

Congratulations to the whole team involved in getting medical assistance and supplies to the remote British Overseas Territory of Tristan da Cunha to help a British national with suspected hantavirus.

The UK Health Security Agency had confirmed on Friday that a British national had disembarked from the cruise ship MV Hondius to the South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha, where they live, with a suspected case of hantavirus.

Six paratroopers, a Royal Air Force (RAF) consultant doctor and an army nurse from 16 Air Assault Brigade were parachuted to the island, followed by oxygen and medical supplies.

An RAF A400M transport aircraft made the 9-10 hour 4,200 mile flight from RAF Brize Norton to Ascension Island, supported by an RAF Voyager tanker aircraft. This was followed by a 2000-mile flight to Tristan da Cunha.

One of several unusual features of the mission is that both the doctor and nurse reportedly made a tandem jump attached to a parachutist, an activity more usually associated with sponsored charity jumps and 'bucket lists'.

At one time there would have been no difficulty in sourcing current parachute-trained medical personnel. All the same, tandem jumping is an interesting capability for which there could be other occasions in emergency.

As well as providing vital humanitarian support this well-conducted operation was a timely reminder of a capability rapidly to reinforce British overseas territory.