

UK MoD Selects Ascent As Preferred Bidder For Military Flight Training System

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Ascent, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and VT Group, has been announced as the preferred bidder to provide military flying training to the UK Armed Forces for the next 25 years.

The UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) programme provides comprehensive training to all new UK military aircrew across the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Army Air Corps. The training covers the period following aircrew selection up to the point the students leave UKMFTS ready to fly in their operational aircraft.

Ascent's selection as the UKMFTS Training System Partner follows a unique contractual approach by the MoD that uses partnering to harness the collective skills of the MoD and industry. Ascent will work with the MoD over the life of the programme to design, deliver and manage ground and flying training at multiple locations across the UK.

Under UKMFTS, the MoD maintains the training output requirements and standards while providing elements such as airfields, fuel and instructors. Ascent will design the overall system and deliver the training capability. The role also includes delivering Lockheed Martin's proven Training Management Information System and the procurement of aircraft platforms and simulators.

Lockheed Martin and VT have a wealth of experience of flying training and aircraft support in the UK and around the world. VT currently runs the Tucano logistics and maintenance programme and the Light Aircraft Flying Training programme for the RAF. Lockheed Martin provides training for more than 20,000 aircrews annually and was recently awarded a 20 year contract with the Republic of Singapore Air Force to provide flight training for their pilot candidates. Together, as Ascent, Lockheed Martin and VT will bring complimentary skills and relevant experience to deliver the highest level of training possible for the MoD.

"With Ascent as the MoD's Training System Partner, UK air crews will be trained faster, more efficiently and to the most exacting of standards. By reducing the time in training, we will increase the time their valuable skills are available, while simultaneously reducing costs," said VT Chief Executive, Paul Lester.

Lockheed Martin UK Chief Executive Ian Stopps added, "Ascent's experience and approach to partnering will continue to pay dividends throughout the life of this programme and has made us exceptionally aware of the important role this team has in the defence of the UK."

For UKMFTS, Lockheed Martin will draw on the expertise of its Simulation, Training and Support (STS) business, whose UK-based team developed and support the UK's Combined Arms Tactical Trainer, the world's largest networked trainer. "We are honoured to be chosen as the MoD's Training System Partner on this exciting and groundbreaking programme," said Dale Bennett, STS president. "We look forward to working with the MoD in a true partnering environment as we manage the incremental delivery of the total aircrew training requirement."

VT Group plc is a leading defence and civil contractor and already provides nearly a third of the UK's existing military flying training.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 140,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.

Lockheed Martin UK, a unit of Lockheed Martin Corporation, is a leader in systems integration working on major programmes spanning the aerospace, defence and civil sectors. Lockheed Martin works with more than 100 business partners and employs over 1500 people at 15 sites across the UK.

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