

Press Release

Serco and RAF celebrate successful start for key aircraft support programme

15 December 2008

Serco and the RAF have come together to celebrate a great start to a critical aircraft support programme.

The 'surface finish' programme involves the provision of painting and finishing services on a wide range of aircraft, ground support equipment and military vehicles across sixteen RAF sites, including the Falkland Islands. This is the first time that this capability has been contracted out to the private sector.

Since contract award in August 2008, the joint Serco and RAF implementation team has been working hard to ensure that the transition, from an MOD delivered service to an outsourced provision of service, has been as smooth and efficient as possible. This has involved the integration of over 90 RAF painters and 20 MOD civilians with a newly recruited workforce of over 100 Serco technicians across the country, and the introduction of a new and innovative IT infrastructure to coordinate the complex range of tasks involved in the programme.

Now that the process has been concluded successfully, the Serco led surface finish team is geared up to provide the surface finish capability for fifteen fixed wing and rotary aircraft types. These include the new Eurofighter Typhoon, Tornado (F3/GR4), Harrier and Hawk fast jets, VC10 refuelling aircraft, C17 and Tristar transport aircraft, the Nimrod, Sentry and Sentinel R1-Astor reconnaissance aircraft, and Chinook, Merlin and Puma helicopters.

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Importantly, the contract will contribute directly to the RAF's ability to meet operational requirements, and underlines the importance of the Serco's support to the UK armed forces. The company is now responsible for elements of the engineering and maintenance on twenty-five military aircraft types, ranging from the Apache helicopter for the Army Air Corps, to the RAF's Hercules transport aircraft.

Ian Wiggans, Technical Director, of Serco's defence operations business, marker the end of a successful transition period with Gp Capt Nick Cox, Wg Cdr Jim Mitchell, Mr Neil Plowman and Sqn Ldr Tim Casey at an event at RAF Cottesmore on 9th December 2008.

Speaking at the event, Gp Capt Cox said:

"The surface finish programme is another great example of industry and the military working in partnership to enhance operational capability. We are delighted with the excellent work that Serco has undertaken with the Service during the preparation for the hand over. Their services will make a significant contribution to enhancing the support to a wide range of RAF aircraft and support equipment over the coming years, and we look forward to working with them."

Ian Wiggans of Serco said:

"The transition to an outsourced provision of service has been a challenging and complex project. Total commitment from the Serco team, together with a pragmatic and effective working relationship with the RAF has directly contributed to us successfully getting to this historic point. We are delighted to have been an integral part of this project. This programme is very important to us, not just in business terms, but also in the opportunity it gives us to extend our support and work more closely with our colleagues in the RAF right across the country.

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The surface finish contact is with the Defence Equipment and Support organisation in support of the Royal Air Force over ten years.

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