



WORLD (/WORLD)

Coronavirus: What The Milita Fight COVID-19

From setting up Nightingale hospitals to delivering PPE, the Armed Forces have been playing a leading role in responding to the pandemic.

10th August 2020 at 10:21am

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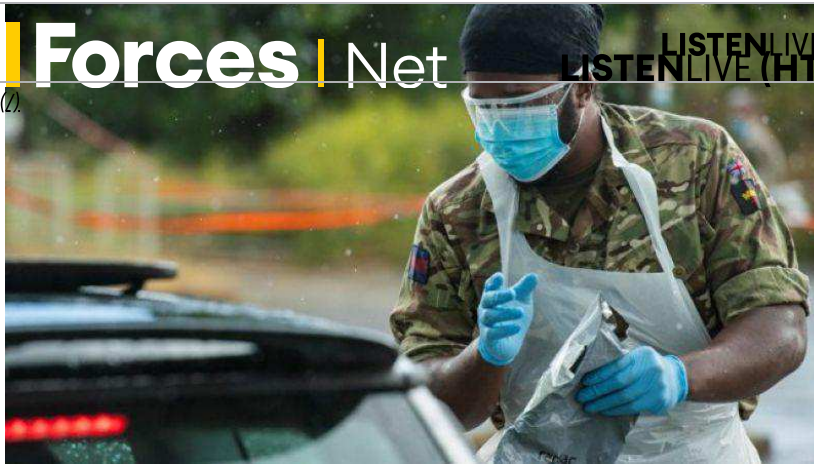
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UK Armed Forces personnel have played a key role in the country's response to the coronavirus pandemic.

During the peak of the military's response, 20,000 troops were at readiness, with more than 4,000 of them deployed at any one time.

Here is what the British military has been doing in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Nightingale Hospitals

A major focus of the military's work has been on assisting the NHS.

Personnel helped to set up Nightingale hospitals around the country, which provided additional care capacity for coronavirus patients.

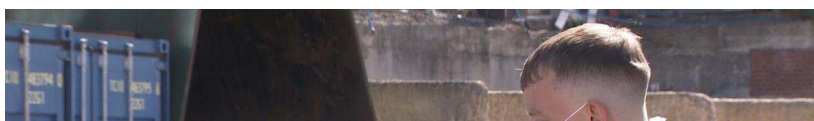
- These include hospitals at London (<https://www.forces.net/news/personnel-work-15-hour-shifts-build-londons-nhs-nightingale/>)'s ExCel, Birmingham (<https://www.forces.net/news/inside-birmingham-necs-nhs-nightingale-hospital/>)'s NEC and a hospital at Manchester Central Convention Complex, formerly known as the GMEX, opened (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-nhs-nightingale-north-west-opens-today/>), after being set up with the help of military personnel (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-army-effort-build-manchesters-nightingale-hospital-astonishing/>).
- The British Army also helped convert Glasgow's SEC Centre into a temporary NHS hospital (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-army-support-glasgow-secs-conversion-temporary-hospital/>) and to build a field hospital at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-field-hospital-opened-cardiffs-principality-stadium/>).
- Army veteran Captain Sir Tom Moore, who raised more than £32m (<https://www.forces.net/news/captain-toms-nhs-fundraising-reaches-ps30-million-his-100th-birthday/>) for NHS Charities Together, officially opened NHS Yorkshire and The Humber via video link (<https://www.forces.net/news/harrogates-nhs-nightingale-opens-after-military-assistance/>), while the Earl of Wessex opened NHS Nightingale Hospital Bristol (<https://www.forces.net/news/bristols-nhs-nightingale-hospital-officially-open/>).
- Royal Engineers were praised for their work in helping to construct NHS Nightingale Hospital Exeter (<https://www.forces.net/news/royal-engineers-help-set-nhs-nightingale-hospital-exeter/>).
- The facilities have stopped admitting patients but have been put on standby (<https://www.forces.net/news/londons-nhs-nightingale-hospital-put-standby/>), if required.

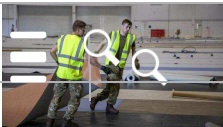


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UK (/UK)

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23rd July 2020





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Coronavirus: MPs Question If Government Has Made 'Full Use' Of



[Armed Forces Hand Over Operations Of England's Mobile Testing Units](https://www.bfbs.com/news/armed-forces-hand-over-military-operations-englands-mobile-testing-units)
 31st July 2020
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31st July 2020



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WATCH: Armed Forces hand over mobile testing unit operations in England.

Mobile testing

- Mobile coronavirus testing units *have been operating across the UK* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-forces-man-new-mobile-testing-units-across-uk>), including sites in Gloucestershire (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-personnel-run-mobile-testing-gloucester>) and Cornwall (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-royal-marines-run-mobile-testing-centres-cornwall>). The vast majority of the facilities were staffed by the military, but operations of England's sites *have now been handed over to civilian contractors* (<https://www.forces.net/news/armed-forces-hand-over-operations-englands-mobile-testing-units>).
- In Scotland and Wales, the military are expected to continue to run the mobile units until the end of the summer.
- The Armed Forces have conducted more than 700,000 tests at UK sites since April. More than 2,700 service personnel have run 218 pop-up units since the programme began.
- The Defence Secretary *praised military personnel for their "ingenuity and determination"* (<https://www.forces.net/news/ingenuity-and-determination-military-key-92-testing-units-supplied-week>) after getting 92 mobile testing sites ready in the space of just a week.
- The Health Secretary thanked the *"best of the best" in the British military* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-military-praised-government-hits-daily-test-target>) as he confirmed the Government had met its target of 100,000 coronavirus tests per day.

Supporting ambulance services

- Nearly 400 Armed Forces personnel from the COVID Support Force were *mobilised to support ambulance services* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-armed-forces-personnel-support-ambulance-services>) across the country.
- Members of the British Army, the Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy have *supported NHS ambulance services* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-norfolk-based-soldiers-given-ambulance-training>).
- Elsewhere, more than 100 tri-service personnel were *trained to drive oxygen tankers* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-military-personnel-train-drive-oxygen-tankers-lockdown-begins>) in support of the NHS, if required.



(W) WATCH: Soldiers complete a charity Doko race in support of the NHS.

Battling coronavirus in the lab

- When the coronavirus pandemic began, defence scientists were tasked (<https://www.forces.net/news/porton-down-assist-coronavirus-response>) with helping with the crisis, including finding out more about COVID-19 and ways to stop its spread. Staff at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL), Porton Down have been helping working to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.
- We were given special access inside the DSTL in Wiltshire (<https://www.forces.net/news/inside-defence-laboratories-porton-down-combatting-covid-19>) to learn more about the work of scientists there during the coronavirus crisis.



(/news/inside-defence-laboratories-porton-down-combatting-covid-19)
UK (/UK)

Inside The Defence Laboratories At Porton Down Battling COVID-19 (/news/inside-defence-laboratories-porton-down-combatting-covid-19)

27th May 2020

Training

- Royal Marines underwent specialist training to help the fight against COVID-19, getting them ready to deploy across the south-west of England to support frontline workers.
- Troops from 247 Gurkha Signal Squadron, part of 16th Signal Regiment spent 10 days training with pharmacists on how to conduct COVID-19 testing at Edgbaston Cricket Ground in Birmingham.
- Similar programmes also took place in Manchester and Glasgow.

Delivery of PPE

- Regular and reservist personnel, from all three services, have helped to distribute and deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline NHS staff (<https://www.forces.net/news/army-deliver-protective-equipment-frontline-nhs-workers>). The PPE includes items such as masks, safety glasses, gloves, aprons and protective suits.
- The British Army teamed up with eBay (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-army-work-ebay-help-nhs-order-ppe>) to help healthcare workers find and order free PPE.
- Alongside distributing supplies to medical personnel during the pandemic, the military has been 3D printing PPE components. (<https://www.forces.net/news/military-support-nhs-3d-printing-ppe>). Engineers from the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and the Army began producing the components following an appeal from 3DCrowd UK, a volunteer organisation crowdsourcing 3D printer owners to help produce protective equipment.

Increasing medical capacity

- Military medics could be brought in to assist the NHS (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-military-medics-could-help-nhs-if-second-wave-strikes>) if there is a second spike in coronavirus cases in the winter.
- Two RAF aircraft normally used to transport Government ministers and VIPs were reconfigured in record time (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-raf-aircraft-reconfigured-transport-covid-19-patients>) to help in the fight against coronavirus. The BAe 146s were specially adapted as medical evacuation planes for critically ill COVID-19 patients.
- The Ministry of Defence (MOD) set aside "dozens" of specialist military planners to support public services, authorities and emergency services on a local level.
- A group of MPs have voiced concern, however, over whether the Government has "made full use" of experts (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-mps-question-if-government-made-full-use-military-experts>), including those in the Armed Forces.



(/news/coronavirus-hundreds-serving-personnel-have-tested-positive-covid-19)
UK (/UK)

Coronavirus: Hundreds Of Serving Personnel Have Tested Positive For COVID-19 (/news/coronavirus-hundreds-serving-personnel-have-tested-positive-

- A £1m fund to "fast-track innovation" (<https://www.forces.net/news/psl-...>) to help the Armed Forces in the fight against coronavirus was launched by the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA). It was set up to discover an "idea or novel approach" that could boost the MOD's capabilities amid the coronavirus outbreak or other similar future threats, DASA said.



WATCH: Queen video calls personnel to hear about their work.

Tackling fake news

- The Ministry of Defence *sent a team* (<https://www.forces.net/news/mod-team-tackle-coronavirus-fake-news-and-scams>) to support the Cabinet Office in tackling online misinformation - part of the COVID Support Force effort in bolstering the UK's coronavirus defences.
- In addition, two experts from the British Army joined a NATO team set up to combat disinformation.

Evacuation, transportation and repatriation

- The Aviation Task Force has provided *a dedicated helicopter capability across the UK's response to COVID-19* (<https://www.forces.net/news/aviation-task-force-military-helicopters-responding-corona>) - British Army, Royal Air Force and Royal Navy aircraft operating 24 hours of the day.
- Joint Helicopter Command, an aircraft force comprising all three services, was put on standby to be used to reach "isolated communities that may not be able to obtain urgent medical care", the MOD said.
- The military has also conducted repatriation flights, including *bringing back British holidaymakers who were stranded* (<https://www.forces.net/news/raf-assist-repatriation-flight-british-citizens-cuba>) on a cruise ship in Cuba.



([news/queen-video-calls-personnel-hear-about-their-work](#)).

THE QUEEN (/ROYALS/QUEEN)

Queen Video Calls Personnel To Hear About Their Work ([news/queen-video-calls-personnel-hear-about-their-work](#))



Civilian contractors are being trained to run coronavirus mobile testing sites.

General



(/news/incredible-infantry-recruits-pass-out-behind-closed-doors)

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Infantry Recruits Praised As They Pass Out Behind Closed Doors (/news/incredible-infantry-recruits-pass-out-behind-closed-doors)

17th July 2020

(/)

- Recent statistics released by the MOD *show 9,220 UK servicemen and women have tested positive for COVID-19* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-hundreds-serving-personnel-have-tested-positive-covid-19>), with at least 406 testing positive.
- Her Majesty the Queen *has spoken to members of the UK's Armed Forces* (<https://www.forces.net/news/queen-video-calls-personnel-hear-about-their-work>) to hear how their lives have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
- Some of the first soldiers to complete basic training at the Infantry Training Centre at Catterick since lockdown *have been praised* (<https://www.forces.net/news/incredible-infantry-recruits-pass-out-behind-closed-doors>) for their attitude.
- The Royal Navy *turned to technology to help continue training* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-how-hms-sultan-using-technology-teach-trainee-engineers>) its next generation of engineers. While the majority of training at HMS Sultan in Gosport was paused during the coronavirus outbreak, some lessons were carried out online.
- Gurkhas serving with the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps *took on a special charity Doko race* (<https://www.forces.net/news/gurkhas-complete-charity-doko-race-nhs>) in aid of the NHS.
- The Government announced *£6m of emergency funding to support military charities* (<https://www.forces.net/news/ps6m-emergency-funding-support-military-charities-during-lockdown>) which are struggling to raise funds during the pandemic.

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WATCH: RAF aircraft reconfigured to help move coronavirus patients.

Scotland

- The Army was involved in the *conversion of Glasgow's SEC Centre into a temporary NHS hospital* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-army-support-glasgow-secs-conversion-temporary-hospital>).
- Liaison Officers at Joint Military Command in Stirling, Scotland, have been in close contact with the Scottish Government's Emergency Co-ordination Centre. They have also been providing planning support in Scotland's regional and local resilience partnerships.

Wales

- Military personnel helped to build a *field hospital at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff*. (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-field-hospital-opened-cardiffs-principality-stadium>)The Dragon Heart Hospital provided up to 2,000 additional beds for COVID-19 patients. It was opened by the Prince of Wales.
- British Army personnel were *mobilised to support the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-60-soldiers-support-welsh-ambulance-service-nhs-trust>)'s (WAST) frontline response to the virus.
- Military operations teams in Brecon Barracks have been speaking with the Welsh Government's Emergency Co-ordination Centre and



[\(/news/soldiers-complete-charity-doko-race-nhs\)](#)

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Soldiers Complete Charity Doko Race For NHS

[\(/news/soldiers-complete-charity-doko-race-nhs\)](#)

24th July 2020



WATCH: Military medics could be brought in to help NHS in case of second spike.

Northern Ireland

- A patient *was flown by the RAF from Northern Ireland to England* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-raf-flies-patient-northern-ireland-england-treatment>), for treatment for COVID-19-related issues. An MOD spokesperson said the transfer marked the fourth time the RAF assisted Northern Ireland's department of health by transferring a patient during the coronavirus pandemic.
- In mid-May, it was announced that Northern Ireland's Nightingale hospital for treating COVID-19 patients was to be temporarily stood down. Stormont Health Minister, Robin Swann said the Belfast City Hospital tower block facility treated 30 people in intensive care beds at the height of the first wave of virus infection.
- A British Army base in County Down was chosen *to be used as a temporary mortuary for victims of COVID-19* (<https://www.forces.net/news/coronavirus-army-base-set-be-used-temporary-mortuary>).

Gibraltar

- Around 175 British personnel have assisted Gibraltar's government with the delivery of food and medicine to local residents. Medical supplies and military equipment arrived into RAF Gibraltar to boost the Rock's coronavirus response.
- Royal Gibraltar Regiment and MOD Gibraltar personnel worked together to help others during the COVID-19 crisis.

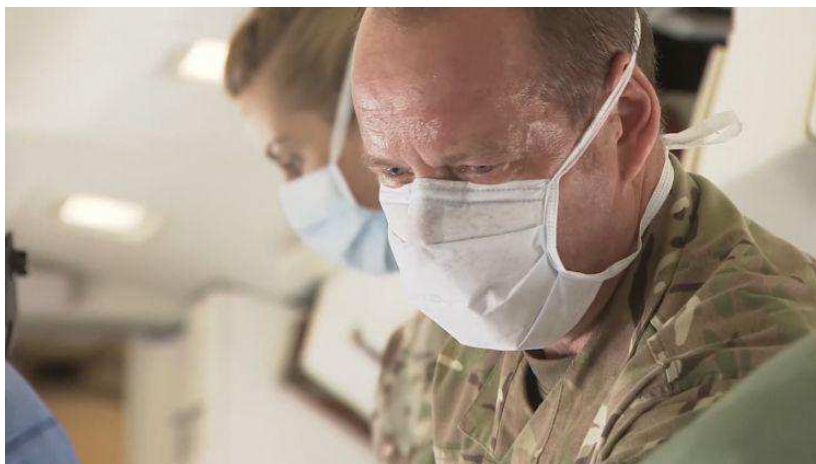


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Inter Services Cricket Officially Cancelled For 2020 Season

[\(/sport/cricket/inter-services-cricket-officially-cancelled-2020-season\)](#)



Military personnel on a BAe 146 aircraft modified to carry COVID-19 patients.

Falkland Islands

- The RAF [delivered essential equipment to the Falkland Islands](#) ([https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55201913](#)) to help treat coronavirus patients.
- Six British Army medics deployed to the Falklands to provide support during the coronavirus outbreak.
- In March, children from the Falklands who attend school in the UK and were left unable to fly home were offered [priority travel](#) (<https://www.forces.net/news/falklands-schoolchildren-set-military-repatriation-flights>) on the South Atlantic Airbridge.

Cover image: Soldiers of the London Regiment, the only reserve unit in the Household Division, were deployed to run mobile testing units across London, in support of the battle against COVID-19 (Picture: MOD).

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