetoric of the 'Whole Force' into a military/industry reality. This action is integral to – not separate from – the wider force re-design and re-set of capabilities being conducted across NATO. My remarks are framed as considerations for commanders, especially those at more senior levels; not to undermine the key role of acquisition experts but because the declaration of military capability as 'ready to fight' is a function of command. And because the Whole Force is currently a fragmented force. Fixing this is an operational leadership imperative not just a technical contracting problem. In crisis and in war the industry private sector 'component' must be indivisible from the public sector components. Critical industry support cannot be assumed in crisis and conflict, unless it was designed and has been tested for this purpose. Many of the supposedly Whole Force commercial constructs that underpin the UK's fighting power today (and likely across NATO) pre-date the invasions of Ukraine in 2022 and even 2014. They are the product of profoundly different strategic imperatives and assumptions. This is not a criticism, but it is a fact. It will require military leaders to engage personally, to find and fill the worst gaps. To direct prioritised campaigns to first identify and then rectify old assumptions and commercial constructs that are unfit.

## THE CHALLENGE

In keynote remarks at the Warsaw Security Forum on 3rd October 2023, the chairman

of NATO's Military Committee challenged nations to develop forces and capabilities fit to deter and win a war on NATO's eastern flank. Are mission-critical industry partners in your military an adjunct to that campaign or integral to it? If they are held at arms-length and tasked when needed in legacy transactional relationships NATO nations will have undermined their own strategic foundations and cohesion. This article does not explore whether the public-to-private sector transfer of the past three to four decades has been a good or bad thing.<sup>2</sup> As with all capability solutions there are strengths and weaknesses. Like many of you, I have experienced exceptionally professional – even gallant – support from contractors in Northern Ireland, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. The UK could not have recaptured the Falklands without the heroic efforts of the Merchant Navy. But whatever one's view of outsourcing, it is simply a fact that current commanders have inherited – from my generation – a fragmented strategic landscape: one where industry is not consistently or fully integrated into operational structures, decision making, planning and training. No general would accept their supporting artillery or engineers being treated as outsiders or leave vital readiness and force generation to contract managers. Because this is a strategic risk (and opportunity), fixing inherited anomalies and creating a NATO Whole Force is not the sole preserve of commercial and procurement specialists. Without assured, timely, resilient partnerships forged into integrated, cohesive industry/military teams, commanders and their troops will not be set up to win.

## A WHOLE FORCE... IN NAME ONLY?

After the Cold War Regular military forces were cut. Democracies took a peace dividend. This led to incremental outsourcing of military support in many functional areas to civilians. It was done under peacetime assumptions and cultures. The result were contracts fit for more peaceful times. The

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<sup>1</sup>Dr Linda Rissa, *The Centre for Army Leadership*, army.mod.uk/media/21519/cal-insight-no40-leadership-in-the-whole-force.pdf

<sup>2</sup>NATO stands for shared democratic values underpinned by credible military hard power and enabled by a vibrant free market. A true Whole Force can fuse and exploit these strategic strengths.

extent and scope of the Whole Force transfer of mission-critical functions varies across the Alliance and domains, but typically includes aspects of equipment maintenance, repair, fleet management, logistics, communications and training. Industry ‘partnerships’ are now woven into the fabric of NATO’s strategic posture. These mutual dependencies take the form of technical contracts, not the clarity of an order of battle diagram or a state of command more familiar to military leaders. If the civilian, commercial part of the Whole Force is alien territory for most commanders, this article suggests ten practical considerations to help assess whether you have a Whole Force or a fragmented force. They are, frankly, things I wish I had thought of and done in my 3\* command appointment.

### THE WHOLE FORCE AS A ‘CENTRE OF GRAVITY’

The Warsaw Security Forum describes the eastern flank as NATO’s “centre of gravity”. A centre of gravity can be a source of mission-winning strength or a vulnerability. Consider the Whole Force in this way. Any gap between the military and civilian parts of the Force will be exploited and attacked. Enemies love an open flank!

As we see in Ukraine and Gaza, the character of war can evolve fast. Long-range multi-domain strike makes redundant old concepts of ‘lines of support’ and dispels the comfortable notion of a ‘safe rear area’. Factories, ports and storage hubs hundreds of kilometres from the close battle will be attacked whether they have a military badge or a company logo on the gate. And the range of core military tasks (cyber, for example) is also expanding, placing new demands on finite numbers of military personnel and budgets. These factors combine to increase reliance on civilian partnerships. Third, despite predictions about technology replacing people, some old characteristics of war stubbornly refuse to go quietly. The battlefield exhibits some doggedly persistent characteristics, where fighting mass still matters. There will be more tasks than there are uniformed troops to do them, which means that if a task has a low military element, it might need to be done by a civilian.

It seems unlikely that there will be wholesale reversal of a decades-long trend of incremental outsourcing of mission-critical functions. Industry is already in the force with which NATO will fight, but in an odd semi-detached relationship. The conflicts of the past three decades have been discretionary and expeditionary: they were limited ‘wars of choice’ not existential wars to defend our homelands. Unsurprisingly, this Whole



**“Long-range multi-domain strike makes redundant old concepts of ‘lines of support’ and dispels the comfortable notion of a ‘safe rear area’. Factories, ports and storage hubs hundreds of kilometres from the close battle will be attacked whether they have a military badge or a company logo on the gate.”**

Force construct was not fully tested against today’s scenarios. Is the Whole Force resilient or brittle and how can we test it? Are key relationships, commercial contracts, governance ‘chains of command’ and habits, ingrained over more than 30 years of taking peace dividends, unfit today? Commanders own this risk.

### TEN CONSIDERATIONS

Authoritarian regimes decide and act faster than democratic governments and alliances. There will not be time in a crisis to re-negotiate arrangements that have accrued in peace. Key performance indicators set in contracts designed in less dangerous times probably do not reflect what commanders need today. Commanders make personal assessments of the true nature and readiness of their own uniformed capabilities, using a combination of data and intuition. They lead military force design. Commanders (including myself), however, have been far less engaged when it comes to knowing the readiness and true capabilities of the non-military – but mission-critical parts – of the Whole Force. And they should be engaged in ‘force design’ which is when key services are re-framed and re-competed. Integration – to the maximum extent possible – can bring to bear the latent power of industry and protect its vulnerabilities. The following ten considerations set out ways by which a commander can quickly assess whether they have an integrated military/industry Whole Force.

**Consideration 1.** If you are a commander supported by industry, I suggest that you familiarise yourself with the key features of contracts that were negotiated well before you took command to support you or your predecessors. When was the contract competed and awarded? If the competition was run pre-2022 or even pre-2014 it was designed in a different military strategic epoch. Does the contract make it clear, to you and to industry, what is expected – of both parties – in peace, in crisis and in war? Does it prioritise ‘cost effectiveness’ (price) or ‘operational effectiveness’ (resilience)? How flexible is it and what are the critical dependencies – on both sides? This does not need deep technical or commercial expertise, just the kind of probing that all commanders do visiting a subordinate HQ or battlefield circulation. How does it ‘feel’? Is the contract a peacetime Monday-to-Friday sort of construct and, if so, does that meet your intent? What vital changes are needed – now – if you require a different quantity or quality of service and how quickly can a contract change be enacted? Perhaps something as simple but critical as short-notice 24/7 manning. Understanding, re-setting and re-framing the main features of your key support and enabling contracts is as important as specifying requirements for a new tank or assessing the readiness of your lead brigade combat team.

**Consideration 2.** As the next step, having got yourself up to speed you might test whether

your industry partners really understand what they signed up to, and how that risk is evolving. What intelligence do you share? They read about the wars in Ukraine and Gaza, and they see Poland doubling the strength of its armed forces, but do they even see themselves as being in NATO's Whole Force? Do they understand the nuance in your language of 'deter' and 'defeat' – how the two are seamless and so signing up to one implies committing to the other?

**Consideration 3.** Having established if you have common 'rules of engagement' in considerations 1 and 2, ask your chief executive officer counterpart if, and if so how, they know the resilience of their own organisations and supply chains. They might need your help. An integrated lessons learnt process can galvanise and focus their gap analysis creating a shared sense of mission. The UK Ministry of Defence has done some excellent Ukraine lessons learnt collaborative work with industry. Industry is being asked for its views, and the classified meetings have served as a prompt to many on the civilian side to look hard at their own resilience. More of this structured collaborative predictive analysis will help de-risk your war plans. Lessons learnt can indicate where dormant risk lies. When we mounted the Second Gulf War and started transporting equipment into UK ports civilian drivers found roads blocked by peaceful protesters. Contractors' drivers were reticent to cross picket lines. This caused operational delays. Do you know how industry personnel policies might impact your logistic operational plans in a time of intense tension in Europe? A dormant but high readiness Sponsored Reserve element to the contract can add resilience to the Whole Force. The same driver, putting on their uniform and obeying lawful military commands, might reduce vulnerability

to disruption. Sponsored Reserves can also buy you valuable time, by surging below the political threshold whilst awaiting decisions on full mobilisation. An open lessons learnt culture and processes will help highlight these options.

**Consideration 4.** Wargames (tabletop scenario exercises and rehearsal of concept drills) are excellent tools, as every commander knows. Run a half-day wargame of 'the road to war' with your industry opposite numbers. Mission Command is a powerful lever but it will only work in a crisis if it is understood, accepted and applied in peacetime. Wargaming a range of credible scenarios will quickly expose flawed assumptions – on all sides. And wargaming is the natural sequel to a lessons learnt session. It will focus the commercial staffs' expertise and scarce resources on the critical gaps that you need filling first.

**Consideration 5.** Going further with integration, can you involve industry chief executive officers and their leadership teams in your real contingency planning? Strive to have the same quality of relationship and understanding as you would in any military supported/supporting state of command. Could their liaison teams embed in your HQ with all the benefits of trust and agility deriving from physical colocation? Armies invented 'headquarters' so it seems odd if the Whole Force is excluded. An exemplar is the integrated military/industry equipment support branch in the British Army's 1st Division Headquarters. Uniformed experts and their Babcock counterparts work as one team-of-teams. You might invite industry leaders to take part in your terrain tours and staff rides to fully-understand

**"[Industry leaders] have skills that can help commanders to craft stronger military solutions. They will bring their distinctive expertise to bear on the most wicked problems, but only if they know the commander's intent."**

and anticipate your requirements, and to create a non-commercial 'safe space' in which they can offer their advice. They have skills that can help commanders to craft stronger military solutions. They will bring their distinctive expertise to bear on the most wicked problems, but only if they know the commander's intent – as in any war-ready formation.

**Consideration 6.** The sixth area that commanders might test is whether your key partners train with you. Do they take part in your force generation and warfighting exercises? Not just to support them, but to be exercised – as players. Militaries train constantly. It is how they learn their craft, test concepts, select leaders and send strategic messages. It is how armies create cohesion; that hard to define, know it when you feel it quality. Industry need to hone their craft, build their teams and learn with you, your commanders and staffs. To feel part of your team. As General David Petraeus said, "you can't surge trust". 'Train as you fight' is only true if it is true across the breadth and depth of the entire Whole Force.

**Consideration 7.** As with the military decision-making process familiar to all commanders, there are key moments in a competition for a new critical service or piece of equipment where commanders can have huge – and entirely legitimate – impact. In my experience most combat-stream officers see 'commercial' as a dark art at best and a minefield to be avoided at worst. I was over-cautious in this regard. I regret being too detached from anything with a commercial element and for staying too firmly within my military comfort zone. Take advice on the legalities for sure but make clear what outcomes you expect. Setting and competing contracts for





the Whole Force has tended to be the purview of acquisition experts. Engaging early, as you do with mission analysis when campaign planning, means commanders can ensure that scoring parameters weight the right things. Early, appropriate engagement in the design of the competition (its 'intent, concept and scheme of manoeuvre' in military parlance) will help ensure the scoring system evaluates competitors' cultures and behaviours. Getting the language right in the competition may seem obvious but, in my experience, cannot be taken for granted. Officers know that a 'hasty attack' is different to a 'deliberate attack'; 'management' is not the same as 'transformation'. What do you, the commander, require, in peace, in crisis and in war? Lots of competitions have 'transformation' in the title. Do you want transformation? If you do want 'transformation' that implies a deliberate disruption of the existing model, aiming for significantly different outcomes, be that in performance and/or cost. It also implies a higher risk appetite. And transformation will call for different skills. Getting the 'mission verbs' in the competition and the contract right is essential and is commanders' business. Choosing partners involves art as well as science. Your experts will guide you, but I suggest you seek advice early to establish ways to inject timely appropriate 'command intent' into the science of commercial processes.

**Consideration 8.** So, with consideration 7 in mind, judge whether your potential partner can – and will – change their ways of working to suit your evolving operational demands. Can they help you to bridge from business as usual to be ready for the crisis? Babcock provides the British Army's deep expertise in armoured fighting vehicle powerpack repair. The company is one of several required to do this under a prescient clause in their contract. But the use of Sponsored Reserves is relatively rare. This is a missed opportunity and an open goal for force designers. Under special terms of service, in this case Babcock is mandated to provide a cohort of highly experienced Sponsored Reserve engineers. If the peace dividend has cut into your uniformed specialist capabilities, can you make far wider use of focused, mission-limited Reserve service stipulated in your key contracts? Should some of your partner executives be Sponsored

**“More subtle hybrid operations will include disinformation to attack and undermine your Whole Force partners' reputations and their share prices, early in or even before the crisis. Enemies will seek to use the free market against us.”**

Reserves? Is the organisation with which you are partnering able to recruit and retain people with this ethos of service, in good times and in bad?

**Consideration 9.** Once your partners are involved in lessons learnt, wargaming, training etc, use the threat assessments you receive to help understand the consequences of enemy action for your industry partners as well as for your military force elements. What parts of your plan are vulnerable through direct or subversive attacks on your industrial partners? Are they considered in the higher-level strategic force protection concept? Your mission-critical industry partners will be targeted. Attacks during war will include physical disruption throughout the depth of NATO's area. But more subtle hybrid operations will include disinformation to attack and undermine your Whole Force partners' reputations and their share prices, early in or even before the crisis. Enemies will seek to use the free market against us. Can national and alliance leaderships help defend your civilian partners so that they are in a fit state to support you?

**Consideration 10.** The final 'test' returns to the notion of command as art and science combined. Commanders develop a sixth sense. Having applied the tests above, when you look your industry chief executive officer counterpart in the eye, what do you see? Trust, especially between leaders, is a critical factor in crisis and war. Whatever the contract says, will your industry partner stand with you in a crisis? I did not spend nearly enough time with my industry counterparts and, frankly, could not have answered this question. I have discovered since that companies are

very different. They are united by free-market motives, but their cultures and values vary. Military readers will be familiar with 'fighting power' as a way of assessing true capability. The physical component (a compatible IT system) and the conceptual component (an approach to improving productivity) are relatively easy to assess in a traditional competition and through key performance indicators once a contract is signed. But in a real crisis, it is the third component of fighting power that is often decisive. Assessing the moral component (the will as well as the skill to see the mission completed) is largely (perhaps entirely?) absent from standard assessments of potential industry partners. The intense pressures in a crisis or war will be similar for the military and civilian parts of the team. When Babcock says "whatever it takes" this is a commitment exemplifying a Whole Force ethos – it is not made lightly. If any part of your military capability depends upon an industry partner, evaluating its moral component is a matter for a commander's judgement as well as commercial staff rigour.

In conclusion, creating a true Whole Force cannot wait. It demands at least the same urgency as the Force modernisation the chairman of NATO's Military Committee called for at the Warsaw Security Forum.



## AUTHOR

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In the movie *Saving Private Ryan* there is a scene in which Tom Hanks' character, Captain John Miller, is staggering up a French beach.<sup>1</sup> His helmet has been blown off and he struggles to take in his surroundings. The sound of battle is muted by a ringing noise that replicates the temporary deafness he is experiencing. One of his non-commissioned officers is shouting in his face, but he remains incognisant and unhearing. Finally, he reaches for his helmet and places it back on his head. Doing so drags him sharply back to reality, the din of battle returns and his surroundings come back into focus. This sequence lasts only a minute and a half. However, for me, it is one of the most potent cinematic moments ever committed to film. I find myself returning to those 90 seconds quite frequently. They help me relive, in a visceral way, a personal memory that is a keystone to my approach to leadership. This is because I have been John Miller staggering up a beach, overcome by shock, unable to bring myself back into the here and now, despite reality screaming for my undivided attention. What I learnt in those moments is hugely rich insight for a leader. On the face of it, much of what I learnt would appear to be limited to the direct leadership that the experience most obviously exhibits. However, as a newly promoted major, my career will gradually remove me from that direct leadership role over the coming years.

In the spirit of preparing for this transition to organisational leadership, I must return to the seminal moment in my career. Marshall

Goldsmith suggests that "what got you here won't get you there".<sup>2</sup> His general thesis is that the leadership habits that have proved successful as a direct leader will not necessarily carry over into organisational leadership. Naturally, this is a worrying proposition for someone whose identity as a leader is vested in a formative experience from the early days of his career. As a result, I have dedicated significant time to extracting what I can from this event to carry with me into this new role. Naturally, my principal concern is avoiding a leadership identity crisis should this formative event diminish in importance.

The event I am about to discuss is inherently personal, so it is with some trepidation that I choose to share it. I do so for three main reasons. First, it is to demonstrate the role of leaders in overcoming shock. In so doing, I hope to provide an explicit endorsement of the principles of transformational leadership and their utility under extreme pressure. Transformational leadership is, of course, a valuable tool for direct leaders. Still, this article will focus on how the principles of this concept grow in importance when it comes to defining an organisational vision and setting a culture.

Second, perhaps self-indulgently, I want to

<sup>1</sup>*Saving Private Ryan*, directed by Steven Spielberg (Universal City, CA: Dreamworks Pictures, 1998).

<sup>2</sup>Marshall Goldsmith, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There: A Round Table Comic: How Successful People Became Even More Successful* (Mundelein, IL: Writers of the Round Table Press, 2011), 10.

acknowledge the event in a public forum. It accounted for just four minutes of the long summer of 2012 that I spent in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, as part of C Company, 3rd Battalion, The Rifles, yet it has played on the back of my eyelids almost daily since. Writing about it, trying to capture it on paper, feels like an essential step in coming to terms with the true significance of what happened.

Finally, I hope to encourage anyone who recognises the look in John Miller's eyes to respect these experiences properly. My vocation, and that of many in the audience to which I am writing, brings us into direct contact with trauma more frequently than we care to acknowledge. Committing this one traumatic incident to writing will have been worthwhile if sharing my story helps someone else find their means of catharsis. My attempt is not without example; the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Patrick Sanders, did something similar two years ago when he acknowledged his mental health journey.<sup>3</sup> This article is my response to the short video he titled *Time to Talk*. Doing so normalises the practice and hopefully develops an environment where others will feel comfortable doing the same.

## THE EVENT

At 1135 on 9th August 2012 our company operations room in Nad-e-Ali District, Helmand Province, fell silent. We had just heard the chilling squawk of the radio inform us "contact, small arms fire, man down, wait out". It was not the voice we were expecting. My close friend Andy Chesterman was the patrol commander on the ground, yet he was alarmingly absent from the net. A cacophony and frantic activity replaced the initial silence following the contact report. My worst fears were confirmed when the anonymous voice relayed the nine-line medical evacuation request over the radio. Andy had prior service in the Navy, so his zap (personal ID) was different from a

<sup>3</sup>*It's Time to Talk* by General Sir Patrick Sanders, YouTube video, posted by "NSDF" 4:10, 8 July 2021, [youtu.be/xibUgr\\_xoo](https://youtu.be/xibUgr_xoo).

<sup>4</sup>*British light infantry spelling of "sergeant."*

<sup>5</sup>*This recount is reproduced from an account recorded by the author in his diary two days after the event.*

<sup>6</sup>James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 20.

**"I was a 23-year-old boy on the adventure of a lifetime. We, my unit, had spent the summer fighting a fierce opponent and consistently winning without suffering a scratch. We thought of ourselves as invincible. Yet, that illusion, built over months, had come crashing down in seconds."**

standard Army number. Ironically, we use zap numbers as a way of protecting the identity of a casualty. Andy's number was so distinct that the radio operator might as well have been shouting his name into the handset as he relayed the contact report. The remainder of the nine-liner was also grim listening; it was clear that Andy was in serious trouble.

I froze, completely choked. The room fell out of focus and sound became meaningless. Without a doubt, I was experiencing an acute shock. It was not immediately apparent why I was so affected as to be overcome to the point of incapacitation. However, having relived that moment repeatedly in the intervening years, I have a good idea why I responded as I did. I was a 23-year-old boy on the adventure of a lifetime. We, my unit, had spent the summer fighting a fierce opponent and consistently winning without suffering a scratch. We thought of ourselves as invincible. Yet, that illusion, built over months, had come crashing down in seconds. The sucker punch was all the more devastating because, at the moment he was shot, my friend was stripped of everything that made him Andy. In his place, just the six-digit zap number and rapidly deteriorating vital signs constantly spitting out of the radio speaker. The company serjeant major, Gavin Paton, had seen my reaction; he had watched me choke from across the room and acted quickly, leading me outside.<sup>4</sup> Four minutes after the initial contact report, I was back in the operations room contributing to the casualty evacuation effort. In the intervening four minutes, I had been consoled, rebuked, motivated and returned to the fight by an expert leader.<sup>5</sup>

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

It may appear to be a bit of a leap to apply

a concept like transformational leadership to a four-minute period. In his book *Leadership*, James Burns, the initial proponent for the term, stresses that transformational leadership is not a one-time event or a quick fix but rather a continuous process.<sup>6</sup> Much of the groundwork for leading this way is achieved by articulating and modelling a set of values and beliefs. In essence, it is about organisational culture. The company serjeant major set the culture in the company. He demanded total professionalism that he rewarded with humbling levels of trust. A closeness permeated the company that permitted us to be remarkably forthright across all ranks. Paton conditioned us this way because he knew it would build individual and team resilience, a trait that the company would need during the long fighting season. As I will explore, the value of this investment lies in the reserves of resiliency, mutual trust and dedication we relied upon in a crisis.

This section will take the reader through the four minutes following the shooting of Andy Chesterman. Then, using the principles of transformational leadership, I will demonstrate the effectiveness of a transformational style in the heat of the moment. Taken in turn, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealised influence – the 'four i's' of transformational leadership – will demonstrate how the investment in the team by Paton set the foundations that we would need during our worst day in Helmand. Doing so will be crucial to expanding the relevance of my experience to my future as an organisational leader.

## INDIVIDUALISED CONSIDERATION

Individualised consideration is the leader's ability to understand each follower's unique needs and to provide personalised support and guidance to help them reach their full potential.<sup>7</sup> Transformational leaders build strong relationships with followers and prioritise their well-being and growth.

The above synopsis of the first pillar of transformational leadership suits my purpose very well – the first half talks about identifying the unique needs of the individual follower. In the seconds following the contact report, Paton led me outside and, with very few words, reminded me that I had a job to do. He





also reminded me that I had a role in keeping my subordinates motivated. As a leader, I had to display physical courage and selfless commitment. He tailored his words perfectly for me. His execution acted as a sharp jolt to my senses; he didn't mince his words and I snapped out of the daze. His bluntness was a risk; of course, it could have backfired, but it didn't, and I believe Paton knew it wouldn't.

The second half of the synopsis of individualised consideration talks about the importance of building solid relationships. Before writing this, I had not considered this event in any broader context. The significance of that conversation was limited to the impact of the intervention at that moment. However, from my current vantage point, I can appreciate the slow and deliberate effort Paton made with the individuals in the company in the months before deploying. Every interaction he had with the team was meaningful and designed to match his eventual vision for C Company, a vision founded on mutual trust and total professionalism. Paton wanted to be able to talk frankly with whoever needed to hear frank words. To do so, he took the time to get to know the team. Paton executed perfect individualised consideration in the six months that led us to that conversation and in those four minutes with me.

### INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION

Transformational leaders challenge their followers to exceed their own expectations and to achieve results that they never thought possible. They create a sense of urgency and excitement that inspires people to work harder and achieve more than they ever thought possible.<sup>8</sup>

Early August was one of the most delicate periods of our deployment. Our usual chain of command was fractured and disjointed. I was covering for the company second in command because the commander was on leave in the UK. Likewise, the normal second in command was now in command. Our organisational resilience was not at 100 per cent. My role that day would be running the operations room. Therefore, I was the person tasked with coordinating the casualty evacuation.

Immediately before the company serjeant major

led me outside, I vaguely recall a signaller asking me to decide on a course of action. However, like Captain Miller in *Saving Private Ryan* when his non-commissioned officer was shouting for his attention, I was incognisant and deaf to everything around me. Part of what contributed to my shock was the weight of responsibility suddenly thrust upon me. To give Andy the best chance of survival, I would have to exercise decision-making under an extreme level of pressure that was new to me. Paton had his role in getting Andy off the ground. He would deploy out and move Andy to the helicopter landing site. Before he could do so, he needed to be reassured that the operations room was functioning as it should be. The last thing the company serjeant major said to me before sending me back into the room was "Mr. Chesterman needs you". I re-entered the operations room and took hold of the radio handset, imbued with a burning desire to play my part in what would follow. He knew I would find intellectual stimulation by putting me back into the fray. He provided a singular focus for the stream of emotion that I was experiencing. Paton had created the "sense of urgency and excitement that inspires people to work harder".

### INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION

Based on Burns' explanation of inspirational motivation, it might appear challenging to link this pillar of transformational leadership to an isolated event. According to Burns, inspirational motivation ultimately rests on moral and ideological foundations, not on a mere search for short-term gains.<sup>9</sup> I will argue that a transformational leader who has conditioned their team to their leadership style can adapt it to achieve short-term results. 'C Company will be the best company in 3 Rifles' is the vision I remember for the company. If you asked any of us back then who was the best company in Afghanistan, let alone 3 Rifles, I know what most would say.

The members of C Company were well-conditioned for this vision. We operated in an environment of total professionalism and mutual trust. We were accountable to ourselves first but likewise for each other



and to each other. That said, executing a vision of excellence is fraught with some risk. Firstly, suppose that 'excellence' is an illusion or the mantle awarded without concrete support. In those cases, organisational resilience will suffer under crisis. Put simply, there will be nothing substantial to fall back upon and structures will crumble. Likewise, if the foundation is not maintained, the illusion of excellence might persist despite an erosion of those foundations.

We believed we were the best company in Afghanistan because we had complete faith in the team. From this belief grew the boldness with which we fought the insurgent for the first three months of the deployment. It is why I was so affected when the enemy eventually hit one of our own. I overcame this emotional response through the immediate corrective intervention of Paton. I only needed a quick intervention because of our individual and team resilience. When a leader can rely upon a solid foundation that complements and supports their vision, they can stimulate a positive response during a crisis.

As Paton and I re-entered the room, he issued a 30-second edict to the team. He made it clear that we in the operations room serve the people on the ground and that we had to exercise every sinew of our collective body to get those in the fight out of trouble. He told us our priority was the casualty evacuation and preventing further casualties. He went on to focus us on what was to come; when everyone was off the ground "C Company would find the shooter and wrestle back the initiative from the insurgents". This short-term vision built upon the long-term idea that C Company was the best company in 3 Rifles. Paton appealed to the resilience he had built into our team. As he finished talking, he strapped on his body armour and moved out to assist in the casualty evacuation. There was nothing Churchillian

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (New York: Psychology Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid, Ch. 6.



about his speech. It was matter-of-fact, down to earth and precisely what we needed to hear. We were inspired and we went to work.

## IDEALISED INFLUENCE

Bernard Bass holds up idealised influence as the bedrock on which the other three principles stand. For Bass, it means the degree to which leaders act as role models, demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct and make personal sacrifices to achieve group goals.<sup>10</sup> I prefer to imagine the four i's as independent pillars supporting the overall transformational leadership concept. I do so because, in Burns' original work, he emphasises a leader's charisma as the vehicle for achieving idealised influence.<sup>11</sup> If charisma is a crucial personal characteristic for idealised influence, one could extrapolate that only charismatic people can execute transformational leadership. I much prefer Bass' reliance on high standards and ethical, moral conduct as a more important trait in a leader than charisma.

As it happens, Paton embodied everything Bass describes as a requirement for achieving idealised influence. He had high standards that he modelled and demanded of others. Likewise, Paton always exhibited firm ethical grounding and unimpeachable moral conduct. One of the things I admired most during those six months was his readiness to put himself in the line of fire for the soldiers he was fighting alongside. Setting an example is what he did that day when he went out to get Andy off the ground. It is worth sharing another anecdote about Paton at this point. He is huge. When the Taliban would count us out of the patrol base (a procedure we listened to by intercepting their radio transmissions), they had a nickname for him. You would hear them count; "one, two, three, The Bear, five, six". He knew that his presence on the battlefield affected everyone. C Company knew he was coming to get us if we got hurt. Likewise, the insurgents knew when he was heading out and they feared him. He knew his place was on the battlefield. In setting this personal example of physical courage, the company witnessed a role model doing what was right in a challenging moment – idealised influence.

## CONCLUSION

When I set about writing this article, I had three main goals. The first was to use my experience of strong leadership as an antidote to shock to endorse a well-executed transformational leadership style. I did so to prove that my identity as a leader would remain intact even as I transition to organisational leadership. I have been reassured that Goldsmith's warning of "what got you here won't get you there"



Courtesy of author

**Soldiers of Headquarters, C Company, 3 Rifles during Operation Herrick 16. The author is fourth from the right in the front row and CSM Paton is seated immediately to his right.**

is only somewhat valid. I do not have to discard the lessons in direct leadership from that summer. They will remain as relevant as ever, mainly because they have taught me to build and maintain strong and meaningful relationships. Writing this article has allowed me to uncover a rich vein of lessons that will be supremely relevant at the organisational level. We did not achieve excellence by being the best at marksmanship or the most aggressive on the battlefield. On the contrary, we fulfilled a vision of excellence founded on trust, professionalism and relationship building. Perhaps most pertinently, I can now see this moment of extreme emotion and violence through a wider lens. Of course, there is much more to leadership for a military professional than these moments. These moments are the exception and not the norm. But for an organisational leader hoping to immunise their team against the effects of shock, what is clear to me now is that resilience is hard earned and requires dedicated investment. I learnt to lead, or at least what leadership looks like, in a baptism of fire that I have kept very close for my whole career. It is a solid grounding that will serve me well as I continue to study the art and science of leadership.

Second, I planted a flag in my mental health journey. I think this article comes across as a stream of consciousness at points. I refuse to edit that because this purpose of catharsis is more important to me than the first. Paton had built a resilient team in which we cared for each other. The morning after the shooting, the battalion commander stood on the steps outside the operations room. The whole company had gathered to hear him speak. I knew what he was about to say but it still hit me like a freight train. "Lieutenant Chesterman fought bravely through the night but did not survive his wounds."<sup>12</sup> Before I had processed the words, I felt a hand on my back and another grabbed my hand. Two riflemen, private soldiers, had reacted the way Paton had trained us and were supporting their teammates. At that moment, I saw the distinction between setting and achieving a vision. That was the true mark of excellence

and why C Company was the best company in 3 Rifles and the best in Afghanistan. From top to bottom, we had each other's backs.

Finally, I wanted to contribute my voice to the conversation on mental health more widely. I have seen first-hand, not just in the aftermath of that tour but throughout my career, that most of us are living with our trauma. Writing about it will not be the way for everyone, but I would echo the Chief of the General Staff's encouragement: it's time to talk. One thing that has struck a chord as I have relived these events is the impact that leaving a team like C Company has had on me as an individual. The further away from that summer in Helmand time takes me, the further away I am from being in that team. That is a reasonably common emotion for a soldier, but it is worth considering. Those tight-knit teams are built to provide mutual support to get through tough times. The broader conversation about mental health must continue to help us deal with everyday life after trauma.

No, Andrew Chesterman did not survive his wounds. Still, we rallied around his death and went after the insurgents with renewed ferocity. For the remainder of the summer, we did very well. The tone was set in the four minutes after the contact report was received. I will always be grateful to Paton for how firmly yet sensitively he guided me from the precipice of self-indulgent grief to a place of ruthless determination. My career ever since has been dominated by two personal priorities: to guard the memory of Andy Chesterman<sup>13</sup> and to lead per Paton's transformational example.

<sup>10</sup>Bernard M. Bass and Ronald E. Riggio, *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed. (New York: Psychology Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>11</sup>James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 16.

<sup>12</sup>Title of author's diary entry for 11 Aug 2012. The image of the Battalion Commander standing on the steps outside the operations room has become a persistent, recurring memory. The impact of Andy's loss has been life and career-defining for the author.

<sup>13</sup>Andrew Chesterman Obituary: [gov.uk/government/fatalities/lieutenant-andrew-chesterman-killed-in-afghanistan](http://gov.uk/government/fatalities/lieutenant-andrew-chesterman-killed-in-afghanistan)



# HUMAN SECURITY IN THE WAR IN UKRAINE – WHY IT MATTERS

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IT'S Monday morning and I am chatting to a work colleague who has recently returned from a short deployment to Ukraine. As she is telling me about how beautiful and vibrant the city of Kyiv is her phone suddenly starts to make a loud blaring sound. This is followed by the voice of Mark Hamill<sup>1</sup> – he of Luke Skywalker fame – advising: “Air raid alert. Proceed to the nearest shelter.”

The unexpected interruption – generated by an app that warns those who have downloaded it of pending air strikes, chemical attacks or other civil defence threats – is a small reminder of something that we often forget in the military; the impact of war on the civilian population caught up in it. In our rush to understand the ‘pacing threat’ and how we will fight in 2026, our discourse and discussions around the war in Ukraine have been conspicuously absent of consideration for how the conflict is affecting the people of Ukraine. In this article I will attempt to address this by using a human

security approach to illustrate how the war is affecting civilians and why this matters to us in the military. But first, what is human security?

Human security is an approach that places emphasis on human beings, rather than the traditional focus on security of the state.<sup>2</sup> It is a people-centred concept that understands security in terms of the risks and insecurities faced by individuals and communities; and stresses the importance of the different needs of those caught up in conflict.<sup>3</sup> A

<sup>1</sup>John Leicester, “Mark Hamill lends ‘Star Wars’ voice to Ukrainian air-raid app,” *Associated Press*, March 28, 2023. [apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-star-wars-luke-hamill-app-08ec03bf1a2c9c0378857090079f00f9](https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-star-wars-luke-hamill-app-08ec03bf1a2c9c0378857090079f00f9).

<sup>2</sup>Ministry of Defence, *Joint Service Publication 985 Human Security in Defence Volume 1: Incorporating Human Security in the way we Operate* (London: MoD, 2021).

<sup>3</sup>NATO, “Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles,” [nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_208515.htm](https://nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208515.htm)

human security approach seeks to address the challenges people face to their survival, livelihood and dignity; and is concerned with issues including the security of food, health, economic production, the environment, information, culture, politics and, of course, physical security. At its essence human security is about the right of people to live in 'freedom from fear, freedom from want and in dignity'.

*"Human security, in its broadest sense, embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear, and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human and therefore national security."*

– Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General<sup>4</sup>

NATO has put human security at the heart of its policy framework, incorporating it into its 2022 Strategic Concept and adopting the Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles at the Madrid Summit in June 2022. NATO's approach to human security, like that of the UK Ministry of Defence, focuses on addressing the issues of human security across five cross-cutting themes. These are: protection of civilians, children and armed conflict, conflict-related sexual violence, human trafficking, and cultural property protection. Themes I will tackle in turn.

## PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The protection of civilians in conflict is integral to all military operations and is understood through its articulation in international

<sup>4</sup>Kofi Annan, "Secretary-General Salutes International Workshop on Human Security in Mongolia," Press Release SG/SM/7382, (18 May, 2000) [press.un.org/en/2000/20000508.sgm7382.doc.html](http://press.un.org/en/2000/20000508.sgm7382.doc.html)

<sup>5</sup>Amnesty International, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/ukraine-deadly-mariupol-theatre-strike-a-clear-war-crime-by-russian-forces-new-investigation](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/06/ukraine-deadly-mariupol-theatre-strike-a-clear-war-crime-by-russian-forces-new-investigation)

<sup>6</sup>Amnesty International, [amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/ukraine-callous-disregard-for-human-life-of-russian-forces-response-to-kakhovka-dam-destruction-compounded-by-its-disastrous-effects-upstream](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/ukraine-callous-disregard-for-human-life-of-russian-forces-response-to-kakhovka-dam-destruction-compounded-by-its-disastrous-effects-upstream)

<sup>7</sup>Major General Colin Weir, "No one said it would be easy... How We Will Fight in 2026", *British Army Review*, Issue 183 (Summer 2023).

<sup>8</sup>War Child, [warchild.org.uk/our-work/where-we-work/ukraine](https://www.warchild.org.uk/our-work/where-we-work/ukraine)

<sup>9</sup>Geneva Convention Additional Protocols of 1977 Article 77 – Protection of Children.



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**"Children represent the future of a country and therefore in addition to the broad protections of civilians in armed conflict, international humanitarian law provides additional special protection to them."**

humanitarian law, otherwise known as the Law of Armed Conflict. This provides protection to civilians from the hazards of war and addresses the conduct of hostilities through a set of rules that restrict the means and methods of warfare. These are summarised in the four principles of humanity, proportionality, distinction, and military necessity. Foremost in this is the rule that parties to an armed conflict must distinguish between combatants and civilians, and that civilians may never be a deliberate target of attacks. However, despite this, civilians have been targeted in Ukraine, such as in the deadly Russian air strike on a theatre in Mariupol where hundreds of civilians had been sheltering in the besieged city.<sup>5</sup>

International humanitarian law also calls for military operations to consider the effects on civilian infrastructure, with all possible measures taken to protect essentials such as water supplies, housing, power-production and healthcare facilities. Destruction of these essential services during a conflict can inflict unnecessary suffering on the civilian population, and significantly increases the risk of a humanitarian crisis. In Ukraine, the Russian destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam has had disastrous consequences for those living in the region, endangering the lives of people living in the flood-affected areas downstream, as well as creating water shortages upstream; threatening livelihoods through insecurity of food, drinking water and agricultural production, and the long-term ecological damage.<sup>6</sup>

During any operation the military are required to take all feasible precautions to minimise

harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure; any failure to do so undermines the legal legitimacy of the armed forces conducting hostilities. This is why the British Army has robust target acquisition and decision-making architecture embedded within the command battle rhythm of higher headquarters. And in the context of How We Fight 2026 it means that to effectively prosecute in the deep battle we will need to work hard to secure the necessary targeting information to enable such decision-making, otherwise we risk losing our legal legitimacy.<sup>7</sup>

## CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

More than half of the children in Ukraine have now been displaced by the war, forced from their homes and communities, their education disrupted, and have been exposed to significant psychological harm.<sup>8</sup> Children represent the future of a country and therefore in addition to the broad protections of civilians in armed conflict set out above, international humanitarian law provides additional special protection to them: "Children shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected against any form of indecent assault. The Parties to the conflict shall provide them with the care and aid they require, whether because of their age or for any other reason."<sup>9</sup> This special protection provides for the evacuation of children from areas of combat for safety reasons, the reunification of unaccompanied children with their families, protection against all forms of sexual violence, and access to education, food, and healthcare. Depending on the conflict situation it is highly likely that the Army, as the presence on the ground, will be called upon to assist with these provisions,

working alongside experts from international and non-governmental organisations.

In Ukraine, Russian forces have unlawfully transferred thousands of children from the occupied territories into Russia and Belarus, removing them from their families and entering them into re-education programmes which expose the children to Russian-centric academic, cultural and patriotic education.<sup>10</sup> It is for this specific war crime that the International Criminal Court has issued an international arrest warrant against President Vladimir Putin.<sup>11</sup> In the Army we have a duty to report violations of the protected status of children in conflict; something which was less-well understood during the campaign in Afghanistan when soldiers encountered bacha bazi (dancing boys). This is an example of the ethical and moral burden placed upon soldiers in conflict, and reinforces the importance of the moral principles which underpin the conduct of soldiers set out in the *Values and Standards of the British Army*.

### CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Despite its prohibition in international law, sexual violence remains a brutal reality in conflict. This form of violence includes “rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, enforced sterilization, forced marriage and any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity perpetrated against women, men, girls or boys that is directly or indirectly linked to a conflict”.<sup>12</sup> It is frequently used to deliberately target civilians, to inflict long-term trauma and psychological damage, fracture societies, demoralise an opponent, and as a means of ethnic cleansing by causing displacement. Sadly, sexual violence is also a largely hidden phenomenon in war, with few victims reporting the crime (especially among men), due to feelings of guilt or shame, social taboos or the

**“The war in Ukraine has created a ‘human trafficking crisis’ with more than eight million people fleeing the country and a further 5.6 million internally displaced.”**

inability to access response services due to the conflict. Yet failure to address the suffering of victims can have profound long-term consequences for the survivor, their family and community; something which makes sexual violence such a potent weapon in war.<sup>13</sup> In Ukraine the United Nations has documented “accounts of horrific acts of sexual violence, reports of gang rape, rape in front of family members, sexual assault at gunpoint, [and] women who have become pregnant as a result of rape”.<sup>14</sup> And these incidences include male victims too.<sup>15</sup>

In responding to sexual violence in conflict the military has a role in identifying associated risks such as detention settings and displacement camps, and to incorporate appropriate protection measures into operational planning to mitigate these risks. In addition, soldiers on the ground should be informed on how to respond if they encounter survivors of sexual violence.<sup>16</sup> It is also important that the Army works alongside relevant international, non-governmental, and civil society organisations to facilitate responses to incidents of sexual violence in conflict, providing security for experts to access survivors and deliver essential assistance.

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The war in Ukraine has created a “human trafficking crisis” with more than eight million people fleeing the country and a further 5.6 million internally

displaced.<sup>17</sup> This displacement has resulted in the increased vulnerability of civilians to exploitation and human trafficking, both during their journey and upon arrival in an unfamiliar destination. The risk of human trafficking is further heightened for certain groups, such as unaccompanied or separated children, people with disabilities, elderly people, people who have already been displaced elsewhere, and people who cannot access protection services, because, for example, they do not have the correct information or documentation (something that has been particularly common among those fleeing Afghanistan). There are also complex links between human trafficking, organised crime and terrorism.<sup>18</sup>

The role of the Army in responding to the

<sup>10</sup>President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, *United Nations General Assembly General Debate 19 September 2023, gadebate.un.org/en/78/ukraine*

<sup>11</sup>International Criminal Court, *icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and*

<sup>12</sup>United Nations, *Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Report of the United Nations Secretary-General 2023, S/2023/413, 6 July 2023.*

<sup>13</sup>Héloïse Goodley, *chathamhouse.org/2019/01/ignoring-male-victims-sexual-violence-conflict-short-sighted-and-wrong*

<sup>14</sup>Special Representative of the Secretary-General Pramila Patten, *in a speech to the International Peace Institute, 7 June 2022, New York.*

<sup>15</sup>United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, *“Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine,” 24 March 2023.*

<sup>16</sup>NATO, *“NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence,” 31 May, 2021.*

<sup>17</sup>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Conflict in Ukraine: Key evidence on risks of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, December 2022.*

<sup>18</sup>United Nations Security Council Resolutions 2240 and 2331.



risks of human trafficking are most likely to occur when coordinating the movement of dislocated civilians. Such military tasks may involve the securing of safe routes out of conflict affected areas for internally displaced persons; or the coordination and processing of civilians in situations where specialist investigative support may be required, such as instances of reported mistreatment and abuse.<sup>19</sup> These situations are usually highly dynamic in nature creating challenges and frictions for concurrent military operations, as has been tested on many a command and staff training exercise. But their occurrence can often be predicted, as the mass exit of civilians typically accompanies the on-set of military operations, as seen with the mass movement of Ukrainian civilians following the Russian invasion in February 2022, which created the largest displacement of people in Europe since the Second World War.<sup>20</sup>

### CULTURAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

Protecting cultural property may sound trivial alongside the other human security themes discussed, but cultural property is far more than simply a building or artefact. It represents a people, their way of life, history, traditions and customs, and destroying it is to wipe out the physical record of who they are. People are people within a place, and we draw meaning about who we are from our surroundings. Including religious buildings, historical sites, works of art, monuments and historic artefacts, these all tell the story of who we are and how we got here. It is for this reason that parties to armed conflict have a legal responsibility to protect cultural property under the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property during Armed Conflict, and the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

In Ukraine, Russia has been accused of deliberately targeting cultural heritage to undermine Ukraine's cultural identity and its claims to nationhood. And this represents a key part of the Russian propaganda for war.<sup>21</sup>

Targeting a country's identity like this is a common tactic which has been seen elsewhere in the destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in Afghanistan, and The Great Mosque of Aleppo in Syria. The destruction of culturally significant sites like this can also have a lasting effect after war, hampering post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction, where ruins or the absence of previously significant cultural monuments act as a lasting reminder of hostilities. For example, during the Bosnian War in the 1990s, the Old Bridge in Mostar for centuries had represented a symbol of peaceful co-existence between the Serbian and Croat communities there. But after its destruction in 1993 a temporary cable bridge took its place and acted as a constant reminder of the civil war in the ethnically divided town. The bridge was eventually rebuilt a decade later as a mark of reunification.

Understanding the importance of the culture where we operate in the Army has long been recognised. And its significance during the high-intensity conflict of How We Fight 2026 does not diminish. The Army has specialist advisers in the Cultural Property Protection Unit under 77th Brigade whose role it is to ensure the incorporation of this dimension of human security into planning and operations and identify for targeteers sites which have designated protection. Their role also involves preventing the looting of cultural property in conflict, where this is used as a method of fundraising for armed actors.

### CONCLUSION

Human security is concerned with how war affects the civilians who get caught up in it. And wherever we may fight in

2026 we will need to consider how our actions are affecting the population. This means factoring human security into how we plan and operate. It means incorporating human security into our training and headquarters staff procedures, such as target development working groups, terrain analyses and wargames; because the civilian population are more than a 'red team friction', they are the people who will inherit the legacy of war. By integrating human security into all that we do, we will be better able to plan conflict sensitive outcomes by understanding the impacts of our actions on the human environment, reducing Human Rights' violations, minimising harm to civilians and ultimately improving the conditions for long-term stability once hostilities are over.

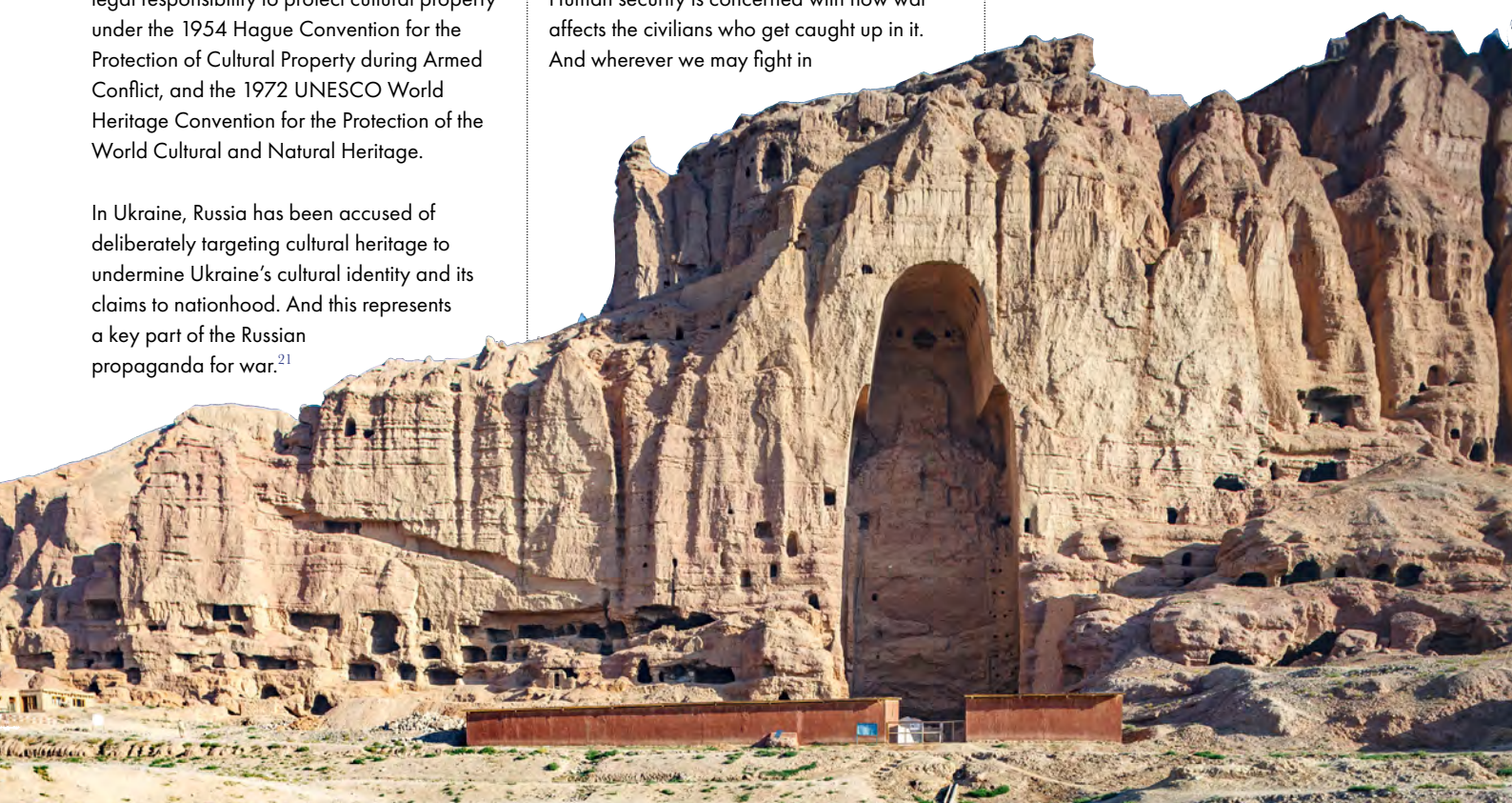
*If you wish to know more about how the Army can incorporate Human Security into operations, see JSP 985 Human Security in Defence.*

<sup>19</sup>NATO, *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Military Contribution to Humanitarian Assistance*, AJP-3.26, October 2022.

<sup>20</sup>International Rescue Committee, "Ukraine: Europe's largest displacement crisis in decades," April 10, 2023, [rescue.org/en/article/ukraine-europes-largest-displacement-crisis-decades](https://rescue.org/en/article/ukraine-europes-largest-displacement-crisis-decades)

<sup>21</sup>Brian Daniels, "How Can We Protect Cultural Heritage in Ukraine? Five Key Steps for the International Community," *Just Security*, 22 April 2022.

**Culling culture: An empty recess is all that remains of one of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, which – on the order of Taliban founder Mullah Omar – were destroyed in 2001.**



**Assembly of allies: The UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky during the Joint Expeditionary Force Summit in Riga, Latvia in 2022.** Simon Walker/No. 10 Downing Street



# ALLIANCE ACCOMPANIMENT

## AUTHOR

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LAST September a team of five staff officers from Northwood took part in Exercise Namejs, Latvia's most ambitious national defence exercise to date. All five officers were from NATO member nations, but they weren't in Riga to represent that organisation; they belonged to the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF). What was the JEF, with its traditional focus on maritime and air activities, doing in Latvia for a land-based exercise? Could the officers be the harbingers of an increasingly agile and integrated JEF security contribution to the land domain? And can the JEF complement NATO at its north-eastern border, now extended by 1,340 kilometres since the accession of Finland, itself a JEF member nation?

## A REGIONAL RESPONSE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

Images from Ukraine have resonated across the world, but particularly in those nations that were once part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; memories of Soviet occupation of the Baltic states and the Winter War in Finland are still very much alive. The heightened unease of Baltic and Scandinavian governments, their militaries and civilian populations have been justified and compounded by a spate of more recent events: a damaged natural gas pipeline;

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unattributed cyber-attacks; surges in undocumented refugees arriving at border crossings; and the presence of survey vessels above key European and North Atlantic underwater telecommunications cables. Neither is the ongoing, albeit legal, Russian presence in the waters and skies of northern Europe just playing out in military operations centres. These physical reminders of regional competition are being projected into sitting rooms along with the evening news.

Any response to these military, security and political challenges in the north and east demands active management across institutional boundaries as well as close multinational co-operation, which is where the JEF comes in. Announced at NATO's 2014



summit in Wales, the JEF was conceived as a command and control framework for just such a military co-operation. Its objective was to improve integration between regional participating nations (both NATO and non-NATO) in response to the re-emergence of traditional threats – and the appearance of new ones – to regional stability. Since its inception the JEF has steadily developed from a concept into a responsive, operational framework which has expanded from its original seven members to ten in total; unsurprisingly, enthusiasm for the JEF received fresh impetus from the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The JEF's main area of interest, in the Northern Atlantic, High North and Baltic Sea regions, reflects its membership: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. As the designated framework nation, the UK provides a 2\*-led headquarters and co-ordination functions out of the Standing Joint Force Headquarters in Northwood, North London. Participation in the JEF is on an opt-in basis and nations can volunteer appropriate and available military capabilities in response to a request from any other JEF member state. Whenever two or more participating nations

work together, that can be labelled a JEF activity. Under a JEF banner, participating nations can join in multi-lateral activities from exercises and persistent deterrence, through humanitarian aid to warfighting, depending on the threat. All activity in the region essentially contributes to NATO's deterrence and defence activity labelled as 'vigilance activity'.

#### **THE BENEFITS OF A PARTNERSHIP OF LIKE-MINDED NATIONS**

Much binds the JEF together; first and foremost, its membership is morally reinforced through a strong set of shared democratic values, respect for international norms and the desire to maintain stability in the region. Doctrinally, participating nations already have a history of working together, so a good baseline of understanding and interoperability exists, with the capacity for increasing levels of force integration. Physically, the JEF can also bring together complementary capabilities across all conflict domains, and in so doing, enhance both national and NATO force development objectives. Whilst JEF nations have co-operated outside northern Europe in the past (for example UK support for Norwegian disaster relief flights after the Turkish earthquake of 2023), JEF aspirations for operating further afield are at a lower order of priority right now. However, it should be noted that at its inception the JEF was conceived as a flexible tool for military influence wherever it was needed.

The JEF has been particularly useful for integrating new and potential NATO

members within its ranks. Until early 2023, the organisation was an important forum within which NATO members could work with Finland and Sweden. And even after Finland's successful accession and the likelihood of Sweden following suit, the JEF continues to offer benefits in addition to those afforded by NATO membership.

Firstly, despite the word 'force' in the name 'Joint Expeditionary Force', there is no JEF





standing force and participating nations are not required to transfer military assets to the JEF in the way they would to NATO. This also ensures that there is no competition for resources between the two and that the JEF will only ever complement NATO, which remains the ultimate guarantor of European security. However, members do gain access to a wealth of expertise, planning and command and control functionality through the JEF's Operational Coordination Cell, embedded in Standing Joint Force Headquarters (and located in proximity to NATO's Maritime Command in Northwood). The Operational Coordination Cell, to which participating nations contribute permanent liaison officers, is multi-national by design and fully deployable. It operated out of Keflavik Air Base in Iceland through June of last year and there are plans for the Cell to act as a deployed exercise headquarters in 2024.

The beauty of its construct is that the JEF offers members an unrivalled platform for building common situational awareness, sharing understanding of multi-domain activities taking place in the region, and understanding where these add up to too much or not enough. The nations, through the Operational Coordination Cell, can then agree to conduct more (or less) activity so that the overall picture of activities and messages we seek to convey (in combination with NATO and other allies and partners) can be carefully calibrated.

### WORKING IN THE SUB-THRESHOLD ZONE

Where the JEF can really add value to NATO

**Above left and below: Multinational troops take to the streets to put Latvia's national defence plan to the test during Exercise Namejs 23.** Armins Janiks (Latvian Ministry of Defense)

lies in the freedom of participating nations to act, opting into a military response to an emerging crisis at the request of any participating member. JEF nations are free to contribute forces and capabilities without the need to reach a ten-member consensus first. This allows the JEF to surge quickly and, where required, shape a theatre in readiness for a NATO response, coalescing a deterrence effect by giving NATO additional options, by injecting doubt into the decision process of any malign actor, and by clearly communicating to them that they risk losing more than they hope to gain.

This agility makes the JEF ideally suited to the changing nature of warfare, where lines and trigger points between peace and war are no longer as clear-cut as they were. Adversaries are now operating in a 'grey zone' to undermine the status quo, using multi-domain hybrid methods such as cyber-attacks, small scale and deniable physical incursions, and the targeting of critical national infrastructure, all of which are hard to detect and easy to deny.

JEF nations are highly experienced at operating in their areas of geographical and technological interest against specific threats, of which they are expert. They can also offer highly capable and credible response options, either as an independent JEF task force or working in coalition with other organisations. The JEF offers scalable, multi-domain and multi-national response options to meet threats that come in below the threshold level of conflict that would trigger a full NATO response.

### BROADENING JEF FOCUS INTO THE LAND DOMAIN

The geographical layout of the JEF area of interest, as well as the nature of potential threats, has meant that the focus of JEF attention has tended to be on activities in the maritime and air domains, reinforced by the relatively straightforward nature of coordinating multi-lateral interactions between ships and aircraft. This trend was exemplified recently by the JEF labelling of elements of Operation Firedrake, the deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group to the seas around Norway and Sweden. During Firedrake, Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish aircraft operated alongside UK carrier-based F-35B Lightnings launched from the Norwegian Sea to strike targets ashore. The task group was also multinational, incorporating ships from JEF members Norway and the Netherlands, as well as other NATO nations.

Operation Firedrake also offered a powerful backdrop to some very high-profile defence engagement during a port visit to Gothenburg, as



well as support to last October's JEF leaders' summit on the Swedish island of Gotland. All of this is enough to make any sailor salivate but at the same time land activity of potentially equal significance for the future of the JEF was taking place in Latvia.

### EXERCISE NAMEJS 23

Namejs is an annual exercise to test Latvia's national defence plan. Now in its ninth year, it has grown into the most important exercise for proving the readiness of Latvia's land forces and cross-government co-ordination. Opening with a table top exercise led by the Latvian Defence Ministry, followed by a command post exercise and culminating in a field training exercise involving regular and reserve forces, 2023 saw the most ambitious and realistic iteration of Namejs to date, incorporating NATO (and JEF) elements into a nationwide, multi-agency exercise. Designed to exploit lessons identified from the conflict in Ukraine, the exercise focused on the mobilisation of defence forces and national logistics efforts and integrating and co-ordinating with allies and the regional NATO structure. The scenario is based around a build-up of tensions and sub-threshold activity, with enemy forces arrayed on Latvia's eastern border leading to an outbreak of hostilities. This in turn prompts an Article 5 declaration during the command post exercise phase, prompting a transfer of authority of forces to NATO.

The JEF element of five staff officers from the Operational Coordination Cell (embedded in the main exercise headquarters in Riga) were able to generate exercise control and side control activity during the command post exercise. They were also in a position to offer extensive experience of large-scale, joint exercises and inject further realism into exercise scenarios by requiring Latvian headquarters to liaise with a multinational supporting element in addition to NATO. Having been involved in the exercise script planning process for Namejs 23, the JEF was also able to make available some of its planning protocols, in the form of JEF response options.

### JEF RESPONSE OPTIONS

Key to its progress towards greater operationalisation, the JEF has been working over the past year to develop a catalogue of 'oven-ready' planning options that can be pulled off the shelf in the event of a crisis. These JEF response options form a playbook of stand-alone, pre-planned packages of actions that JEF nations can draw upon as a starting point for any multi-lateral activity. They are deliberately designed to be general, affording a greater degree of flexibility so that they can



**Collective capability: A British marine and Latvian soldier conduct an assault during Exercise Baltic Protector.** UK MOD © Crown copyright

be tailored for the unknown. However, they do cover most considerations likely to arise in a wide range of preparatory and deterrence activities, ranging from the establishment of in-theatre logistics infrastructure and tightening security around critical national infrastructure to a full show of force, including the deployment of land forces into theatre.

The added value of a JEF response option lies in its scope to generate and position forces in readiness for a potential NATO response, which can just as quickly be stood down should its deterrent effect be successful in de-escalating a situation. Namejs 23 was an early opportunity for response options to be tested within a command and control arrangement between NATO, the JEF and a participating nation, and was a useful framework to spread an awareness of the JEF and its utility to parts of the military where this remains relatively low.

### THE POWER OF A LAND PRESENCE

Historically, NATO provides the structure and lead for western Europe's mutual defence. However, the international picture has changed; the level of activity along NATO's flank is back to levels not seen since the Cold War but the nature of the threat has changed, with a wider range of attack methods available to a greater number of malign actors. As a result, friendly nations need more choice, in terms of the number and nature of agile, scalable and – above all – swift responses to a challenge. Likely scenarios would encompass the deployment of mobile forces with support across all domains (particularly air) to provide an initial presence in the territory of a threatened partner nation.

While maritime and air force elements are agile and swift by nature, the very physical presence of an armoured battlegroup from a friendly nation, operating with local forces

on the ground, sends a very substantial message of reassurance to a JEF population as well as having a strong deterrence effect on neighbours acting in bad faith. This was demonstrated in 2022 when NATO nations responded to events in Ukraine with an enhanced forward presence of forces in each of the Baltic member states.

Under Operation Cabrit, the UK continues to contribute an armoured battlegroup to Latvia's northern neighbour, Estonia, to deliver a very visible reassurance and deterrence effect. Latvia also plays host to NATO formations with which the JEF team interacted during Namejs 23, including: NATO's multinational Division North Headquarters, where the Namejs 23 side control headquarters was collocated; and enhanced forward presence Latvia (at Camp Adazi) where three of the JEF officers were based. This interaction added to the reality of Namejs 23, reflecting the likely progression of activity during a crisis, from a national response, through a request for multi-lateral JEF cooperation to the full involvement of NATO, as the threat escalates.

### GREATER COOPERATION IN THE LAND DOMAIN

Building on the successful contribution to Namejs 23, a JEF team took part in a planning meeting for Exercise Hammer 23, a Finnish Army validation exercise to which the British Army, among other nations contributed to, in the UK's case an anti-tank platoon. This might seem small change compared to JEF aspirations, but if it were to take on the role of an element of a much larger, hypothetical UK land contribution, a platoon-sized unit would be valuable in putting relevant response options to the test. Such interactions would help develop a JEF role in supporting national defence exercises and, by refining assumptions and rehearsing its response options, JEF planners could ensure that their work remained aligned with national as well as NATO regional plans.

In return, JEF participation offers experienced planning and exercise control augmentees to partner nations, offering JEF response options as a starting point to introduce a multinational element into a national exercise scenario during the planning stage.

Following Namejs 23, there is an ambition for more JEF land exercise opportunities and activity in the future, furthering integration between JEF nations. A JEF command and control table top exercise in October 2023 was informed by activity witnessed during Namejs 23, which has highlighted some key uncertainties in current understanding. The

possibility of establishing a JEF J7 capability to support national exercise planning and potential execution will also be investigated in the context of establishing a JEF exercise programme.

In common with NATO planning, the aim of a land-based JEF response option is to project land forces eastward, which invites future cross-pollination of ideas. Avoiding the need to initiate new activity, existing exercises could be leveraged to make better use of resources on all sides. The JEF could also be tapping into NATO post-exercise reporting to refine its own response option planning on the premise that what's good for NATO is also good for the JEF.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The JEF has been on an accelerating trajectory of activity since Exercise Baltic Protector in 2019, the first genuine demonstration of JEF 'operational' collective capability. Its headquarters has been directed from ministerial level to develop an operating framework for its members while at the same time refining its relationships with NATO so that as tensions increase, it can synchronise concurrent responses while preparing for a smooth transfer of national force assets to NATO control should the need arise. The JEF is designed to complement other international frameworks and avoid duplication. Work will continue to integrate activities to support a NATO, UN, EU and any other multinational

**“Through defence engagement built around major deployments and supporting the planning and execution of national exercises, the Joint Expeditionary Force can continue to reassure friends and deter potential adversaries.”**

or coalition operation if required. This process involves ongoing working groups hosted by members to develop credible military response plans and promote interoperability on land as well as at sea and in the air.

Much of the JEF's effect lies in strategic influence. Through defence engagement built around major deployments (such as Operation Firedrake) and supporting the planning and execution of national exercises, the JEF can continue to reassure friends and deter potential adversaries.

On the diplomatic stage, the JEF will continue to act as a convening force for friendly non-NATO nations to participate in mutual defence and its reinforcement of interoperability at the equipment, doctrine and interpersonal levels, can smooth the accession of new members to NATO. However, to prove itself as a truly credible

and capable force, the JEF must also assert a physical presence in the material world. Exploiting its developing links with the Army's Land Warfare Centre to engage with the Land Operations Activities Programme would enable the JEF to increase force integration opportunities between British and other member nations' land forces. This has the added benefit of spreading the word about the JEF. As JEF response options are increasingly built into land-based activities, awareness of the JEF and its purpose will spread right up to the front-line soldier, ideally fostering real relationships at the tactical level between JEF land forces. Participating nations have pledged to invest in the capabilities that enable them to plan, exercise and operate effectively together, adopting an approach that brings together military elements of the broader levers of national power to respond to hybrid security challenges. This includes sharing situational awareness through greater interconnectivity and enabling common solutions to common challenges.

In an increasingly uncertain and insecure world, with national resources stretched, the future will likely see greater cooperation in every domain among friendly nations. The JEF offers a valuable platform to achieve this in North-East Europe.



**In need of a lift: An RAF Chinook prepares to move troops from NATO's multinational enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup around the 'battlefield' during Estonia's annual exercise Winter Camp.** UK MOD © Crown copyright 2023



#### AUTHOR

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# A GLIMPSE OVER THE HORIZON AT A NEW DAWN IN LOGISTICS

**T**HE exigencies of the war in Ukraine reveal weakness in the UK's defence logistics, some of which must now lead to necessary adjustments – ones that go far beyond the need to simply replenish ammunition stockpiles. The Chief of the General Staff was right, in his foreword to the spring 2023 edition of *The British Army Review*, to highlight the importance of improving our 'operational logistic' capabilities alongside the need for more contingent stock.

We don't need to look far to find discourse and critical analysis that cites Russian strategic and operational failures as being consequences of overly causal logistic preparation and exaction. Conversely, the successes of Op Interlink [the flow of multinational military aid into Ukraine] can be put down to remarkable end-to-end logistic collaboration, innovation and execution. Both nationally and amongst allies. But we must not deceive ourselves that the remarkable ability of our logisticians in 'making the extraordinary seem ordinary' is in itself sufficient.

The former commanding general of the United States Army Europe and Africa, Lieutenant General (Retired) Ben Hodges, believes that "wars are a test of logistics and will". He also said: "You can have good systems and

platforms but if you don't have good logistics they are simply monuments." Both statements are truisms that draw as much relevance from current events as they do from the enduring character of warfare.

Whether the focus is on 'winning the first battle' (as Army Futures calls it) and denying the enemy their theory of victory or the notion that long-term prospects are improved when the first battle is lost but the will to prevail is hardened (as the US would have it), there are profound implications on the hierarchy and primacy of logistics in any chosen hypothesis. The desires of Op Mobilise, the Field Army's How We Fight 2026 concept of employment, the NATO New Force Model and the new Land Operating Concept reveal much about the logistics capacity and capability required and the assumptions underpinning the ambition. What is concerning is the extent to which we are deficient in logistic capability, capacity and systems when it comes to what is likely required, even when accounting for what might be possible through graduated readiness, for warfighting. We have forgotten more than we have remembered. The chair of NATO's Military Committee Admiral Rob Bauer recently acknowledged that allies had for decades "neglected the larger-scale logistics that is connected to collective defence". He stated: "This is part

of the discussion on making sure that we understand what we need, which is part of the force structure requirements... this will require investments in logistic capabilities that we don't have anymore."

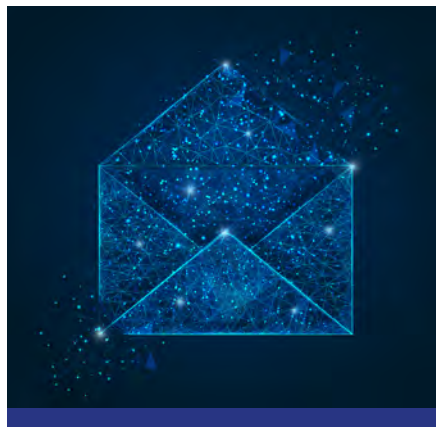
The war in Ukraine offers a timely window on the importance of the logistics contribution, to the extent that both Russia and Ukraine's strategies have rapidly become an appendix of logistics, industrial base capacities and supply chain management. This key character of warfare should serve to remind all that logistic preparation and capability are profoundly important well before the 'conflict continuum' approaches its zenith when we might need to win the first battle and/or maintain the means to prevail having lost it.

By now we should have moved beyond the belief that a sub-threshold reliance on 'operate' in-and-of itself is sufficient to deter, to one where credible deterrence comes from being able to fight, underpinned by having effective logistics capability from the get-go. And when armed conflict does eventuate, it will be as much about the fight to resupply – the defence of the logistic supply chains and the efficiency of the logistics process – as it is about winning on the battlefield.

As The Royal Logistic Corps commemorates its 30 years of being it is right that we turn our eye to tomorrow and consider what that might look like, and I am fortunate to be able to share with *British Army Review* readers a 'digital dispatch' from the future. To be precise, a missive filed by the future Master General of Logistics in 2038 during a visit to British logistics forces in a demilitarised zone – on the border between Donovia (akin to Russia) and Pertuni<sup>1</sup> (akin to Ukraine) – and sent to the future Chief of the General Staff.

As I reach the end of this extended tour, I thought I should share with you how UK logistics has played a significant part in supporting the wider NATO mission to secure the peace between Donovia and Pertuni. The ravages of war and years of low-level conflict have led to the almost complete destruction of critical national infrastructure – so our achievements here, under what is in essence a logistics heavy sustainment mission, have been profound and should be viewed in that context.

I'd also offer up front that our success has much to do with the almost prophetic foresight shown by our predecessors who led the important process and structural changes necessary, which, in turn, filled the critical capability gaps in our operational logistic structures. That was borne out by recognition back then that



**"It is right that we turn our eye to tomorrow and consider what that might look like, and I am fortunate to be able to share with *British Army Review* readers a 'digital dispatch' from the future."**

effective deterrence requires effective logistics. That realisation, coupled with the investment that followed, was the catalyst for our re-imagined role in NATO. We were wise to use the lessons from Ukraine and the expansion of the Alliance to proposition ourselves as a lead logistic nation (regionally orientated) in a framework agreement for the north and north-eastern flank territories. The UK is viewed by our allies as highly credible having invested and then specialised in warfighting multi-domain logistics. In reality it underpins our Tier 1 status.

I do note with a wry smile, however, that our veteran community still points out how remarkably similar it all looks to old Allied Command Europe Mobile Force Land modus operandi. A concept whereby the UK was lead nation for logistics for a multinational medium scale warfighting force, prior to us pulling the plug<sup>2</sup> and leaving it untenable and dispensing with much of the hard-earned muscle memory.

Given we were fighting by proxy a major war across Eastern Europe and the challenges with what turned out to be the longest post war recession, Defence Support recognised the headwinds we're still experiencing and characterised it by applying the term the 'new normal' within its supply chain strategy. The realisation then was that we would experience perpetually disrupted global supply chains, which forced us to place a value upon effectiveness, resilience (by design) and sustainability over cost efficiency.

Thank goodness we also banished notions of 'just in time' logistics predicated upon false assumptions of 30-day lead times for contingent

stocks. That outdated assumption was just as harmful in the thinking back then as that hackneyed phrase of 'reducing logistic drag', which had simply become a maxim for cutting logistic capability one didn't think one needed, whilst getting you off the hook from investing in what was needed.

Anyway, because I know that you walk-the-walk in championing capabilities underpinning logistic-led land operations I wanted to briefly explain how it's being employed here in the demilitarised zone. You'll recall that at a conceptual level How we Fight 2026 and the Land Operating Concept of the mid 2020s recognised the primacy of logistics as a multi-domain capability. Insightfully we agreed then that the primacy of its functions created a theory of victory regardless of which conceptual framework you applied. Whether you're aspiring to win the first or second battles or betting that your long-term chances of victory will be achieved only through a hardening of resolve, underpinned by a strategically expanded defence industrial base capacity, the common-to-all transformative connective tissue is the nature of the whole force logistics capability which defines the successful outcomes.

Coming out here I realised how central logistics was in deterring further Donovia aggression, and any other potential adversary for that matter. It cannot be disputed that having adequate logistic capability and visibility across global supply chains are critical to enabling land forces to operate with maximin freedoms. My observation is that we have been highly effective in getting where we need to go quickly. Ever since the Vilnius Summit of 2023, when we took heed of General Cavoli's calls for logistical infrastructure investment, we have built up, year-on-year, our enduring regional partnerships with allies, sustaining them in-place through forward basing of stocks and equipment, whilst operating at high-readiness in neighbouring countries. Having capability to sustain our forces effectively and being able to project them rapidly throughout the demilitarised zone and wider Europe is core to our effective deterrence right now. It is clear to me that the logistic function is underpinning the maxim 'get there fast, maximise choice', which was set out in the Project Wavell hypothesis a decade or so ago.

It is also apparent that the logistic function is central to the preservation of life out here when placed into the context of protecting the civilian

<sup>1</sup>Use here of the NATO approved *Decisive Action Training Environment Europe Regional Map* scenario names.

<sup>2</sup>The *Telegraph* wrote that NATO had to disband the AMF(L) after Britain withdrew its contribution to ensure troops were available to join the Gulf War coalition.

population. If we're successful in protecting the civilian population it builds and strengthens allegiance to the NATO effort, while support to systems and structural repair/damage limitation minimises the incipient chaos of crisis and conflict. This is the case both during a kinetic phase and in creating the peace afterwards.

In essence the logistic-led effect we are applying into the demilitarised zone, which is focused on the provision of goods, delivery of services, building/maintenance of infrastructure [and the economy to provision that capability], is rapidly becoming a force multiplier. People and life are leading efforts here, with logistics providing the necessary function in support of those aims.

Notwithstanding that it is our logistic-led effort that is at the heart of NATO's role in the demilitarised zone, the difficulty, or the challenge, still lies in sorting out capabilities, new roles and opportunities for loggies in senior/institutional NATO leadership positions, and specific contingency strategies/doctrines. Which is a good prompt for me to look down and in, for I know that you'll be interested in the role The Royal Logistic Corps is playing. You'll also recall that the RLC led the Army's drive to embrace the opportunities for sustainability when it came to delivering logistic effect. Well, it is that initiative that has ultimately delivered the profound operational advantages in support of life that I have seen.

For example, our energy specialists (petroleum operators in old money) have operated our first micro nuclear generator, which 'powers' the 5,000 troops stationed here and our electric/hybrid vehicle fleet. This has released combat forces from protecting the contracted fuel trucks and those diesel ground fuel farms of yesteryear – by my rough calculations that's more than three million litres of diesel which we have not had to move this year alone. Of course some hydrocarbon usage still exists, chiefly for local needs, so our energy specialists have been advising on that too.

Our logistic support specialists are at the forefront of the supply chain operation, ensuring compatibility across NATO with procurement and demand management decisions for user items being UK-led, artificial intelligence-enabled and NATO common-funded. They draw heavily on the Ukrainian lessons of exploiting artificial intelligence enablement of indirect fire chains to predict and thus reduce ammo demand. As you'd expect the resulting effect has seen massive economies of scale in the amount of stock we demand and hold forward, in large part supported by the collection of supply chain intelligence data that we're sharing with industry



**“Another demonstrable example of logistic innovation in action [is] that the RLC's nutritional specialists played a key role in establishing the UK's first operational vertical farm. We now get a chunk of our carbohydrate and all our vegetables and fruits from this unit.”**

and between allies. We are now able to gain an upstream perspective of the entire NATO inventory and associated supply chain network to gauge how resilient it is.

The need for the Future Soldier-era stores troop has also been comprehensively overtaken with the development of deployable 'factory in a box' ISO-type advanced manufacturing units. The direction taken back in 2024 to design into our kit the need for parts to be 3D printable has made a huge difference to the deployed inventory. Commander NATO Joint Force Support was telling me that movement and holdings of inventory have reduced by nearly 40 per cent from a decade ago; coming on the back of NATO's wholesale digitisation of the engineering and logistic enterprise that concluded a couple of years ago. Equipment availability has shot up and commissions are coming in from the local leaders where life enhancing capabilities are identified.

You already know Business Modernisation for Support is deployed and proving remarkably resilient to cyber disruption, and our people are relishing the empowerment that full visibility brings. This shift was supercharged by rebalancing our logistic data professionals (formerly systems analysts) away from their outdated role in 30 Signal Regiment back in the 2020s. Their growth, refocus on data and redistribution to enable and oversee all the logistic nodes has seen the volume, velocity, variety, value and veracity of data transformed. By way of another demonstrable example of

logistic innovation in action I am proud to record that the RLC's nutritional specialists (those once in the chef trade) played a key role in establishing the UK's first operational vertical farm. We (and the local populace) now get a chunk of our carbohydrate and all our vegetables and fruits from this unit – and the farm occupies a space less than half a football pitch in size. We've reduced fresh food movements by nearly 70 per cent in the first year – our partners in Leidors tell me that it's great to be moving mission essential stores rather than carrots! Meanwhile, combat commanders, those in force generation formations, and our allies marvel at the improved health and deployability of our people as a result of the specialist nutritional advice delivered by their fellow soldiers. Finally, there has been vindication of the decision to add the specialist qualification of 'gardener' to the trade – with so many soldiers having transitioned to plant-based diets, our nutritional specialists have been gainfully employed inside the vertical farms.

Some of the most ubiquitous logistic capabilities we have employed in the demilitarised zone are some of those considered defunct as Army 2020 and Future Soldier optimised to 'operate'. Your work in the Army headquarters back in 2024 to rebalance and grow the capability needed to confront the return of visceral, high-intensity land warfare in Europe has paid off. It tangibly demonstrated that we were serious about joining battles as a land component and fighting hard to survive. The most obvious of those logistic deficiencies that we reinstated to the order of battle was the assault pioneer capability. Not

having a deployable mortuary affairs and graves registration capability for more than 15 years between 2011 and 2026, for example, was something we should never have ignored. Moreover, and more generally, assault pioneer skills are in huge demand out here right now in a people-centric notion of logistic-led operations. Their nexus of logistic and combat knowledge makes the case that one battalion equivalent capability really isn't enough. That said, what we have goes a long way when leading a logistic framework that our allies can plug into.

The other resuscitated asset proving its weight in gold is our railway capability. Ironically it was the Surgeon General back in 2023 that opened our eyes to rail being central to causality evacuation across the European theatre. From a logistics perspective we have been able to integrate our capability with that of Pertuni and wider NATO/industry partners to both repair the rail infrastructure in the demilitarised zone and to establish the lines of communication throughout Europe that assures supply all the way back to the UK strategic base. It is inconceivable to think now we might have aspired to project quickly without a dedicated rail capability and sufficient numbers in this key trade.

The ability to fight hard and survive as logisticians is unquestioned and is predicated on our ability to disperse, deceive and disrupt, underpinned by secure data and robust systems. As such our commitment to enhancing our operational logistic capability a decade ago using robotic autonomous systems is now paying dividends. Our driver, tank transporter and communications specialists have fully embraced optionally crewed leader/follower-capable large goods vehicles to enable our logistic personnel to increase delivery throughput. We are also seeing smaller autonomous systems, such as drones, being optimised to undertake the last-mile logistic tasks such as distributing blood products and critical spares to the buffer zones. Furthermore, our ammunition technicians are employing drones for explosive ordnance disposal disruptor tasks and mapping explosive facilities and mine marking. While our air despatchers – clever, air-minded soldiers who understand how things move – are

**“One aspect worthy of recording is the utility we are gaining from having invested in autonomous and crewed Mexeflote, arguably one of the most versatile craft operating in the Black Sea.”**

playing a similar role with heavy-lift drones. The use of our air despatchers forward to rig drones with equipment support materiel and get it back to the repair depots directly is a game changer for both operational effect and sustainability. This has only been possible through the integration of sensors to enable data capture and usage at a standard and volume that we've not seen before.

One aspect worthy of recording is the utility we are gaining from having invested in autonomous and crewed Mexeflote, arguably one of the most versatile craft operating in the Black Sea. In the early phases of this deployment it moved vast quantities (up to 250 tonnes) of reconstruction material from one end of the demilitarised zone to the other, saving land vehicles transiting 18 hours across rough terrain. Finally, the port operators and divers have been working tirelessly with the new Fleet Solid Support ships, in particular RFA *Princess Anne*, to act as a ship-to-shore temporary energy transfer node moving green ammonia in underwater pipelines to collection points ashore.

I have to say too that NATO values enormously our digital communication specialists for only the US can match us in delivering operational effect in information activities and operations, media operations and supporting mission critical intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance support, by means of content capture, digital editing, design and production.

Of course, all of this is in stark contrast to Donovia over the border. I suspect they are still ruing the decisions they made back in 2022/3 to disinvest in their logistic capabilities. They are still catching up. But to illustrate my point, our US intelligence colleagues believe that Donovia

continues to be fixed by logistic considerations when it comes to operational manoeuvre. Very 20th century!

Who would have guessed that effective deterrence needed effective logistics and that our pre-eminence in NATO as a Tier 1 partner was being underpinned by the lead nation for logistics role the UK provides? Well, thank goodness our predecessors did! On that note I'll sign off and I look forward to hosting you at the Corps' 45th birthday commemorations.

Of course, the 'tomorrow' painted is one view of the future operating context. But it is one that needs to be shaped by a realisation of how far we have fallen, logistically, from a decade ago when a land force could sustain a fight and do so in days as opposed to months, offering choices in enabling the win – however long it took. Nor do I shy away from believing that the opportunity afforded to us by being an early adopter of sustainable logistic capabilities should be underestimated. The introduction of sustainable and green technologies should be viewed as a force multiplier under the notion of sustainable logistics in all people-centric operating environments.

So where does that leave the Corps and what more must we do to address the challenges we face? The period between now and 2026 will be challenging for the land domain as it makes its case for a war-fighting land-centric capability. The demand for the British Army will not reduce and Russian aggression in Europe has re-ordered how the Service must prioritise the challenges it faces. Hence why the main effort is to be ready to fight and win wars on land. What is all to play for is the desire that we should/could field a land force with 'full spectrum' capabilities.

Clearly my purported 'letter from the future' offers a view on that. The first challenge is to find the honesty necessary to recognise how far we have fallen logistically from what it takes to fight at scale and what we ought to be advocating for when rebalancing in the course correction currently underway.





# MARKETING THE MILITARY TO A MODERN AMERICAN AUDIENCE



## AUTHOR

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*“But he asks the impossible! I need more men!”  
– An Imperial officer to Darth Vader in  
Star Wars: Episode VI, Return of the Jedi*

**A**S the British Army is discovering, enticing people into the business of bombs and bullets when the generally much safer and serene world of business is booming is a tough sell. A buoyant employment market across the UK represents stiff competition for the Service – particularly when it comes to filling technical roles such as those in the field of cyber security – and Capita, which manages recruitment for the Armed Forces, concedes convincing candidates to shun the ‘commercial coin’ in favour of the ‘King’s shilling’ is currently a challenge.<sup>1</sup>

Attracting the right people into the ranks and retaining their services is not, however, a problem exclusive to Britain’s barracks. Across the Atlantic, for example, the US Army – a one million-member organisation<sup>2</sup> – is struggling to maintain mass for a multitude of reasons, including low levels of fitness, lack of

education, and increased mental health issues and related opioid usage amongst the 18-35 demographic.<sup>3</sup> It is a recruitment battle that the United States, which stands at a tense moment in its history, would rather not be fighting. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has thrust back into Europe the spectre of large scale conventional war. Spillover of the conflict into neighbouring countries of Ukraine is a credible threat to both the United States as well its NATO allies in Europe, particularly Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia,<sup>4</sup> and could trigger US involvement, as an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all.<sup>5</sup> This could consequently engulf the

<sup>1</sup>The Telegraph, [telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/08/13/army-struggling-hire-cyber-staff-attacks-britain-ramp-up](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2023/08/13/army-struggling-hire-cyber-staff-attacks-britain-ramp-up)

<sup>2</sup>Duffin, E. (2021). US Military Forces by Service Branch and Reserve Component. [statista.com/statistics/232330/us-military-force-numbers-by-service-branch-and-reserve-component](https://www.statista.com/statistics/232330/us-military-force-numbers-by-service-branch-and-reserve-component)

<sup>3</sup>Longley, R. (2021). Up to 75 Percent of US Youth Ineligible for Military Service, [thoughtco.com/us-youth-ineligible-for-military-service-3322428](https://www.thoughtco.com/us-youth-ineligible-for-military-service-3322428)

<sup>4</sup>Szumski, C. (2022). [euractiv.com/section/politics/short-news/ex-nato-general-risk-that-russia-invades-baltics-is-real](https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short-news/ex-nato-general-risk-that-russia-invades-baltics-is-real)



Army into a land conflict similar in magnitude to the battles of World War II. Such wars require countries to draw upon vast resources that must be brought to bear on the battlefield. Personnel, more specifically soldiers, would rate very high on the list of wartime needs for a mostly conventional, land-centric conflict. For the United States, this would involve fielding a massive army to fight against Russia – one far greater in size than it could currently muster. And, of course, Vladimir Putin’s military might is not the only sizeable thorn irritating the side of global security. China’s ambitions for Taiwan continue to ratchet tensions between Beijing and Washington, and the entire Middle East region is on tenterhooks – and at risk of widespread conflict – in the wake of Hamas’ assault on Israel and the Israel Defense Forces’ retaliatory strikes in Gaza. While the possibility of America being drawn directly into a major war is still relatively remote, the international unrest draws into sharp focus the existing shortfalls the US Army has experienced over the past decade in recruiting civilians and retaining existing soldiers. To meet the mission requirements of today and the potentially expanded demands of tomorrow, the US Army must become better at marketing its brand to potential consumers. To plot a path forward in pursuit of this aim, an examination of past struggles, perceived value propositions and current marketing schemes is required. This would help to identify problems with previous efforts and shed light on ways forward that will equip the US Army with an effective marketing campaign that can provide it with the human resources needed for success on the battlefields now and in the future.

Problem formulation is a necessary step in constructing an effective solution.<sup>6</sup> Using a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat (or SWOT<sup>7</sup>) analysis of Army recruiting, reveals a value proposition that can vary greatly among its ‘consumers’, those being the civilians it seeks to enlist. In general terms, employment in the Army is viewed very favourably, with a large percentage of the American populace considering the military the most trustworthy public institution.<sup>8</sup> Soldiers can fulfil patriotic aspirations while earning competitive pay and benefits, and learning job skills that are often desired by private sector employers. However, employment-related strengths can quickly become weaknesses when the US economy is expanding and much more lucrative jobs in the private sector become widespread. In the current inflation-ravaged economic environment, which is still reeling from the effects of COVID-19 and has been exacerbated by war in Europe, opportunity presents itself for Army



**“To meet the mission requirements of today and the potentially expanded demands of tomorrow, the US Army must become better at marketing its brand to potential consumers.”**

recruiters. But this is tempered by hesitation on the part of volunteers to serve due to concerns of being deployed to a war zone in Ukraine, which constitutes a clear threat to boosting recruitment numbers. Furthermore, a dwindling pool of qualified applicants presents another obstacle.<sup>9</sup> However, a review of current marketing schemes reveals opportunities for the Army to improve its recruiting efforts. In summary, the various components of this analysis reveal strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that can be weighted differently by each consumer. This demands a nuanced approach by Army recruiters to the target audience that casts the Service’s value proposition in the best light through the lens of each market segment, which is the critical aim of this author’s proposed marketing campaign. Inflexible and indiscriminate standards and pitches for all applicants defeat any

<sup>5</sup>NATO. (2022). *Collective defence - Article 5*. [nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_110496.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm)

<sup>6</sup>Singhvi, S. & Gena, R. (2005). *researchgate.net/publication/273592545\_Problem\_Formulation\_and\_Categorization\_An\_Empirical\_Study\_of\_Marketing\_Problems\_in\_an\_Organization*

<sup>7</sup>Schooley, S. (2022). *SWOT Analysis: What It Is and When To Use It*. [businessnewsdaily.com/4245-swot-analysis.html](https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4245-swot-analysis.html)

<sup>8</sup>Andrews, C. (2019). [eu.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/07/08/military-is-public-institution-americans-trust-most/39663793](https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/2019/07/08/military-is-public-institution-americans-trust-most/39663793)

<sup>9</sup>Tiron, R. (2022). [about.bgov.com/news/army-steps-up-lures-to-recruit-soldiers-as-candidate-pool-ebbs](https://about.bgov.com/news/army-steps-up-lures-to-recruit-soldiers-as-candidate-pool-ebbs)

<sup>10</sup>Ash, B. (2019). *Navigating Current and Emerging Army Recruiting Challenges*. [rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR3100/RR3107/RAND\\_RR3107.pdf](https://rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR3100/RR3107/RAND_RR3107.pdf)

efforts at recruitment segmentation. It is by incorporating segmentation of consumers and flexibility in evaluating their needs that a more effective recruitment platform can be constructed and implemented.

Historical recruiting guidelines for the US Army naturally create a specific but somewhat broad target audience of 18-35 year old women and men. However, data from several sources, including extensive information from a 2019 RAND study<sup>10</sup>, reveal segmentation within this age range, with corresponding characteristics for each, as well as corresponding perceptions of each segment by Army recruiters. For example, the 18-21 year old demographic is often lacking college degrees and usually fill enlisted billets that are often toward the bottom of the pay scale. The 22-25 year old demographic offers more college graduates, but still a large percentage of candidates who would fill lower billets. As the demographics increase in age, between 26-29 years old and especially 30-35 years old, more candidates have college credits or diplomas as well as previous employment experience. This usually entitles these individuals to a higher initial rank with greater pay, benefits and responsibility, as well as leadership application. But this overall market segmentation should not suggest a difference in value for each group; all billets need to be filled for the Army to meet its manning requirements. Successfully targeting one segment does not solve the Army’s recruiting problem. Hence, a campaign should target each segment, but with a tailored pitch that increases their perception of the Army’s value proposition by presenting strengths as being greater than weaknesses.

*“Even when you are marketing to your entire audience, you are still simply speaking to a single human being at any given time.” – Ann Handley*

The target market for my proposed campaign has four key market segments grouped by the age demographics previously mentioned. While there can be some exceptions, these age groups have specific characteristics which offer opportunities for potential pitches. Brand personality dimensions, as well as the preferred mode of communication, will vary with each grouping. Some enticements to join span all segments; signing bonuses in particular seem effective regardless of the demographic of the candidate and epitomise an overall promotion-focused approach.<sup>11</sup> However, this is more exception than rule. Market segmentation is a tailored solution that the Army should embrace. A breakdown of each segment offers a potential way forward.

The **18-21 segment** generally consists of individuals with a high school degree, little or no collegiate education, strong computer skills, and in the market for both job skills and employment. Statistically, this segment has been trending away from military service.<sup>12</sup> To address this issue, the Army can emphasise the multitude of employment opportunities that it offers, to include highly marketable skills such as aviation, engineering and law enforcement. Given the overall social media presence of this segment, the Army should prioritise adverts on digital communication channels to best reach the

target audience. Adverts on traditional communication channels such as television could also be effective, especially if shown during entertainment and sporting events. Lastly, with many in the 18-21 segment living with their parents, the recruiting pitch should emphasise the many non-combat occupations in the Army that build civilian skills. This could satiate the concerns of parents, many of whom still have a strong influence on their child’s decision-making.<sup>13</sup>

The **22-25 segment** shares many similarities with the 18-21 segment, but often have some level of collegiate education up to and including a degree. A college degree translates to higher initial rank for those joining the US Army, which usually incurs positions of leadership. The Army can adjust its pitch to this segment by extolling the managerial aspects of employment one can be exposed to in the military, in addition to job training and gaining work experience for civilian application. Like the 18-21 segment, adverts via social media and television commercials during entertainment and sporting events should be effective, but with a greater emphasis on the benefits of being a leader both in and outside of the Army. Recruiting booths at job fairs should also be employed. This segment is more likely than the 18-21 segment to live on their own. This may give them a greater sense of urgency to find employment, which could lead to greater participation in job fairs.

The **26-29 segment** combines some elements of

the previous two, but with a higher percentage being college educated and possessing a greater amount of civilian employment experience. A fairly typical candidate in this segment has completed their college studies but has found it difficult to secure what they determine to be suitable employment, especially in turbulent economic times. For this segment, gaining experience in the Army that translates to civilian applications could be a strong pitch. In addition to the methods utilised with the previous segments, the pitch should include adverts in news apps and publications, with a focus on job skill transferability and enhancement. An emphasis on non-combat occupations could prove to be a strong motivator for consumers in this segment.

The **30-35 segment** is generally the best educated, most experienced and conducts the greatest level of research to support their decision about joining the military, including reaching out to recruiters. This segment often has a percentage of individuals who have had more difficulty meeting the standards for joining the Army, with some requiring age waivers for certain positions such as officer billets. Frequently, individuals in this segment are concerned that their experience in the civilian sector will not be taken into consideration and that they’ll be ‘starting over’ by joining the Army. It is imperative for a pitch to this segment to emphasise the similarities

<sup>11</sup>Marcus, J. (2022). [independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-army-new-recruits-50k-reward-b1993591.html](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-army-new-recruits-50k-reward-b1993591.html)

<sup>12</sup>O'Donnell, W. (2021). [wesodonnell.medium.com/why-dont-america-s-young-people-want-to-join-the-military-fa1c9ab80d3](https://www.wesodonnell.medium.com/why-dont-america-s-young-people-want-to-join-the-military-fa1c9ab80d3)

<sup>13</sup>Gibson, J, Griepentrog, B., Marsh, S. (2007). [researchgate.net/publication/222874354\\_Parental\\_influence\\_on\\_youth\\_proensity\\_to\\_join\\_the\\_military/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222874354_Parental_influence_on_youth_proensity_to_join_the_military/citation/download)





between civilian and military employment, as well as pathways the Army offers for those with college degrees and extensive employment experience. These include opportunities to join the military as an officer through Officer Candidate School and other programmes which involve specialising in a field that is the military equivalent of their civilian employment.<sup>14</sup> One such opportunity is the 38G programme, which in the estimation of many is not well understood or advertised by the majority of Army recruiters and, consequently, their recruits.

#### KNOW YOUR FOES... AND YOUR FRIENDS TOO

Extensive research is required to successfully create and implement this marketing campaign. The research can be bifurcated into two main groups: those who choose to join the military and are current military personnel, and those who explore joining but do not and remain in the civilian world. Exploratory research should consist of conducting interviews (if possible) with both groups; if this is not possible, brief but directed confidential surveys could be utilised. These should be distributed via random sampling. Focus groups should be avoided due to the tendencies of group-think, especially amongst military personnel.<sup>15</sup> Secondary data also has limited utility, as it is unlikely there is significant pools to draw upon.

Conducting in-depth interviews and/or confidential surveys require different techniques to maximise data points. For those who serve in the military, interviews or surveys can be mandated by the Department of the Army. Currently, service members conduct mandatory training each year, both in-person and online; these interviews and surveys could be simply added as another requirement. Army personnel are a captive audience; while

**“The Army could offer financial incentives – such as gift cards – to those who joined, and those who didn’t, for participation in interviews and surveys to capture key metrics and hone future marketing pitches.”**

having some resources to lodge complaints, soldiers have little legal ground to stand upon if wanting to protest completing an interview or survey. Furthermore, given the service-oriented and hierarchical nature of being a soldier, the prevailing culture makes it unlikely that there would be any significant push back on completing an interview or survey. However, civilians who choose not to join the Army present a different and more complicated problem set. They are under no obligation to discuss a ‘product’ they chose not to buy, nor is it likely they have the requisite level of motivation to do so. The US Army has little leverage or much to offer this group but does have one powerful motivator: money. With access to a sizable chunk of the defence budget (circa \$700,000,000 in 2023),<sup>16</sup> the Army could offer financial incentives – such as gift cards – to those who joined, and those who didn’t, for participation in interviews and

surveys to capture key metrics and hone future marketing pitches. This could be by way of a third party vendor that might be willing to participate to gain favour with the United States government. While the cost might seem excessive, the data gained by utilising interviews and surveys to conduct conjoint analysis could be critical in identifying more effective recruitment themes and techniques in the future. This could provide a long-term financial benefit that offsets upfront costs.

Perhaps of greater impact would be a proactive approach that involves conducting interviews and surveys before applicants begin the process of recruitment and eventually make their decision to join or not to join. This approach could provide baseline metrics that can then be measured against post-decision interviews and surveys to identify specific steps in the recruitment process that either encouraged joining or not joining the Army. Given that this segment is still contemplating military service, it is conceivable that a sizable portion would be willing to participate and discuss their expectations of the process. This can then be compared and contrasted with their ‘exit’ interview. It is through this method that problematic themes or techniques in the recruitment process can be identified and addressed appropriately.

#### THE TEMPTATION OF ‘EASY’ SOLUTIONS

Such a segmented approach is certainly not original. There is no shortage of criticism of current US Army recruiting, much of which incorporates in various levels the

<sup>14</sup>United States Army. (2022). *Army Civil Affairs Officers – Reserves*. [talent.army.mil/job/civilaffairs-reserve](https://talent.army.mil/job/civilaffairs-reserve)

<sup>15</sup>Mulrine, A. (2008). *usnews.com*

<sup>16</sup>Department of Defense. (2023). *defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2980014/the-department-of-defense-releases-the-presidents-fiscal-year-2023-defense-budg/#:*



**“Should recruits looking to fulfil non-combat positions, such as roles in IT and cyber, be held to the same physical standards as those in the infantry? There is a growing consensus that the current inflexibility disqualifies many applicants who are otherwise qualified.”**

recommendations previously mentioned. But the level of segmentation actually applied is questionable and still does not address a recruiting issue that spans all segments of potential recruits: qualified applicants. This pool has significantly decreased in recent years.<sup>17</sup> This is the result of myriad issues, including increased rates of mental illness, opiate and recreational drug use, and obesity. Critics can and often do point to conscription as a solution to recruiting shortfalls. This option has consistently been mentioned over the past decade but has failed to garner enough support for implementation.

While these arguments have some validity, there are counter-arguments to these counter-attacks that can mitigate the issues raised. Perhaps the easiest to refute is conscription. Historically, conscription in the United States is viewed unfavourably by both civilians and military personnel alike. This is consistent with many countries, most recently Russia, as conscription for the conflict in Ukraine has generated a sharp public rebuke. The United States’ experience of conscription in Vietnam was problematic both in the military and in civil society, as well as politically.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, there have been historic poor performance issues, as conscripts are generally considered inferior to volunteers who are more motivated to be a soldier. The other aspects of the counter-attack, although less straightforward than conscription, can be mitigated by a

variety of approaches. The key to each approach is not only the segmentation of the target audience but the specific nuances applied to each. For example, should recruits looking to fulfil non-combat positions, such as roles in IT and cyber, be held to the same physical standards as those in the infantry? There is a growing consensus that the current inflexibility disqualifies many applicants who are otherwise qualified.<sup>19</sup> The Army is already facing a dwindling applicant pool; decreasing it further due to institutional inertia and a reluctance to remove obstacles that do not affect job performance is a self-inflicted wound that should not happen. While the Army has made some progress in this area,<sup>20</sup> more is required. As its enemies grow in number, size and stature, the Army cannot afford to let bureaucratic rigidity deprive its own ranks of those best capable of fulfilling specific occupations.

#### **AN UNCERTAIN ROAD AHEAD**

While the current economic environment might encourage enlistment in the Army, geopolitical events do not. The lingering war in Ukraine and persistent threats by Russian President Vladimir Putin of a wider (and potentially nuclear) conflict with NATO most likely eliminate the fence-sitters and leave only the most determined of volunteers. Civilian employers, without stating this specifically, offer opportunities that statistically don’t subject applicants to potential job-related

death; quite fairly, this can be a powerful motivator. Army recruiters cannot in good faith make such a promise, while boosting enlistment bonuses doesn’t appear to be a cure-all answer to this and other objections to service.<sup>21</sup> But the Army still has much to offer this generation of potential soldiers. Segmenting its consumers, delivering tailored pitches, and removing needless hurdles to joining can help Army recruiting reach its goals and tap into a greater and more diverse pool than it can now. Instead of weakening the Army, these measures stand a good chance of contributing to an Army that is more diverse, more intelligent, and more effective than previous versions. This is critically needed in an increasingly complex geopolitical environment that only stands to challenge the United States in grander and more sophisticated ways in the coming days, weeks, months and years.

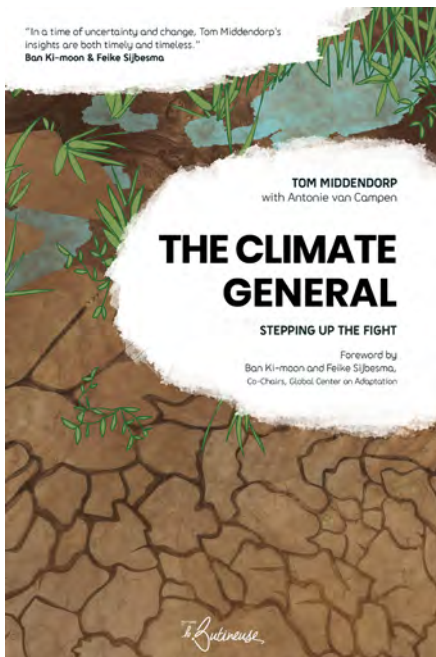
<sup>17</sup>Grady, J. (2019). *news.usni.org/2019/06/17/panel-says-u-s-military-recruitment-pool-must-broaden#:*

<sup>18</sup>Erikson, R. S., & Stoker, L. (2011). *Caught in the Draft: The Effects of Vietnam Draft Lottery Status on Political Attitudes.* *jstor.org/stable/41495063*

<sup>19</sup>*taskandpurpose.com/joining-the-military/change-physical-standards-recognize-jobs-dont-require-combat-fitness*

<sup>20</sup>*independent.co.uk/news/army-af-washington-rand-national-guard-b2042243.html*

<sup>21</sup>*military.com/daily-news/2022/04/26/army-keeps-boosting-recruiting-bonuses-it-struggles-find-new-soldiers.html*



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Paperback, 318 pages, £24.99,  
ISBN: 978-2-493291-55-4

## TITLE

The Climate General: Stepping Up the Fight

## AUTHORS

Tom Middendorp with Antonie van Campen

## REVIEWER

Dr Timothy Clack,  
University of Oxford and CHACR

# A CLIMATE CALL TO ARMS

*Climate General* is a clear, wide-ranging and engaging text authored by a former chief of the defence staff of the Netherlands, General Tom Middendorp, and his speechwriter, Antonie van Campen. Targeted at a mainstream readership, the book is structured into two parts: part one (12 chapters) describes how climate change is creating and amplifying insecurity around the world and part two (10 chapters) focuses on possible military and wider responses.

The book draws heavily on the lead author's operational experiences in Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia and Syria but also offers analyses of other conflicts (such as Ukraine), confrontations (e.g. High North, Central Asia) and disaster responses (e.g. US, Europe).

Some of the threats outlined include: droughts and floods, food/water and other resource scarcity, and pandemics and pests, which, in turn, lead to diplomatic friction, economic insecurity, social unrest, internal and cross-border migration, violent extremist organisation growth and recruitment, and human security violations. A battery of threats which are, without relevant and resilient infrastructural development, compounded by population growth and geo-political and ideological polarisation. Unsurprisingly, given the threats and fact that climate is a truly global commons, the book stresses the need for urgent, cooperative action.

Some of the defence-orientated solutions outlined include: changes to procurement frameworks (enabling local acquisition and enforce sustainability requirements), investment to encourage commercial collaborations, better forecasting (to facilitate prioritisation), preparation of response (e.g. information campaigns, rehearsal of contingency plans, making supplies available in forward localities etc), and effective and equitable water distribution.

The authors assert that "anyone who would dare to suggest that there is no such thing as climate change is guilty of wilful blindness". It might have been worthwhile here for them to unpack why some still dispute the science. The motivations of political expediency and financial opportunity shape decisions and, of course, powerful actors – state,

corporate, individual – have vested interests in the carbon economy. There is also what psychologists call 'implicatory denial', the recognition of a problem but denial of its consequences. The cumulative result is what Mark Carney, the former Governor of the Bank of England, has called the "tragedy of the horizons" – we recognise the threat but fail to act.

Some chapters are likely to be of more interest to military readers than others. The ways climate change erodes the capabilities of both people and kit and how, in reducing the "carbon footprint" on operations overseas, forces can win host country and local consent are worthy of attention. The book largely views themes through the prism of the Dutch experience. This is understandable given the authorship, autobiographical style and, indeed, the original target audience. (The book has been translated and updated from a Dutch language version published in 2022.) Far from reducing relevance, however, this confers some fascinating insights into relevant Dutch, EU and NATO capabilities and adaptation activities. It shows what can be achieved by states of different sizes and military forces at both deployed and home station.

The escalating tempo of Military Aid to the Civilian Authority and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations due to climate change is also recognised by the authors. In response to Hurricane Irma (2017) in the Caribbean, for example, Dutch marines had to prevent looting, airborne forces secured the airport and undertook wider force protection efforts, rotary winged aircraft crews delivered aid, medical personnel provided care, engineers repaired infrastructure, and logisticians (including from naval platforms) managed and distributed supplies. The potentially exhaustive draw on limited resources is clear. As such, questions of how such commitments detract from the military's primary warfighting and deterrence roles and how climate security response might also be exploited by adversaries might have been afforded greater focus.

The book is a powerful call to arms and asserts that world leaders should "wage a war" against "the degradation of the Earth". This resonates with a point I made to the UK's

House of Commons Defence Committee in February 2023: “If an adversary was attacking our cities with floods, fires and bio-weapons, threatening to take away our drinking water and destroy our food security, our agriculture and our food supply, causing untold economic harm, the response would be total war.”

The authors take an optimistic position whilst making clear that the climate security challenge is enormous, its effects are at once complex and frightening and mitigation costs vast (albeit cheaper than non-action over the long term). Beyond the book, positively, there is what might be called an emerging ‘general

perspective’ on the need to respond to climate change as a national security priority. Notwithstanding the proclamations of the current UN Secretary General and a number of his predecessors, Generals Bell (US), Ghazi (Pakistan), Muniruzzaman (Bangladesh), Nugee (UK) and Singh (India), for example, have also made great contributions in galvanising attention and defence-related climate action.

In short, *Climate General* is an excellent and accessible gateway into the issue of climate security. If there is a key takeaway, it is that adaptation is not a defeat but a critical line of defence.



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#### TITLE

Israelophobia: The newest version of the oldest hatred & what to do about it

#### AUTHOR

Jake Wallis Simons

#### REVIEWER

Captain Ben Tomlinson,  
Visiting Fellow, CHACR

## TIMELY TALE OF A NEW AGE OF ANTISEMITISM

“The old antisemitism,” writes Jake Wallis Simons in *Israelophobia*, “was a known quantity. It was cartoons of Jews with hooked noses and bags of money. It was Fagin and The Merchant of Venice.” However, in recent times, he asserts, this hatred has shifted.

It has become more discreet and more disguised. Instead, the author argues, anti-Jewish bigotry now focuses not so much on religion or race as it did in the Middle Ages or the 20th Century, but on the Jewish state of Israel. In fact, arguments against Israel are so littered with the tropes of historical antisemitism that the current anti-Israeli sentiment, or “Israelophobia” as Wallis Simons names it, must simply be recognised as the latest manifestation of antisemitism.

Wallis Simons is well placed to discuss modern iterations of antisemitism. Having worked as a Sky News and BBC Radio 4 commentator, he now presides as the editor of *The Jewish Chronicle* – the world’s oldest Jewish newspaper – where he reported extensively on antisemitism within Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party. Much of this work invigorated discussions around British antisemitism, which was sustained by David Baddiel in his 2021 prize-winning book, *Jews Don’t Count*. Baddiel’s work, which asserts that, in a time of intensely heightened awareness of minorities, Jewish people aren’t counted as a real minority, purposefully omits discussions around Israel as to focus his analysis

“in a way that some Jews can’t”. However, in omitting this topic, Wallis Simons describes *Jews Don’t Count* as having “vacated the bloodiest battlefield” of antisemitic refutation. *Israelophobia* therefore inhabits a divisive space, even amongst those defining the parameters of modern antisemitism.

There remains, without doubt, a serious issue of antisemitism in the UK. Whilst comprising just 0.5 per cent of the population, “British Jews face nearly a quarter of all hate crimes”, and the backlash in the wake of the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict only serves to highlight this phenomenon. Similarly, Wallis Simons expresses concerns over the prevalence and popularity of antisemitic narratives amongst educated and liberally progressive audiences. “A dislike for Israel,” he writes, “has become a core part of a suite of views held by the progressives who set the tenor of much of our culture,” so much so, that

“on campus, fighting the bogeyman of the Jewish state has become the most desirable of causes... a central plank in this new progressive credo”.

Nonetheless, *Israelophobia*’s equation of critiquing Israel and antisemitism appears to be a large step which can’t be bridged by its use of ‘whataboutery’. Wallis Simons’ argument is thought provoking and necessary. However, occasionally, it is made with more passion than substance.

RICHARD DANNATT  
& ROBERT LYMAN

# VICTORY TO DEFEAT THE BRITISH ARMY 1918-40

'An excellent book'  
Andrew Roberts



Published by Osprey  
Publishing, Hardback, £25,  
ISBN: 9781472860866

## TITLE

Victory to Defeat: The British Army  
1918-40

## AUTHORS

Richard Dannatt and Robert Lyman

## REVIEWER

Professor Andrew Stewart,  
Head of Conflict Research, CHACR

# HISTORY'S WARNING

In July 1939 General Edmund Ironside, recently returned from Gibraltar where he had been governor-general and now appointed to the role of Inspector-General Overseas Forces, made an initial visit to the War Office to better understand the military and strategic situation he faced. As he wrote in his diary, everyone he met "was in miserable confusion and nothing has been arranged whatsoever. The politicians have never consulted their military advisers and make pacts without their knowledge. How they have all allowed things to get into this state I cannot conceive...". As the authors of this interesting and important new book concur: "Wishful thinking does not buy peace, but hard power does. A well found army in being is a strong deterrent in its own right. It was absent in 1939 and disaster followed in 1940."

In examining a span of more than 20 years, beginning with the close of the First World War and concluding with the disaster of the forced evacuation from the Continent in 1940 but with a focus on the inter-war period, *Victory to Defeat* explains what happens when a military organisation forgets how to fight. After the "striking achievements" of 1918 and the First World War's victorious conclusion, the years of fiscal challenge and imperial overstretch that followed left the British Army unable to respond "in a sophisticated, integrated and coordinated manner against a first-class enemy". As hinted at in the opening dedications and quotations, and then explained succinctly within the opening pages, whilst never overlooking its many deficiencies, the writers provide a strong defence of the second British Expeditionary Force which had sailed for France following the outbreak of another European war. The story is familiar, the 'disaster' experienced by Britain and the British Army in 1940 has been a regular topic for reflection and debate more or less since it occurred. Indeed, there have been no shortage of writers, including a number of eminent military historians, who have documented and analysed the organisation's inter-war experiences. These include, perhaps most notably, Brian Bond and Corelli Barnett – but also David Fraser, Ian Beckett and Allan Mallinson (all of whom are referenced either in the notes or the helpful suggestions for further reading). With just over 150 footnotes and very limited reference to any original archival material, there is no particularly new research within the book's 17 chapters but what it offers is a different and equally valuable contribution to how these events are viewed. A very senior

and highly distinguished military officer and a military historian (who also spent an extended period serving in the Army) noted for his many publications, have in combination provided a shared perspective and analysis, a deeply reflective practitioner view which is presented as a well-written, very readable and often compelling story.

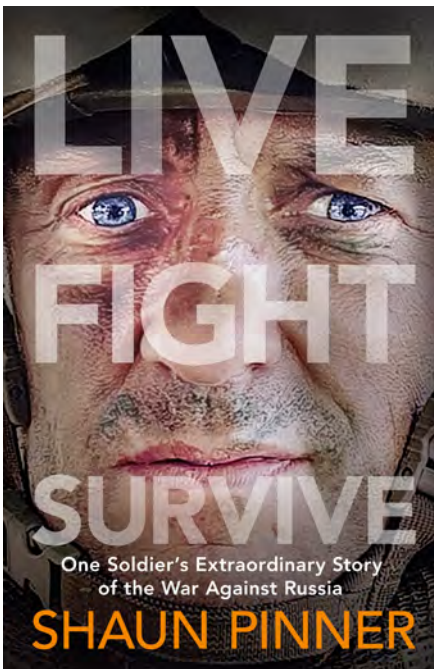
There are numerous insights about identified historical lessons that are applicable now. One particularly relevant example focuses on the discussion during the immediate post-First World War period about how to manage innovation and change and the calls for some form of "formal or sanctioned laboratory where ideas could be tested or developed". As the writers argue, creating such an environment would have added rigour to thinking and planning and – hopefully – established a process to remove "mad ideas" that would not work. As it was, a lack of money meant there was little support and evidence of a sanctioned and organised conceptual dimension. There was also little evidence of large-scale training which would have allowed new ideas to be rehearsed. Add to this a lack of substantive doctrine or campaign planning and the conditions were set for 1940 and a failure to adapt to the new battlefield. This is a common thread throughout: "The rapidly expanding army of 1939 had to build on the emasculated structure bequeathed in 1938, with an impoverished concept of warfighting, and little residual corporate knowledge about how to fight on a fast-flowing manoeuvre battlefield." The British Army found itself with a critical lack of knowledge, with a senior echelon devoid of imagination – deficient in both "thinking and doing" – and unable to respond to the revitalised Germany military threat.

In terms of the historical detail, the examination of the first battlefield – Norway – provides a concise critique of a significant campaign, one which was so well assessed in 2019 by John Kiszely. Here the authors are scathing about the lack of a plan and the almost complete absence of operational level command and control. Widely taught in staff colleges as one of, if not the first, example of successful joint operations on the German side, the conclusion here is that the Anglo-French experience "remains an object lesson to this day of how not to conceive, conduct and command a joint service operation". There are a few arguments that perhaps are not quite as convincing, notably the claim that better training, equipment and preparations might have

resulted in a different start and outcome to the Second World War – even going so far as to suggest “it might not have happened at all”. Whether the German leadership could have been deterred is certainly moot, delayed at best seemed more likely as the use of military action to achieve national aims was enshrined in national socialist thinking. Whatever the exact case, the second British Expeditionary Force, without any “defining methodology or philosophy of battle”, journeyed across the English Channel to what would remain to this day one of its worst military defeats.

There is another underlying message, referenced on the dust jacket and perhaps hinted at in the book’s title which appears a take on Bill Slim’s celebrated account of the Burma campaign. With some scattered brief

references, it is only really expanded upon in the prologue – this is also a cautionary tale and a warning for a contemporary audience of what can happen when military forces are not maintained and procurement programmes fall behind or are abandoned to the point where capability and effect become increasingly questionable. As Chief of the General Staff, General Lord Dannatt was a powerful voice in warning of the potentially disastrous consequences of politically imposed cuts to the Army. With the conflict now being fought in Ukraine, this provides an opportunity to look again at what can happen when there is political uncertainty about drawing on the military lever of power and armed forces prove ineffective when deployed. Potentially timely warnings indeed in an increasingly complex and dangerous global security environment.



Published by Penguin Michael Joseph, Hardback, £22, ISBN: 9780241668085

#### TITLE

Live. Fight. Survive.

#### AUTHOR

Shaun Pinner

#### REVIEWER

Captain Ben Tomlinson,  
Visiting Fellow, CHACR

Scan the QR code to watch the CHACR’s exclusive – and wide ranging – video interview with author Shaun Pinner.



## A LIFE LESS ORDINARY

“You’re probably wondering,” writes Shaun Pinner in *Live. Fight. Survive.* “how a bloke from Watford ended up scrapping with the Ukrainian Marines in the first place” – and the former British soldier isn’t wrong. But although the answer to that particular teaser might be out of the ordinary and the reason why many reach for this book, it is the extraordinary details of the author’s front-line experiences of the fight still raging in Europe’s eastern reaches that will keep most turning its pages.

Initially a private in the 1st Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment, Pinner completed tours of Northern Ireland and Bosnia before seeking adventure elsewhere and, following an excursion to Syria alongside “minimum wage mercs”, found himself training Ukraine’s Azov Battalion. It was while doing so that he fell in love with Mariupol and Larysa, who later became his wife – dual passions that led the author to establishing a new life in Ukraine by transferring to the 36th Marine Brigade, 1st Battalion. In his new role, Pinner found himself at the sharp end of the Ukrainian defence against the Russian invasion and, after weeks of savage fighting, surrounded at the infamous Azovstal Iron and Steel Works. His subsequent capture and incarceration were littered with beatings, stabbings and torture before he was sentenced to death by a Russian-controlled kangaroo court in mid-2022.

*Live. Fight. Survive.*, which owes its title to the last exchange Pinner had with his wife prior to capture, is a genuinely insightful account of the ongoing Ukrainian struggle against Russia which details the most human experiences of

war. Whilst brilliantly describing the fear and anticipation that built before the initial invasion, Pinner also flippantly recalls the resemblance between Russian artillery bombardment and Phil Collins’ *In the Air Tonight* without breaking step. Indeed, Pinner’s colloquial and conversational style is what establishes *Live. Fight. Survive.* as a valuable edition to the burgeoning genre of ‘first-hand war stories’, and his descriptions of how his captors, at times, resembled David Brent or the cast of *The Inbetweeners* deliver a relatable and engaging read.

Unlike other true-life tales of combat and capture, *Live. Fight. Survive.* capably communicates Pinner’s experiences without taking itself too seriously or presenting too polished an image. By his own admission, Pinner had only limited exposure to SERE [Survive, Evade, Resist, Escape] training prior to his ordeal, which makes his fears, and successes, more recognisable than those accounts of far more experienced operators. His unflinching discussions around how he recognised the onset of depressive bouts or his visceral descriptions of hunger and uncertainty really bring this home to the audience, and I finished this book far sooner than any other I’ve read of a similar vein.

At a time when much of the world’s attention has been diverted, *Live. Fight. Survive.* serves to remind readers of the intensity and severity of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Fortunately, due to its style and prose, consuming this reminder of an unfolding dark chapter in history is a perversely enjoyable experience.





The Land Warfare Centre Warfare Branch recently published the following manuals and handbooks.

### **Army Field Manual: Tropical Operations**

The tropical zone remains geo-strategically significant; lying between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, it accounts for more than 35 per cent of the world's land mass and is currently home to around 40 per cent of the world's population. Since 1945, tropical operations have usually been conducted below the threshold of armed conflict. Counter-insurgency, stability and humanitarian operations are likely to continue but, given the increasing state threat, future conflicts in a tropical environment may be more conventional. This predicated a combined arms and multi-domain approach. It is only in understanding how capabilities can be effectively combined that we can hope to win in a tropical environment, where the complex terrain creates a physically and mentally challenging operating environment.

### **Counter-insider Threat Handbook**

The *Counter-insider Threat Handbook* describes the principles and approaches to ensure an effective counter to any hostile action executed by seemingly friendly actors. Protection is central to preserving our fighting power and freedom of action; this includes maintaining the freedom to operate safely within any environment, including ostensibly safe locations. It is therefore vital that commanders and planners understand the requirements of countering the insider threat.

### **Counter-explosive Ordnance Handbook**

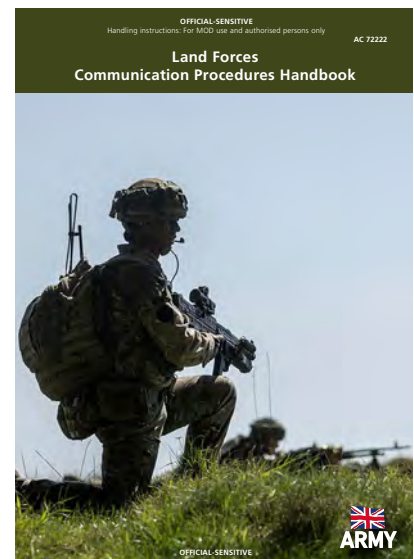
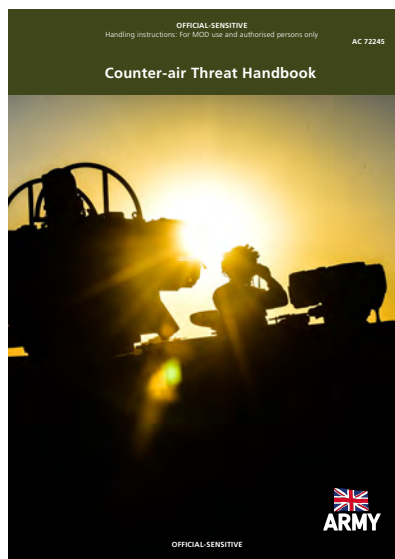
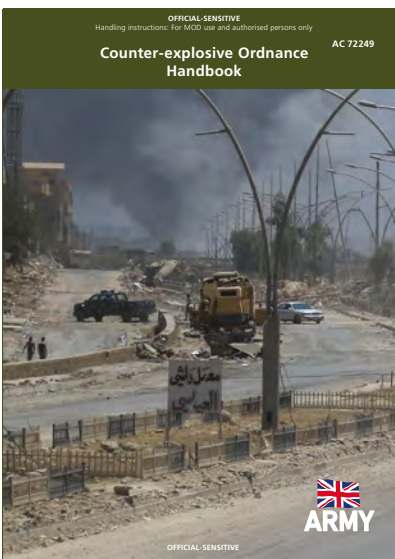
The *Counter-explosive Ordnance Handbook* builds upon *Army Doctrine Publication – Land Operations, Part 5: Protection*. It describes the principles and approaches to ensure an effective counter to any explosive threat encountered. Countering explosive ordnance contributes to all components of fighting power: it facilitates our conceptual approach to warfare, protecting our freedom of manoeuvre; it is a key part of the physical protection of the force, preserving our fighting power; and it underpins the moral component by giving our soldiers confidence.

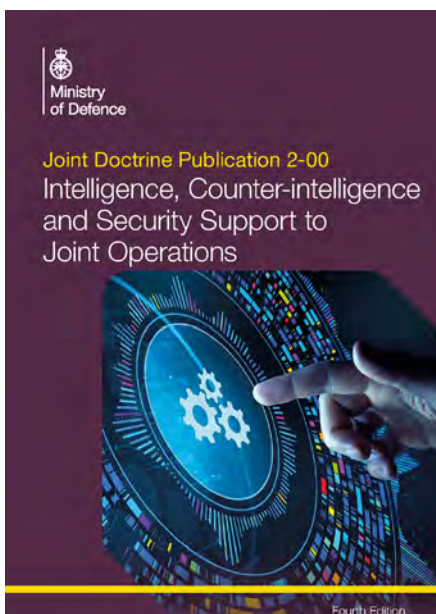
### **Counter-air Threat Handbook**

The *Counter-air Threat Handbook* builds upon *Army Doctrine Publication – Land Operations, Part 5: Protection*. It describes the principles and approaches to ensure an effective counter to the enemy air threat. This includes how to protect the force, planning for short-range ground-based air defence and how to conduct passive and active all-arms air defence. It also covers countering the uncrewed air systems threat. It is thus a comprehensive guide for all commanders and planners, not just those who specialise in air defence.

### **Land Forces Communication Procedures Handbook**

The *Land Forces Communication Procedures Handbook* directs the procedures required to achieve efficient and effective communications through common understanding and uniformity. This handbook focuses on the process over the technical detail which is articulated in other aide memoires and in doing so provides the baseline for communication education in the land forces.

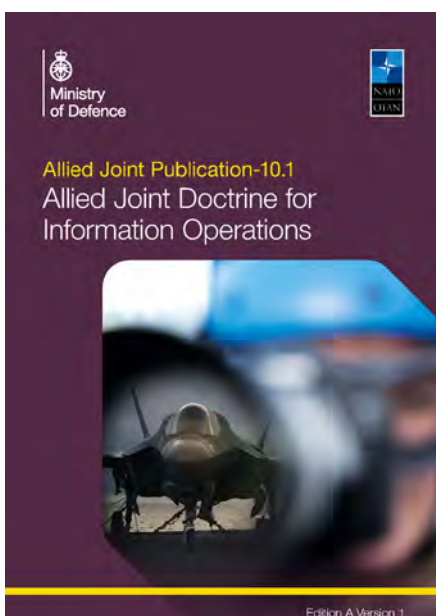




The Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre has published eight new joint doctrine publications since May 2023. The publications serve to guide military operations and inform professional military education as British Army regular and reserve personnel progress through their careers.

**Joint Doctrine Publication 2-00, Intelligence, Counter-Intelligence and Security Support to Joint Operations, Fourth Edition** describes the core functions of intelligence, the intelligence cycle, and how intelligence activities provide support to joint operations. This publication reinforces the enduring cross-governmental nature of intelligence and the need to instil a spirit of collaboration, including with partners and allies, in an inter-departmental and inter-agency context. To support this approach, commanders at all levels require accurate and timely intelligence and understanding to inform their decision-making. They must also know and understand their own role and that of their staff in developing and delivering it.

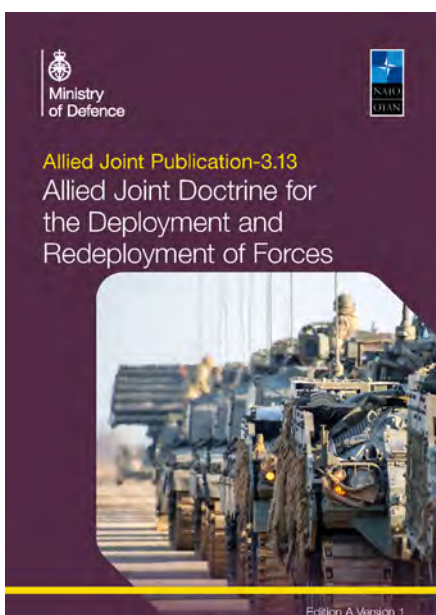
The publication provides the opportunity for commanders at all levels to gain an understanding of the value of intelligence and the intelligence process. Secondly, it provides a reference document for Ministry of Defence intelligence specialists (both civilian and military) on which subordinate documents can be based. Finally, it provides external readers with an explanation of intelligence functions.



**Allied Joint Publication 10.1, Information Operations, Edition A, Version 1** outlines the principles, planning considerations and processes for information operations. This publication explains how information operations staff ensure coordination and synchronisation of information activities. It focuses on the operational level to support commanders' objectives. Information operations is applicable in peace, crisis and conflict throughout the continuum of competition. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the information environment and, for particular audiences, the ability to plan specific activities for cognitive effect.

The publication provides guidance to NATO commanders and their staffs to use information operations as the staff function for the horizontal integration of strategic communications direction and guidance through planning and coordinating information activities throughout the full spectrum of activities and operations. It clarifies the role of information operations staff within the communication directorate, emphasising their responsibility for coherence and their key contribution to joint operations.

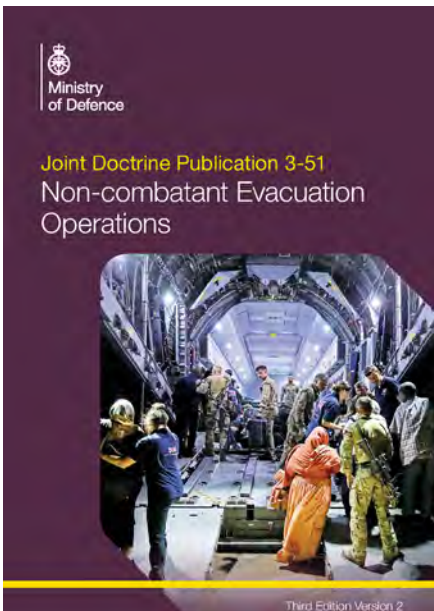
**Allied Joint Publication 3.13, Deployment and Redeployment** is the NATO doctrine that articulates the common framework surrounding the command, coordination and synchronisation aspects of deployment and redeployment for Allied joint operations. It covers the principles and structures, systems and procedures crucial to the necessary processes. The publication emphasises that deployment and redeployment are separate stages of an operation. They are delivered through the joint core activity of sustain and are enabled through the joint function of sustainment. It is intended primarily as guidance for commanders, staffs and forces at the joint operational level, but it also a valuable reference for coalitions of NATO member states, partners, non-NATO nations and other organisations.



**Joint Doctrine Publication 3-51, Non-combatant Evacuation Operations, Third Edition, Version 2** provides insight, guidance and points to consider when planning and conducting a non-combatant evacuation operation. It contains guidance and insight to assist military commanders and staff, and partners across government, to plan and execute national non-combatant evacuation operations in a range of scenarios. It reflects the modern operating environment and lessons from recent non-combatant evacuation operations in Afghanistan (2021), Ukraine (2022) and Sudan (2023). The publication is intended for use primarily by military commanders and their staff at the strategic and operational levels of command. It also acts as a useful guide to diplomatic staff serving in the UK and overseas. It should inform local Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office contingency evacuation plans where appropriate.

*Doctrine publications and supporting documents can be found at the following links:*

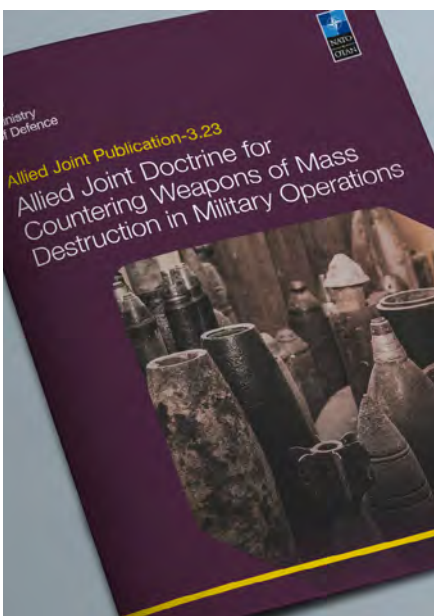
- Defnet – Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre ([sharepoint.com](https://sharepoint.com))
- DCDC App on the Defence Gateway Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre ([mod.uk](https://mod.uk))
- GOV.UK – Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre ([gov.uk](https://gov.uk))
- YouTube – Publications may be supported by introductory videos and audio books which can be accessed from the Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre YouTube channel.



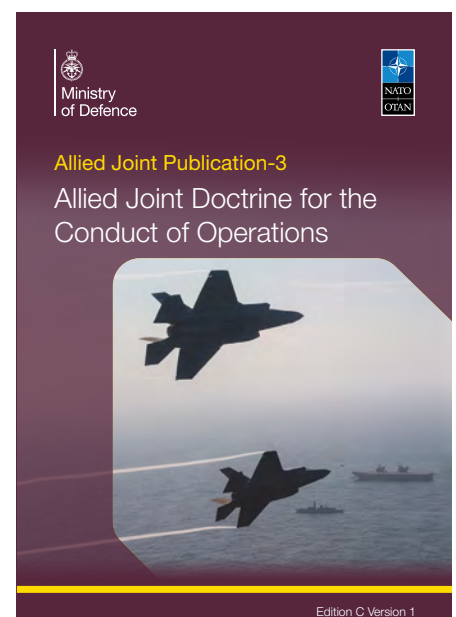
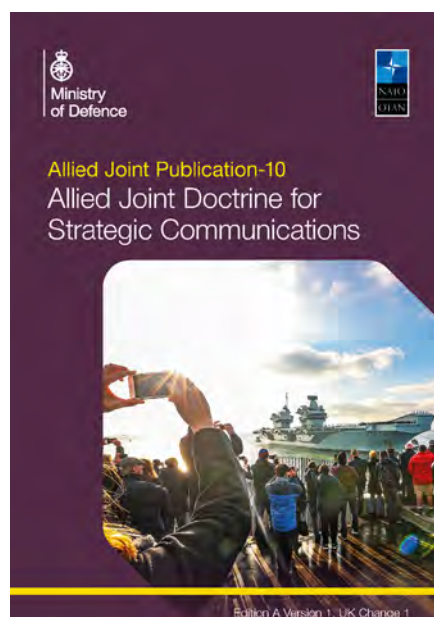
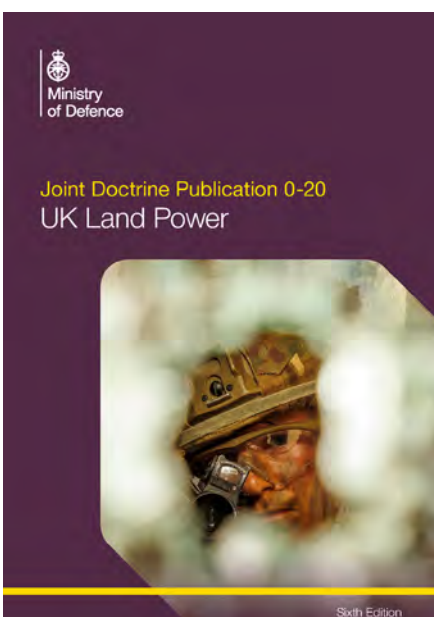
**Allied Joint Publication 3.23, Allied Joint Doctrine for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction in Military Operations, Edition A, Version 1** provides the fundamentals to effectively plan and conduct countering weapons of mass destruction missions and tasks. It provides guidance to military authorities, at the strategic and operational level, and informs NATO political and civil authorities of their recommended roles in countering weapons of mass destruction efforts within a joint and multinational framework.

**Joint Doctrine Publication 0-20, Land Power, Sixth Edition** describes the nature and application of UK land power and is the UK's keystone land doctrine. It describes land power's increasing reliance on multi-domain capabilities (maritime, air, space, cyber and electromagnetic) that enable land forces to operate on land and its interdependence with the other elements of national and military power, as well as multinational and private sector partners. The publication is relevant to all three single Services. It provides a simple and concise explanation of UK land power and represents the land domain's contribution to developing, operating and integrating across Defence to maintain operational and strategic advantage.

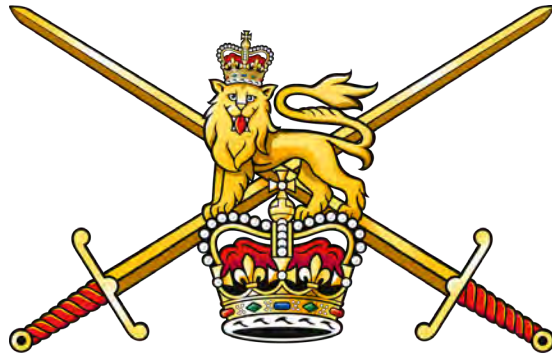
**Allied Joint Publication 10, Allied Joint Doctrine for Strategic Communications, Edition A, Version 1, Change 1.** This publication explains the principles of strategic communications and how they can be integrated into planning, execution and assessment for Allied joint operations. It is the keystone NATO doctrine for strategic communications and all information and communication related activities. It introduces strategic communications as the primary function for ensuring all NATO activities are conceived, planned and executed with a clear understanding of the critical importance of informing and influencing the perception, attitudes and behaviours of audiences to achieve objectives. The publication is primarily for use by NATO commanders and their staff at the military-strategic and operational levels but has equal relevance at the strategic and tactical levels. It is also an important reference for Alliance and partner nations at all levels because it offers a useful framework for operations, missions and tasks conducted by a coalition of NATO partners, non-NATO nations and other organisations. It provides a reference for NATO and non-NATO actors.



**Allied Joint Publication 3, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations, Edition C, Version 1, Change 1.** The national elements in relation to componsency were revised, ratified through the Joint Doctrine Steering Committee and published under *Change 1* in September 2023. The publication provides a common framework to command, coordinate and synchronise Alliance operations, and is the keystone NATO doctrine for the conduct of joint operations from preparation to termination. This publication builds on the principles described in *Allied Joint Publication 01, Allied Joint Doctrine*, is adjacent and closely related to *Allied Joint Publication 5, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Planning of Operations*, and it is the foundational doctrine for the *Allied Joint Publication 3* series. It is intended primarily as guidance for joint NATO commanders and staffs. However, the doctrine is instructive too and provides a useful framework for operations conducted by a coalition of NATO members, partners and non-NATO nations. It also provides a reference for NATO civilian and non-NATO civilian actors.



“THE PURPOSE OF THE BRITISH  
ARMY IS TO PROTECT THE UNITED  
KINGDOM BY BEING READY TO  
FIGHT AND WIN WARS ON LAND.”



**ARMY**