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MSU 10/11K

21 January 2009

*Jean Gordon,*

**ARMED FORCES DAY – 27 JUNE 2009**

I am writing to inform you about our plans to hold the first Armed Forces Day on Saturday 27 June this year.

As you will be aware, we announced our plans to hold an Armed Forces Day when we published our response to the Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces in October last year.<sup>1</sup> The intent is to provide an occasion during which the whole nation has the opportunity to show their appreciation for the contribution made to society by all those who serve and have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

The title "Armed Forces Day" has been chosen to reflect the wider Armed Forces family of serving personnel (both regular and reserve), veterans and the cadet forces. This sense of inclusiveness is reflected in the strapline for the Day: "Honouring Britain's Armed Forces, past, present and future."

Building on the success of previous Veterans Day celebrations, we plan to mark the occasion with a wide range of community-led events taking place in towns and cities around the country. Last year, we supported over 100 such events and we expect a similar level of activity this year. To provide a focus for national recognition we also intend to support a UK national event and a number of local authorities and other organisations have also submitted bids to be the national event host. There were a number of compelling bids that

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<sup>1</sup> The Government's Response to the Report of Inquiry into National Recognition of our Armed Forces, October 2008.

Prime Minister and other Cabinet Colleagues

offered excellent prospects to host a prestigious and fitting event, but against stiff competition, we have selected Chatham Historic Dockyard to be the host for the 2009 national event as it offered the best prospect for meeting our overall requirements. The Veterans Minister will be announcing the winning bid with a written statement to Parliament and at a press facility when he visits Chatham on 22 January, and we plan to embargo the announcement until then.

I have no doubt that there will be a vast range of initiatives from public, private and third sector organisations seeking to contribute to the Day, including from those in the education sector and from the sporting, entertainment and leisure industries. We will be keen to support these wherever we can, but we do not wish to add unduly to the burden of our hard pressed Armed Forces given their current level of commitment, so the engagement of serving personnel (regular and reserve) in events may necessarily be quite limited this year. That said, we hope that they will participate where possible and we hope that many events will be characterised by the presence of veterans, serving personnel and cadets standing side by side.

I would be grateful if you could do what you can within your Department to support the Day and help use the occasion to raise public consciousness of the vital role that our Armed Forces, past and present, make and have made to our security and well being.

Your officials can contact the Armed Forces Day Project Director, Air Commodore Martin Sharp who will be pleased to give whatever help and advice he can (Tel: 0207 8078212; email: [Martin.sharp449@mod.uk](mailto:Martin.sharp449@mod.uk)). I am copying this note to Sir Gus O'Donnell.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a series of connected loops and a final horizontal stroke.

**JOHN HUTTON**