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British Army Unveils £1bn AI 'Asgard' System to Target Enemies by 2027

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New battlefield AI will deliver rapid strike capability, with human oversight still in place.

The British Army will begin using a cutting-edge artificial intelligence (AI) system named Asgard by 2027, a move to transform how enemy threats are detected and engaged on the battlefield. The £1 billion initiative is designed to dramatically cut response times by allowing AI to recommend action within seconds, replacing traditional manual analysis that can take much longer.

Built as a networked system of sensors and data feeds, Asgard will gather battlefield intelligence in real time. It will then identify potential enemy targets or incoming threats and propose a course of action to commanders. Although a human officer will currently remain in control of strike decisions, Ministry of Defence (MoD) officials admit the system could one day operate independently if legal and ethical standards evolve.

Faster Frontline Decisions

The new technology comes amid rising concerns over the UK's military readiness. The Chief of the General Staff warned that Britain must be prepared to confront Russia, possibly backed by allies like China, Iran, or North Korea. Asgard aims to ensure the Army can react at the speed modern warfare demands.

The system will allow soldiers and analysts to process vast amounts of data in a fraction of the time, feeding actionable intelligence to officers within minutes or seconds. While human judgement remains in place, insiders now acknowledge that the AI can fully function without it. Whether that becomes reality depends on future defence policy and international law.

Some components of Asgard will be shared with allied forces to strengthen coordination, and others may be exported to boost the domestic defence sector. The project already draws lessons from Ukraine, where AI and real-time data systems accelerate responses to Russian aggression.

One contributor to Asgard, the British-Estonian tech firm SensusQ, has developed an app enabling civilians and troops to report suspicious activity or sightings. Co-founder Villiko Nurmoja, an Estonian reservist, said, "Every citizen can be a sensor, not only soldiers." The approach mirrors World War II-era civilian watch programmes, but with the added power of instant digital communication.

Another technology partner, Mind Foundry, uses acoustic sensors embedded in soldiers' smartphones to detect the distinct hum of drone wings. The firm says this can buy troops vital seconds to take cover and help commanders better understand the enemy's drone activity. Al Bowman, a former Army intelligence director now with Mind Foundry, said the app's detection range can stretch up to 50 metres and help identify drone types and their approach direction.

Oxford Dynamics also provides key support with software capable of compressing eight hours of intelligence work into 23 seconds. Director Shefali Sharma said their focus is to “help soldiers focus on what only humans can do best” while AI handles the heavy lifting.

Project Asgard represents a major evolution in UK defence capability, combining speed, precision, and international collaboration. Human decision-making remains central for now, but the tools of war are undeniably becoming smarter.