

Ascent Signs Contract With MoD For New UK Military Flight Training System

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Ascent, a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and VT Group, has today signed the contract which will see it provide military flying training to the UK Armed Forces for the next 25 years. The initial contract is valued at 635 million pounds Sterling and is projected to rise to approximately 6 billion pounds over the life of the programme.

The contract makes Ascent responsible for running the UK Military Flying Training System (UKMFTS) programme, providing comprehensive training to all new UK military aircrew across the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force and the Army Air Corps.

Minister for Defence Equipment and Support, Baroness Taylor, said: "The partnering contract with Ascent brings together MoD and industry skills to deliver a first class flying training capability. It will significantly improve training for Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army aircrew by bringing together the current range of fragmented training schemes into one modern and cohesive programme."

Fred Ross of Lockheed Martin has been named managing director of Ascent and Ken Cornfield of VT Support Services will serve as Ascent deputy managing director.

Under UKMFTS, the MoD maintains the training output requirements and standards whilst providing elements such as airfields, fuel and instructors. Ascent will design the overall system and deliver the training capability including delivering a proven Training Management Information System and the procurement of aircraft platforms and simulators.

"UKMFTS is a model private-public initiative that will enable us to work with the Ministry of Defence for the next two and a half decades, providing tailored solutions that will optimise the capabilities of UK aircrews," said Dale Bennett, president of Lockheed Martin Simulation, Training & Support.

Ascent will take over the role on an incremental basis to ensure minimal disruption to the current training programme. Additional contracts detailing future services and purchases will be announced as the programme progresses. The training covers the period following Aircrew Selection up to the point the students leave UKMFTS ready to fly in their operational aircraft.

VT chief executive, Paul Lester said: "Our background in flying training extends over 70 years. As part of Ascent, we will utilise that experience and work closely with the Ministry of Defence to deliver new standards in flying training that will further enhance the world leading capability of UK aircrew."

Ascent's selection as UKMFTS Training System Partner in November 2006 followed a competition to select a partner who would 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.

Lockheed Martin UK chief executive, Ian Stopps said: "The key to this programme is a successful partnership that will provide 25 years of exacting training for UK aircrews. Ascent and MoD will work together to ensure UK air crews remain amongst the most highly-trained and respected in the world."

Lockheed Martin and VT have a wealth of experience of flying training and aircraft support in the UK and around the world. VT currently operates the RAF Tucano logistics and maintenance programme (Tucano Total Support programme) and the Light Aircraft Flying Training programme. Lockheed Martin annually provides training for more than 20,000 aircrew, including U.S. Air Force Special Operations crews. Together, as Ascent, Lockheed Martin and VT will bring complementary skills and relevant experience to deliver the highest level of training possible for the MoD.

VT Group is a major defence and support services company which already supports nearly a third of the UK's existing military flying training. Customers include government agencies and businesses worldwide. VT Group employs nearly 14,000 people with a turnover in 2007 of 1.2 billion pounds

(\$2.4 billion). The support business of VT operates from various locations primarily in the UK, USA and Middle East, with shipbuilding operating principally from new facilities in Portsmouth, UK.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland, Lockheed Martin Corporation 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. The Corporation reported 2007 sales of \$41.9 billion.

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 1700 people at 12 sites across the UK.

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