Artificial Intelligence used on Army operation for the first time

The British Army has used Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the first time during Exercise Spring Storm, as part of Operation Cabrit in Estonia.

Soldiers from the 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade used an AI engine which provides information on the surrounding environment and terrain.

Through the development of significant automation and smart analytics, the engine is able to rapidly cut through masses of complex data. Providing efficient information regarding the environment and terrain, it enables the Army to plan its appropriate activity and outputs.

The Army's Director of Information, Major General John Cole said:

> The deployment was a first of its kind for the Army. It built on close collaboration between the MOD and industry partners that developed AI specifically designed for the way the Army is trained to operate.

> The lessons this has provided are considerable, not just in terms of our support to deployed forces, but more broadly in how we inform Defence's digital transformation agenda and the best practices we must adopt to integrate and exploit leading-edge technologies.

This AI capability, which can be hosted in the cloud or operate in independent mode, saved significant time and effort, providing soldiers with instant planning support and enhancing command and control processes.

Announced by the Prime Minister last November, Defence has received an increase in funding of over £24 billion across the next four years, focusing on the ability to adapt to meet future threats. Further outlined in the Defence Command Paper, the MOD intends to invest £6.6billion over the next four years in defence research and development, focusing on emerging technologies in artificial intelligence, AI-enabled autonomous systems, cyber, space and directed energy systems.

20th Armoured Infantry Brigade and user of the AI, Major James Mcevoy said:

> This was a fantastic opportunity to use a new and innovative piece of technology in a deployed environment. The kit was shown to outperform our expectations and has clear applications for improving our level of analysis and speed at which we conduct our planning. I'm greatly looking forward to further opportunities to work with this.

> In future, the UK armed forces will increasingly use AI to predict adversaries' behaviour, perform reconnaissance and relay real-time intelligence from the battlefield.

During the annual large-scale NATO exercise, soldiers from France, Denmark, Belgium, Estonia and the UK used the technology whilst carrying out live-fire drills.

Operation Cabrit is the British Army's deployment to Estonia where British troops are leading a multinational battlegroup as part of the enhanced Forward Presence.

Artificial Intelligence has already been incorporated in a number of key military initiatives, including the Future Combat Air System, and is the focus of several innovative funding programmes through the Defence and Security Accelerator.