

# News story: US and UK Armies lead the way in world-first for robotic vehicles

A robotics demonstration between the UK and US Armies in Michigan gave a glimpse into the future of getting supplies to the front line.

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), together with the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) and the U.S. Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center (ARDEC) demonstrated unmanned trucks formed into driverless convoys, unmanned aerial vehicles, and a robotic all-terrain 4x4 steered via a remote tele-operator, British and American soldiers.

As a result, the Coalition Assured Autonomous Resupply (CAAR) demonstration showed initial capability in unmanned tactical resupply incorporating a combined line-haul convoy, autonomous 'last-mile' ground and air capabilities.

The 'last mile' represents the final leg of the logistics and resupply route between the most forward base and troops in the field and can be the most difficult and dangerous stage of logistics support to a combat zone. The line-haul convoy is the first time ever that a UK-US collaboration has joined together in this way, with a British Army MAN SV 6-tonne (HX-60) truck as a 'leader' vehicle in the convoy, followed by two US Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTV) trucks.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

One hundred years ago we pioneered tank warfare with our US allies, and today we remain right at the forefront of military technology together. This exercise has proven the success of our ongoing investment in science and technology as we see concepts becoming reality. This particular project is spearheading solutions to the notoriously dangerous operation of supplying our frontline on the battlefield. Delivering crucial food, fuel and ammo remotely will help save soldiers' lives.

Pete Stockel, innovation autonomy challenge lead for Dstl, said:

Following the communique signature between the two nations in 2014, we have been working closely with our American counterparts to develop effective demonstrations and assessments of important new autonomy technologies, which could one day reduce the burden on and risk to the military user, while improving logistics efficiencies and interoperability.

This is the first time that we have created a UK-US coalition semi-autonomous leader-follower convoy to bring to life concepts which will provide solutions to de-risk the Last Mile of logistics support to the front line. We are enormously excited to be working with our US colleagues on this project, delivering on the commitment announced at the Farnborough Airshow in 2016. It has been an exciting challenge to drive this forward at pace. This could be a step-change in how operational risk could be managed, costs could be reduced and – ultimately – lives can be saved, as a result of harnessing this rapidly-evolving technology.

For this early stage of the collaboration, safety drivers monitored the semi-autonomous vehicles which were controlled using real-time information or following GPS waypoints. The week-long experiment is expected to inform future autonomous capabilities. This is a new way of coordinating and delivering vital supplies to front-line operations, aiming to reduce risk to those troops and provide on-demand delivery of food, fuel or ammunition to the so-called 'last mile'.

This CAAR event is the first demonstration in a 3-year project with a goal of bringing to life a series of concepts which can provide unmanned support to the last mile. The convoy was led by a British MAN SV 6-tonne, two axle truck, travelling at speeds of up to 25 mph, providing the leader vehicle for the following two US LMTV trucks, using integrated robotics to make decisions about speed, steering and other driving functions.

The UAVs demonstrated included the British-developed Malloy Aeronautics Hoverbike. An advanced prototype quadcopter drone, it can deliver more than (100kg) of supplies, all using a simple tablet controller. It has potential to be used for humanitarian aid and could one day carry a casualty away from danger. This was the first time this version of the Hoverbike has been unveiled.

A tele-operated Polaris MRZR, fitted with Light Detection and Range (LIDAR), sensors, cameras and GPS. This was operated by British Soldiers from Combat Support Unit Trials Development Unit (CSS TDU) as part of a joint UK-US trials team. Using nothing more than an X-Box game console controller, Cpl Mortimer and LCpl Thorne, 'drove' the 4x4 around the area.

Colonel John McCrann, from Army Headquarters, said:

The British Army is keen to work with its US counterparts through Dstl to identify where autonomous technologies can benefit UK military capability.

Dstl brought together a wide range of military and industry partners to join commercial-off the-shelf (COTS) supplies with novel ideas and tech start-ups to produce a futuristic demonstration of how UK and US forces' tactical resupply could one day operate.

Jeffrey Ratowski, TARDEC's project leader for the Coalition Assured Autonomous Resupply (CAAR) effort, said:

We're using US and UK Soldiers to control multiple robotic assets including the convoy, the autonomous last mile- ground piece, and there's also an autonomous last mile- air piece.

For more information on the autonomy Last Mile Challenge, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/defence-and-security-accelerator>

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## **Press release: Government backs British talent with £2.4 million funding for music exports**

- UK artists receive £2.4 million funding boost for music exports
- a total of 162 UK acts were supported through Government's Music Exports Growth Scheme (MEGS)
- DIT and the BPI award further £181,944 to help UK artists achieve success in international markets

The country's up-and-coming music acts are being encouraged to set their sights on the world stage thanks to a government export scheme.

In the latest round of funding, 12 UK music acts have received grants including Public Service Broadcasting, twice-mercury nominated Ghostpoet, Folk Rock duo Zervas & Pepper and 5 piece pop punk band ROAM, who all hope to maximise their chances of going global or further increasing their international exposure.

In total so far, 162 acts have received more than £2.4 million of funding in their bid to become the next Adele or Ed Sheeran through the Music Export Growth scheme (MEGS). The scheme which is jointly run by the DIT and the UK record label association, the BPI, helps raise the international profile of developing British artists and their music companies.

To further promote UK music talents abroad, the Government is launching a trade mission to India at the start of February 2018 (1st to 7th). Based in Mumbai, it will help connect music talent with record labels and talent scouts and presents a significant export potential in the world's seventh largest economy.

Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, Baroness Rona Fairhead said:

The UK is a world leader in music exports and recognised for its exceptional home-grown talent around the globe. Through the music exports scheme, we help to nurture the talent of the future to explore new global markets.

As an international economic department, we are launching a trade mission to India to connect music artists with investors in one of the world's largest economies, ensuring the strengths of our creative industry sector reach audiences at home and abroad.

Chris Tams, BPI Director of International overseeing the MEGS programme, said:

The Music Exports Growth Scheme gives a diverse range of artists who have the talent, but not always the means to realise its full potential, the opportunity to grow their fanbase in key international markets. In the process it helps to promote the profile of British music overseas and, crucially, helps to boost our exports – so far to the tune of a 10 -1 return on investment for each Pound put in by the UK Government.

Obaro Ejimiwe, the artist known as Ghostpoet, said:

It's truly amazing to be selected for funding, this money will really help to make in-roads into mainland Europe. It's been a while since I toured over there properly and this cash injection is not only timely but very much appreciated.

MEGS recipient Public Service Broadcasting said:

We'd like to thank MEGS once again for continuing to help us with what often prove to be very expensive overseas tours. On a limited budget such as ours (as is the case with almost every band in the independent sector, who need this kind of support), it really makes a difference. We'll carry on working hard at our end to justify the investment and make the most of the opportunity

To date, UK music exports were worth £2.5 billion in 2016 and through the scheme, the country has seen a return of £10 for every £1 invested.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) , in partnership with AIM (The Association of Independent Music) and BPI (British Phonographic Industry), is launching the UK music trade mission to Mumbai, India, which will take place from 1st to 7th February 2018 and help connect music businesses and presents a significant export potential in the world's seventh largest economy.

The grants, ranging from £5,000 to £50,000, are available to eligible UK

based-music companies with a turnover of less than €50 million and fewer than 250 employees, providing them with an opportunity to enhance their profile in overseas markets, as well as develop their commercial potential.

Applications for the next round (12) of MEGS funding will be open for applications from the 8th January 2018 and will close on 5th Feb 2018. For details or to download an application form please visit the MEGS page on the [BPI website](#).

Full list of MEGS recipients in the eleventh round of funding:

- ALA.NI
- Broken Witt Rebels
- Bruno Major
- Charlie Cunningham
- Ghostpoet
- Jane Weaver
- Matthew Herbert
- Public Service Broadcasting
- ROAM
- Shopping
- The Wombats
- Zervas & Pepper

Export revenue for the UK music industry was £2.5 billion in 2016 (source: Measuring Music, September 2017).

## **About the BPI (British Phonographic Industry)**

BPI champions the UK's recorded music industry, safeguarding the rights of its members and of the artists, performers and label members of collecting body PPL. BPI's membership consists of over 400 independent labels and the UK's 3'majors', which account for 85 per cent of legitimate domestic music consumption.

BPI promotes British music overseas through its trade missions and the Music Exports Growth Scheme. It provides insights, training and networking with its free masterclasses, Innovation Hub, Insight Sessions, and reports. The BPI administers the Certified Awards, co-owns the Official Charts, organises The BRIT Awards and is also home to the Mercury Prize.

## **Further information**

Contact the DIT Media and Digital Team on 020 7008 3333

Follow us: [@tradegovuk](#), [gov.uk/dit](http://gov.uk/dit)

Contact the BPI at [gennaro.castaldo@bpi.co.uk](mailto:gennaro.castaldo@bpi.co.uk)

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# Speech: Work together to tackle illegal wildlife trade

One of the highlights of my time as British Ambassador to Vietnam was last November's high-level conference on the illegal wildlife trade in Hanoi, when Prince William and our Environment Minister joined representatives of 42 other countries and 11 international organisations. This week, the British government announced that a year from now, on 10-11 October 2018, the UK will host the next high-level meeting of this global coalition against the illegal wildlife trade.

As the incoming and outgoing chairs, the UK and Vietnam have a strong shared interest in working together to keep driving forward progress. A milestone on the road to the London conference will be the progress report which Vietnam will publish next month. This will set out what countries and organisations have done, one year on, to fulfil the commitments they made in Hanoi. So this is a good time to reflect on how we are doing in the fight against the illegal trade in endangered species and wildlife products.

In some ways, the Hanoi conference was a moment for optimism, as Vietnam stepped forward, on behalf of Asian countries, to host the event, and in the process attracted new Asian participants such as Mongolia and Myanmar. And I felt a real sense of hope as I took part in Vietnam's first ever destruction of part of its stockpile of seized ivory and rhino horn, and as a coalition of excellent Vietnamese and international NGOs came together to make their voices heard.

The UK was among the countries that made new commitments to action at Hanoi, including Viet Nam, Indonesia, and Malawi. But since then, we have decided to go even further, with the British government recently announcing plans for a total ban on the domestic sale of ivory, closing loopholes in current regulations. This is an important signal of our determination to continue to lead by example on this issue.

But the reason why we need to take such measures, and why next year's conference in London is needed, is that globally, the battle against the illegal wildlife trade is not yet being won. Wild populations of elephants, rhinoceros and other iconic species are being poached at an unsustainable rate, fuelled by in large part by demand in Asia. And this is not just a problem for iconic species far away. Asia's and Vietnam's wondrous biodiversity is equally under pressure. The slow loris is increasingly under threat for the pet trade, the trade in tiger parts continues and pressure on habitats mean that many species of langurs unique to Vietnam are now listed as critically endangered. Such is the threat facing our wildlife that scientists now talk of us being in the 6th great phase of extinction.

So what can we do about this? As governments, we need to recognise that the groups involved in trafficking wildlife products represent a serious international organised crime threat, not only a threat to wildlife, and

respond accordingly. This means building country-level capability and will to enforce our national laws against the trade – something that countries like the UK can help with, as we did through September’s bilateral workshop between UK and Vietnamese customs, police and transport experts. But while national action remains essential, only international collaboration will allow us to bring down the kingpins of the illegal trade. Helping bring about more cross-border cooperation to disrupt the trade will therefore be a priority in the year leading up to the London conference. Again, Vietnam is setting a good example through its MoU with Mozambique on this issue.

But government and law enforcement alone cannot solve the problem. There would be no illegal trade without demand. Civil society, experts in conservation and traditional medicine, and leaders from the worlds of business and entertainment have a key role to play in speaking out, and creating a culture in which display and consumption of illegal products is no longer seen as fashionable or acceptable. It has been a real pleasure for me to join events with great Vietnamese NGOs like Education for Nature Vietnam and Save Vietnam’s Wildlife and to see all that they are doing to educate and inform the public. Likewise, it was both an honour and an education for me to appear on VTV’s Cafe Sang programme recently with Nguyen Xuan Huong, Doctor of Traditional Medicine, Former President of Vietnam Oriental Traditional Medicine Association to hear him explain why rhino horn had no legitimate role in traditional Eastern medicine. But we need to redouble these efforts if we are to continue to drive down demand.

We will not get rid of the illegal wildlife trade in the next year. But, so long as the UK, Vietnam and other countries continue to display commitment and ambition, I’m confident that by the time of the 2018 conference in London, we can make real progress in national, regional and global efforts to preserve our planet’s precious biodiversity for future generations to enjoy, and put an end to the criminal enterprises that threaten it.

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## **[News story: Government backed scheme helps train two million people in digital skills](#)**

The Digital Skills Partnership sees Government, businesses, charities and voluntary organisations join forces to give people of all ages the opportunity to boost their online know-how by offering free training in areas such as basic online skills through to cybersecurity and coding.

At the launch of the government’s Digital Strategy in March, four million training opportunities were pledged by businesses such as Barclays, Cisco, Google and Lloyds Banking Group. With over half of those training

opportunities having now been completed, the Partnership is continuing work with business to bridge the gap between the estimated 11.5 million people who lack at least one basic digital skill.

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock said:

Just eight months ago we committed with the tech sector to delivering four million skills training opportunities. Today two million of those have already been delivered. This is a massive over-delivery in a vital area, and there's more to come.

Digital skills training is essential to ensure that the UK can take advantage of technology and the opportunities it presents.

If we want to maintain our position as a world leading digital economy we need to ensure more people are able to use basic online services, use the digital tools they need for work, or gain the advanced skills in coding, AI or data science that are required in specialist roles.

Through this Partnership with industry and other sectors, the Government can deliver on its commitment to strengthening digital skills right across the country so that no-one is left behind.

Nick Williams, Managing Director, Consumer Digital at Lloyds Banking Group said:

With 11.5m people in the UK lacking Basic Digital Skills, it is crucial that organisations work together to improve digital capability across the UK. At Lloyds Banking Group we have committed to help 2.5m people by 2020 and we are proud to have already trained more than half a million individuals and businesses face-to-face this year. This has been achieved by utilising our extensive branch network, but also through partnering with other industry leaders like Google and the Good Things Foundation. We are delighted to be a key part of the Digital Skills Partnership and working with others towards a strong digital future for the UK.

Ashok Vaswani, CEO Barclays UK said:

Barclays is pleased to support the Government's Digital Pledge and be part of today's milestone in boosting the UK's digital skills. We are committed to ensuring the UK is armed with the digital skills and tools required for current and future generations and at Barclays we've improved the digital skills of over 1.1million individuals- through initiatives such as teaching coding to UK school children, expanding our network of 18,000 strong Digital Eagles, and providing free training to small businesses across the

country. Earlier this year we launched a huge Digital Safety drive to keep consumers and businesses protected against the growing threat of digital fraud and scams. The industry, working with the Government must do everything in our power to keep the UK digitally safe. We have also expanded our Eagle Labs network- giving fast growing businesses access to space, technology and 3D printers.

Chief Executive of Good Things Foundation Helen Milner said:

We're proud to be a member of the Digital Skills Partnership, bringing our expertise in supporting the hardest to reach to gain digital skills to improve their lives. Through the Online Centres Network, and with other partners, we've supported 75,000 people to gain basic digital skills since March.

We're pleased the government is taking an ambitious approach to ensuring that not only can the UK become a leading digital nation, but that no-one is left behind as we do this, and we're pleased to be playing our part. The Digital Skills Partnership has created more than four million free digital skills training opportunities as part of our Digital Strategy to make Britain the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business and ensure our digital economy works for everyone.

Free training opportunities that have been successfully accessed include:

- Lloyds Banking Group training 550,000 individuals, SMEs and charities face to face on digital skills, including internet banking.
- Barclays improving the digital skills of over 1 million individuals. This includes teaching basic coding to 45,000 children.
- BT teaching 250,000 school children through it's Barefoot Computing programme and remaining on track to meet its pledge to train 500,000 by the end of the 2017/18 school year, taking the total to 1.5 million.
- Google's training opportunities on offer include their Digital Garage which teaches local businesses and the wider community digital skills. It has already reached its target to visit 100 cities and towns in 2017 and will continue to visit other locations around the UK.

Cisco also recently announced 250,000 more people would be trained in a range of digital skills through their Networking Academy by 2020. This is alongside existing pledges on training opportunities from IBM UK, HP and Accenture.

Next month, the first Digital Skills Partnership Board with representatives

from the public, private and charity sectors will meet to discuss a more joined up approach to delivering digital skills and best ways to tackle digital exclusion so everyone can make the most of the digital world.

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## [News story: New online challenge will test teenagers' cyber security skills](#)

Young people between the ages of 14 and 18 will be invited to take part and test their skills in online real-world cyber challenges to see if they have the potential of playing a role in defending the nation from future online threats.

The £20 million Cyber Discovery programme is part of the Government's £1.9 billion investment to significantly transform the UK's cyber security. High performing individuals will also have the opportunity to take part in face-to-face interactions with cyber security experts and attend regional camps.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, said:

This Government is committed to improving the skills of the next generation and encouraging the best young minds into cyber security.

Cyber Discovery will help inspire the digital talent of tomorrow and give thousands of young people the opportunity to develop cutting-edge cyber security skills and fast-track future careers.

This important programme is part of our £1.9 billion investment to protect from online threats and make Britain the safest place to be online.

James Lyne, Global Head of Research and Development, at delivery partner SANS Institute, said:

It's been a privilege to be involved in a programme that aligns exactly with what SANS stands for: training to fill the cyber security skills gap. Using gamification to teach is a great and innovative way of ensuring interest is captured early on in this technology-led generation, which is something I, personally, am very excited about being a part of.

Debbie Tunstall, Head of Education at Cyber Security Challenge UK said:

Cyber security is an industry that's still in its infancy, meaning very few young people know and understand that there are lucrative careers awaiting them in the field. With a critical skills gap looming and the cybercrime threat growing, we need to educate about cyber security while individuals are still young; piquing their interest in future cyber careers and as a result, filling the pipeline of talent. The Challenge has years of experience in dealing with people in this age group and providing fun and educational face-to-face events and we're delighted to bring our expertise to this innovative programme

Mark Hughes, CEO BT Security, said:

Organised crime has moved online while countries across the globe are also battling with hacktivism and cyber espionage. The cyber-crime industry is getting bigger, stronger and more sophisticated in its techniques of attack. So it's vital that we start engaging and encouraging young people in developing their cyber skills now, to further bolster the UK's defences against the escalating level of the threat. As a key delivery partner for the Cyber Discovery programme, BT is looking forward to inspiring the next generation of cyber security professionals and equipping them with the skills they need to beat cyber-criminals at their own game.

Chris Ensor, Deputy Director for NCSC skills and growth said:

Cyber security is an integral part to the UK making the most of the digital age, and programmes like Cyber Discovery and the NCSC's CyberFirst are helping young people develop skills that lead to dynamic and rewarding careers.

Investing in these initiatives will make a huge difference for generations to come, and will help us to find and support motivated, high performers from all backgrounds who want to make a positive impact on the world."

Participants have until early January 2018 to take the assessment and will find out mid-January if they have been shortlisted to take a part in the first pilot year of the programme.

Players will be responsible for driving their own learning and progression. However, the programme will also make use of extra-curricular 'clubs' where groups of Cyber Discovery participants can chat and collaborate, with guidance from an adult mentor or club leader.

This is part of the Government's National Cyber Security Programme to find, nurture and fast-track tomorrow's online security experts.