£50m MoD education contracts

by Chris Graham

Four five-year education contracts potentially worth over £50m were awarded by the Ministry of Defence last month, accounting for the bulk of the £88m total of work given to British-based firms for September. The largest single contract for £29.8m has gone to Babcock Training Ltd of North Harbour, Portsmouth, Hampshire, for adult and other education services. This is based on an estimated delivery in 2010/2011 of 1,464 starts and 1,512 completions.

Babcock will deliver apprenticeship courses for the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) in the UK, Germany and Cyprus. Depending upon the specialisation and career stage, learners undertake apprenticeships in Engineering Maintenance (L2), Production Engineering (L3), Engineering Maintenance (L3), Performing Engineering Operations (L2), Roadside Assistance and Recovery (L2 & L3), Warehousing and Storage (L2). Soldiers are inducted during Phase 2 training at Arborfield Garrison in Berkshire or Bordon, Hampshire. Key skills and functional skills and the Technical Certificate are delivered in the phase 2 schools. The NVQ element is delivered in the Field Army. There is currently a trial to deliver the Vehicle Mechanics Technical Certificate in unit lines.

GB-Andover has awarded another five-year education contract for £12m to Royal Artillery Centre for Personal Development, RA Barracks, Larkhill, Salisbury , Wiltshire. The Army holds an agreement with the Skills Funding Agency of England (SFA) to provide a grant towards funding the delivery of apprenticeships and other
work-based learning qualifications to soldiers as part of their continuingprofessional development.

This requirement covers apprenticeship delivery to the Royal Regiment of Artillery (RA) and is wholly dependent upon the availability of SFA funding. Because SFA funding is provided on an annual basis, the contract has been let on the basis of one year certain, with four further optional, one-year periods. Some programmes require bespoke functional skills courses to be run in various locations and training establishments including the UK, Germany, Cyprus and others. The contract is based on an estimated delivery for 2010/2011 of 894 starts and 1,285 achievements

The Royal Regiment of Artillery consists of 15 Regular Army Regiments based in the UK and Germany. Depending upon trade specialisation, learners undertake apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship programmes in Communication Technologies, Carry & Deliver Goods, and Logistics Operations Management. Most delivery commences in Larkhill; some learners are inducted from the Field Army. All apprenticeships are completed in Field Army regiments.

Another five-year education contract for £7.5m has gone to TQ Education and Training Ltd, Lockington, Derby for Royal Engineers based in the UK & Germany. Soldiers are inducted onto and complete their apprenticeship during phase 2 training at Chatham, Deepcut, Leconfield, Minley and potentially Bovington. The Technical Certificate and a significant proportion of the NVQ assessment are conducted within the Phase 2 training and is not part of this requirement. Functional Skills is delivered during Phase 2 training. Depending on the specialisation, soldiers undertake an apprenticeship in Engineering (L2, Specialised Plant Machinery Operations (L2), IT and Telecoms (L3), Warehousing and Storage (L2). Following a pilot, an apprenticeship in Carpentry and Joinery may be required from 2011. The average learning figure for L3 programmes is currently 60, L2 is currently 340. The contact is based upon an estimated delivery for 2010/2011 of 462 starts and 486 achievements.

The Army Catering Training Trust, Worthy Down, Winchester, has been awarded an education contract worth £3.35m. The Defence Food Services School in Worthy Down delivers City and Guilds qualifications and Sector Skills Apprenticeships in Food Preparation and Cooking (L2), Hospitality, Supervision and Leadership (L3), Apprenticeship in Customer Service (L3). Functional Skills and Technical Certificates are delivered at Worthy Down. The NVQ is delivered in the Field Army by qualified military assessors, supported by qualified military IVs at over 250 locations in including UK, Germany, Cyprus, Brunei, Falklands and Afghanistan. The average learning figure for L3 programmes is currently 100, and L2 currently 300. The estimated 2010/2011 delivery is 124 L2 and 58 L3 starts with 88 L2 and 51 L3 achievements.

Apart from education services, the largest UK contract awarded by the MoD last month was for £7.2m to AcciDon't Ltd, Helensburgh, on the Firth of Clyde. This MoD Combined Contract Award by GB-Andover is for the provision of Category B Licence Acquisition Training Services for the Armed Forces within Defence Science & Technology (DST) (South) Section VII. The total value of the contract is £7,244,420.

A £7m contract for motor vehicles for goods transport has gone to Ryder Ltd, Devizes, Wiltshire. Awarded by GB-Andover, the contract is for lease hire of Category C and C+E Minimum Test Vehicles for the Defence School of Transport and is worth a total of £7,034,770.

GB-Bristol has approved a contract for £4m for breathing apparatus for fire-fighting, but the successful contractor has not been named. The Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus (EDBA) is a self-contained breathing apparatus and is used on all ships, submarines and MoD shore establishments. It is used to fight and/or to rescue casualties in an atmosphere that will not support life (smoke, toxic gas).

A near-£1.8m contract for bird control services in the Southern Region has gone to Safeskys Ltd, High Wycombe, Bucks. The MoD Combined Contract Award by GB-High

Wycombe includes bird-scaring cartridges for use on airfields and is worth a total of £1,799,725.

Ansell Jones Marine Services Ltd, Johnstone, Renfrewshire, has gained a £1.7m contract for repair and maintenance of marine equipment, including in-service support of their proprietary equipment fitted on HM ships and submarines. Awarded by GB-Bristol, the contract is worth a total of £1,767,000.

A £1.7m contract for primary water systems has gone to Police Resource International Ltd, Exeter, Devon. Awarded by GB-Bristol the contract is for Individual Hydration Systems and is worth a total of £1,759,340. Singapore Technologies Kinetics Ltd has gained a £1.2m contract for vehicle maintenance and repair services related to specific parts of vehicles.

Viking Arms Ltd, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, has won a £1m weapons deal from GB-Bristol for weapons, ammunition and associated parts for the Light Weapons, Photographic and Batteries (LWPB) Project Team including the further procurement of a relatively small quantity of holographic weapon sights which are in service with UK Armed Forces during current military operations. The total value of the contract is £1,090,000.