

Hercules Starts Work On £121m Defence Training College

Friday 14 February, 2014

Hercules, a 50:50 joint venture between Kier Group and Balfour Beatty, has begun a £121m contract to transform a former RAF airbase into a new Armed Forces training facility for the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO).

The start of work was celebrated on 13 February with a sod cutting ceremony at the former airbase. In attendance were Dr Andrew Murrison, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State and Minister for International Security Strategy, and representatives from the Ministry of Defence, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Balfour Beatty and Kier Group.

Hercules is delivering new single living accommodation for military trainees and purpose-built enhanced training facilities for over 1,100 trainees and 800 staff from the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. This is the first time in the UK that training provision for all three services has been delivered in one location. The facilities include a large outdoor training area and a museum for the Army's Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.

At construction peak the project will employ 900 people including service leavers and injured ex-military personnel. Hercules has committed to working with the Forces Career Transition Partnership, which assists military personnel to secure permanent work on completion of their time in service, and Enterprise Works, a Swindon-based organisation that supports individuals with a disability - specifically injured ex-services personnel - to secure employment.

RAF Lyneham's history of repatriation will be preserved and honoured through a memorial dedication, a public Garden of Remembrance and an area within the museum.

David Holmes, DIO project leader, said:

"DIO's aim is to support the Armed Forces by providing what they need to live, work and train. This new state-of-the-art college will help us to achieve this by offering the best possible training facilities for all three services in a central location."

Defence Minister Andrew Murrison added:

"I am delighted to officially mark the first stage of construction work on the new Defence College of Technical Training.

"This new college will ensure our Armed Forces have the best possible training environment with modern accommodation in which to live and learn. By co-locating activities for all three services in one place we are not only helping to improve efficiency by reducing the time personnel need to spend in training, but also helping to save money for the taxpayer by rationalising the Defence estate."

Richard Collin, Hercules construction manager, said:

"Hercules is delighted to have been awarded this major tri-services strategic training facilities project. Working with the DIO and the team of services stakeholders, our objective is to provide best value new and refurbished assets employing sustainable construction methods and whole life solutions. Hercules' commitment to sustainability will include our approach to maximising localism in terms of both local procurement and engagement with the local community."

Phase one of the work, being supported by award-winning international architects Scott Brownrigg, is expected to be completed by the autumn of 2015, when staff and students will start to arrive at the college.

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