

## CANADA

### Army spends £45M on Canada training

 3 November 2011 | [Canada](#)


The Army spends an average of almost £45 million a year training British soldiers on a Canadian prairie, the Government said today.

Seven thousand troops are sent to British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS), on a prairie in Alberta, each year ahead of deployment to war zones, including Afghanistan.

They are able to fire live weapons more freely than in the UK because of the vast size of the prairie in Alberta.

But figures revealed by the Ministry of Defence show spending on BATUS totalled £224.5 million over the past five years, peaking at £58 million in 2009/10.

It works out at an average of £44.9 million annually since 2006.

Junior defence minister Peter Luff said the total cost of operating BATUS was even higher.

He told MPs: "These figures exclude manpower costs for military and MOD civil servants, and also for stock consumption, since these costs would be incurred wherever the Army is training."

The figures were revealed following a written parliamentary question by Labour MP Alison Seaback, who asked whether BATUS's costs would be affected by ministers' plans to pull British troops out of Germany.

Mr Luff said: "The training that currently takes place in Germany is unit-level training and similar training also takes place in the UK.

"The training that takes place at BATUS is higher-level, collective training where a number of units join together to form battle groups for larger-scale exercises in preparation for deployment."

According to the MOD website, more than 1,000 military vehicles including Challenger 2 tanks and Warrior armoured personnel carriers, are based at BATUS, with the overall training area equivalent in size to the total space available to the Army in the UK and in Europe.

The Salisbury Plain training zone would fit in seven times over.

The website says: "Five battle groups, each containing approximately 1,400 soldiers, are trained at BATUS each year.

"The duration of the exercises, and size of the training area, allow all elements of a combined arms battle group (infantry, armour, artillery, engineers, air defence, logistics and equipment support) to conduct realistic live firing training at all levels and to practise sustaining this activity over a long period of time."

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