



JO CHURCHILL MP
Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds



Thursday 26th January 2017

Dear colleague,

I have received numerous communications from Members across this House, with respect to the disappearance of a constituent of mine, 23 year old RAF Serviceman Corrie McKeague. I wanted to update you as to the current situation.

Corrie left his RAF Honington base on the 23rd September 2016 and there was a final sighting of him at 3.25am on 24th September in Bury St Edmunds town centre. Since then, nothing has been seen or heard of Corrie.

He was reported missing on Monday 26th September and Suffolk Constabulary immediately responded, declaring Corrie as a high risk missing person due to his military connection.

Following eight days of intensive searching, investigations were transferred to Norfolk and Suffolk Major Investigation Team and headed by senior investigating officers at PIP 3 and 4 level. The Assistant Chief Constable was also appointed Gold Commander.

RAF Personnel have attended all Gold Command meetings and the military has supported the investigation at all stages including assisting with CCTV viewing, providing specialist capability, defence intelligence support and mountain search and rescue teams. Within days of his disappearance, the Minister for Armed Forces, Mike Penning MP visited RAF Honington and assured that all necessary defence resources, were at the disposal of investigating teams.

So far, some two thousand hours of CCTV footage has been recovered and is being reviewed. Most of those people seen on this CCTV have been identified and efforts continue to identify those remaining. Nevertheless, the quality and nature of the footage means that viewing is taking some time, and is being conducted with care. This includes utilising the resources of the National Crime Agency including national search advisors, behavioural investigative advisors and geographic profilers.

I have been assured that all necessary resources for this case, have been made fully available, reviewed weekly and mutual aid from other Forces has been utilised. Furthermore, there has always been agreement by the Constabulary and the Police and Crime Commissioner that if necessary reserves could be used. In order to reassure the public, should the cost of the investigation rise above £1 million then there are options for reclaiming the money from central government.

The investigation itself was overseen with police personnel in line with national best practice, as too has the search strategy, which remains under reviews by both Constabulary and national experts.



The police search has been extensive and continues to cover thousands of acres of countryside. Moreover, the search included a two miles stretch of the A14 and the nearby railway line; an unprecedented decision. Specialist assets such as cadaver dogs; drowned victim recovery dogs; and sonar equipment have been used where and when appropriate.

In addition to the police search, the family of Corrie McKeague, have raised tens of thousands of pounds and put up individual rewards to gain additional information. This has allowed the use of private investigators but these have not been driven or tasked by the police.

Also Nicola Urqhart, Corrie's mother, has enlisted the support of Suffolk Lowland Search and Rescue and the general public in searching areas of public land, with the last public search conducted this weekend just gone (21st - 22nd January). So far the two searches conducted, have delivered no further information.

Nonetheless, the police maintain that, for anyone who has any information with regards to this case, they be encouraged to first contact the police directly on 01473 782019.

With this investigation ongoing, every effort is currently being made to not only find Corrie but to understand the circumstances of his disappearance.

I have been and remain in regular contact with both RAF Honington, Suffolk Police Constabulary and lead authorities, all who are investigating this ongoing case and have agreed to the distribution of this letter.

I trust, therefore, this will be of assistance in responding to any constituent enquiries regarding this case and the nationwide campaign to find Corrie.

On a more personal note, I wish to reiterate my own concern for the whereabouts of Corrie McKeague. My heartfelt thoughts and prayers, which I have conveyed in person to Nicola Urqhart, remain with all of Corrie's family and friends during this most difficult time.

I welcome any further comments from colleagues, regarding this case.

Yours sincerely,

Jo Churchill, Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds