

Defence Estates: improving facilities across the tri-Services

Defence Estates was relaunched in April 2005 with responsibilities for managing the defence estate as a corporate asset on behalf of the MOD, and for the delivery of estate maintenance, works and services, which means their work has a massive impact across the tri-Services. Here, MOD DCB looks at three recent projects already benefitting Army, Navy and RAF personnel.



Royal Marines – new Devon depot

In August 2010, Defence Estates (DE) completed a new storage depot which will allow Royal Marines in Devon to despatch military vehicles quickly and efficiently to the front line.

Working with industry partner Debut Services, DE provided the Commando Logistics Regiment (Cdo Log Regt) with secure vehicle storage at Royal Marines (RM) Chivenor. The new building expands existing facilities and greatly enhances the active life of military vehicles. It minimises environmental damage to vehicles by removing moisture from the atmosphere and allows them to be maintained in a condition for immediate deployment.

DE and Debut delivered the Controlled Humidity Environment (CHE) storage facility, on behalf of the Royal Navy Estate Organisation (RNEO). The new building supports the provision of second-line Combat Service Support to 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.

Chris Roberts, Project Sponsor RNEO, said: "I am extremely pleased with the outcome of this project, particularly, the high quality of workmanship and the 'can do' approach of the entire Project Team. Lessons learnt from an earlier facility were quickly gathered, analysed and resolved leading to a much improved and far more efficient final design."

"The facility itself has the potential to quickly pay for its own construction and running costs by delivering improved availability and reliability of our valuable hi-tech vehicle fleet. It will also significantly extend vehicle life and reduce servicing costs."

This building is the latest in a series of CHE facilities that has been provided by DE and Debut and builds upon previous experience gained in providing similar facilities in the South West region. It was opened by Major General Garry Robison Royal Marines, Chief of Staff Capability to Commander in Chief Fleet.

RAF Tornados – airfield refurb at Marham

Another ground-breaking project was announced in August 2010, with the news that work is underway at RAF Marham, Norfolk, which is enabling the Tornado GR4 aircraft based there to continue their vital training role.

In a further show of DE's sustainable credentials, the project, led by DE and supported by regional industry partner Babcock Dyncorp and BAM Nuttall, involves refurbishing the southern taxiway using recycled materials from the current surface.

Construction work is being carried out in seven phases, ensuring that the Tornado squadrons based at Marham can remain operational. Part of their

role includes providing ongoing, essential close-air support to UK troops fighting in Afghanistan.

DE Project Manager Dan Willmott said: "This project is designed to keep the Tornados flying while providing essential maintenance works. It is also a showcase project to prove that airfield works of this scale can be completed and achieve high standards of environmental responsibility."

"Supporting our Armed Forces is the top priority for Defence Estates, particularly when what we deliver has a direct positive impact for troops on the ground"

The project is thought to be the first large-scale project anywhere in the world to fully refurbish a taxiway by reusing materials. As well as saving money on the overall cost of resurfacing the runway, the work will also result in lower CO2 emissions when the improved taxiway is in use.

RAF Marham Senior Air Traffic Controller, Squadron Leader Alan Hyton, said: "The first class working relationship between RAF Marham and the contractors at the tactical level, and with DE at the operational level has been essential in the continuing success of this project."

"The contractors have gone out of their way to be as proactive as possible, building a strong rapport with the station through numerous projects and charitable events outside their primary work; DE have ensured this ground-breaking project has stayed on track through monthly meetings, and specialist advice to the station whenever required."

The work at Marham has involved removing the airfield's old surface and processing it on site. Materials are then treated in order to rejuvenate them before being re-laid back on to the taxiway.

Around 85 per cent of materials from the surface will be recycled and reused in the new pavement. Surplus material will be used for other tasks on site, such as constructing bunds to help contain the noise. The project aims to have no waste transported from the site for disposal.

Once complete the energy efficiency of the airfield itself will be also be improved by using new LED lights, which require only five per cent of the power used by existing lights.

Army drivers – new facilities at Leconfield

In September 2010 it was announced that urgently needed new facilities had been completed in Humberside in double-quick time to help provide vital training for military drivers heading out to the frontline in Afghanistan.

DE, working with its regional industry partner CarillionEnterprise, constructed classrooms, instructors' offices and vehicle storage facilities (VSFs) at the Defence School of Transport (DST) in Leconfield, near Beverley.

An increase in demand for military driving training meant that the new facilities were needed urgently to support operations in Afghanistan. Responding to the Armed Forces needs, DE completed the works in only ten months.

Director General of Army Recruiting and Training Major General Gerald Berragan, who recently opened the new facilities, said: "The delivery of these new facilities, which are vital to sustaining operational success in Afghanistan, has been impressively rapid and professional."

The initial design brief called for classrooms that would accommodate 200 students and instructors, offices for 60 instructors, and seven VSF buildings. However, during the design and development phase of the project, it was decided that three 'super-sized' VSF buildings would be more versatile.

DE Project Manager Rob Seymour, said: "Supporting our Armed Forces is the top priority for Defence Estates, particularly when what we deliver has a direct positive impact for troops on the ground in Afghanistan."

"This project shows how well we can work with our partners to respond to urgent requirements. The whole integrated project team worked together to deliver the requirement on time, which ultimately resulted in better training for soldiers prior to their deployment."

DST Leconfield provides driver and transport management training to military personnel. It offers 114 different courses delivering transport management and operation training, with a throughput of approximately 16,000 trainees each year.

At any one time DST is able to train up to 1400 personnel – making it one of the largest residential driver training schools in the world. In addition to core training of military personnel, DST provides specialist training to the police and fire services and overseas training for Defence Attachés.

Further information

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The feature articles provided by MOD teams and individuals, as well as defence contractors, are key to the magazine's development and provide readers with important information regarding the defence market. MOD DCB is looking for individuals and teams or contractors from both the public and private sectors who would like to discuss the projects or initiatives that they are working on or have recently completed.

These features should focus on key contracts, more efficient ways of working within the MOD or even new products and initiatives that could help the MOD provide a more effective service.

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