

## **The DTR: Matching training demands to defence needs**

When the new tri-service defence training campus opens its doors in 2013, St Athan in the Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales will become home to one of the biggest and most advanced military training and education establishments in the world, with a standing population of up to 11,000 Armed Forces trainees and 3,400 military and 3,000 civilian instructors and support personnel. The project might not be the most spectacular transformation venture in the UK, but at second glance it proves to be more far reaching than many others on the agenda.

### **Need for change**

It all started back in 1999, when Lord Robertson, the then Secretary of State for Defence, ordered “all individual training and education” for both military and civilian personnel to be examined. The Defence Training Review (DTR), finally published in 2001, revealed what the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had already suspected, namely that the UK’s training estate was still too large. One recommendation was that some types of specialist training should be rationalised by delivering it on a tri-service or MoD-wide basis. The MoD subsequently established the DTR Rationalisation Programme, which aimed to concentrate training on a reduced number of sites. The point, however, was not just to reduce and cut, but to provide training with modern concepts and methods and state-of-the-art technology. “It is essential, therefore, that we both deliver this training as cost effectively as possible and ensure that it meets the needs of modern, battle-winning forces,” Geoff Hoon, Lord Robertson’s successor, wrote in the Foreword to the DTR.

### **Achieving more with less**

The DTR will be realised as a public-private partnership (PPP) programme, a procurement method that places responsibility on industry. It takes private-sector management expertise and significant capital investment into the estate within a short period of time. It provides the ability to link payment to training results, and the flexibility to increase or decrease student throughput, as industry will be able to generate third-party income from any spare capacity. The programme aims at a more flexible, responsive and effective training system, the improved ability to adjust to changes in training demands, and a more efficient use of training personnel. The DTR will improve living and training accommodation, as well as reduce the training estate. The 27 existing training sites will be cut to less than 10. Where appropriate, training will be delivered on a tri-service basis and no longer separately by the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force. The benefits for the Armed Forces are obvious. The implementation of modern training methods and media such as neurolinguistic programming, e-learning technologies, computer-based training (CBT), computer-aided instruction (CAI), emulation and simulation and Web-based systems, as well as improvements to the training estate, will enhance the overall training capability.

The new training system provides greater flexibility to pass better trainees faster through to front line commands. Combined with training conducted in a joint environment, it will improve the British Armed Forces' ability to respond readily to changing requirements. And, finally, personnel currently involved in training tasks will be released for operational missions.

The areas of specialist training that will be affected by the DTR programme have been divided into two separate packages: Package 1 comprises training for Aeronautical Engineering, Electro-Mechanical Engineering, and Communications & Information Systems; Package 2 includes training for Logistics & Personnel Administration (with the exception of the Defence Explosive Munitions & Search School and the Defence Animal Centre), Policing & Guarding (both Military and MoD Police) and Security, Languages, Intelligence & Photography. The estimated costs of the programme exceed £10bn (approx. US\$20bn) over the term of the contract, which is expected to last for a minimum of 25 years. Both packages will be taken forward as separate projects with separate contracts. While Package 1 is broadly affordable, Package 2 still needs to be brought into the budget frame.

### **Metrix took it all**

In January 2007 Defence Secretary Des Browne announced that the Metrix consortium had been awarded Preferred Bidder (BD) status for Package 1 and provisional Preferred Bidder Status (PBS) for Package 2 of the DTR programme. Metrix shareholders (each with a 50% equity stake) are Land Securities Trillium and QinetiQ. Key service providers to the consortium are Raytheon, EDS, Nord Anglia, The Open University, Laing, Dalkia and Sodexo. Metrix won Package 1 against MC3, (BAE Systems, Vosper Thornycroft Group and Carillion), and Package 2 against Holdfast (Babcock Support Services, Carillion and Innisfree). In a competition where the driving factor and the primary consideration in the selection process was to identify the best training solution for defence, the bids from the Metrix Consortium were judged to offer the most economically advantageous solutions to the DTR requirements for each of Packages 1 and 2.

As regards Package 1, the proposal plans to downsize the estate on which this training is currently delivered over a five-year transition period to initially two major sites, St Athan and HMS Sultan (Marine Engineering training), before further consolidating on a single main campus at St Athan. The St Athan site will largely be a newly built facility, which will offer the unrivalled opportunity to establish a world-class training establishment. A small enclave will be retained at Bordon for Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) vehicle recovery training, and some communications training will continue to be delivered alongside Naval warfare training, itself outside of the scope of this project, at HMS Collingwood.

Overall this will have a varying impact across nine sites: Arborfield, Bordon, Blandford, HMS Collingwood, Cosford, RAF Cranwell, RAF Digby, HMS Sultan and St Athan. Marine Engineering training, currently delivered at HMS Sultan, Gosport is anticipated to remain there until 2017, when it is planned to relocate to St Athan.

The proposals for Package 2 will also see rationalisation over a five-year transition period of a number of sites to St Athan, but training undertaken at Chicksands, Leconfield and Wethersfield and a number of smaller federated sites will not move. The MoD and the Metrix consortium is currently exploring what potential there is for making Package 2 affordable by examining the possible synergies and economies of scale across the entire programme, described as a whole programme solution (WPS). However, until the issues relating to Package 2 have been resolved with the bidder, there is no certainty as to the final approach the MOD will take, including whether all or only part of Package 2 will move forward. In the worst-case, if costs cannot be reduced, the MoD will continue some training as is. In terms of the key dates for the programme, contract signature is still scheduled for late 2008, followed by Vesting Day in spring 2009. It is estimated that the affected schools and colleges will not relocate to the new infrastructure until towards the end of a five-year transition phase, due in 2013.

### **Can civilians provide military training?**

Civilians delivering training have proven to be efficient and cost effective. Resource policy also encourages a move toward civilianisation where it proves to be cost effective and a viable operational alternative to military manning, freeing up resources for elsewhere. A further advantage is the continuity that a civilian training organisation can offer. Yet there is still some concern that a private organisation that is detached from military commanders in the field will actually be capable of delivering such a comprehensive military training. For Brigadier Geoff Nield, Defence Training Review Integrated Project Team Leader, this is no problem: "Senior military officers will command and retain overall responsibility for the effectiveness of our future DTR Defence Training Establishments." While the industry partner will be responsible for the design and delivery of specialist training jointly with the military, a strong military presence will be maintained to provide military skills training, ensuring that operational experience is shared with students and that military discipline, command and control and ethos is maintained.

**by Walter Ullrich, Modern Simulation & Training**

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