

STAS – Open for Business

By Craig Taylor, Head of Marketing Communications, Excelitas Qioptiq

£3.7m STAS Facility designed to deliver vital support to the British Armed Forces has been opened by Major General Colin McLean CBE, Director Land Equipment.

Back in the early part of 2017 UK Minister Harriett Baldwin announced the award of an £82 million MoD contract to Qioptiq. The award would see Qioptiq in St. Asaph, North Wales provide support for surveillance and targeting equipment to the UK Armed Forces over the course of the six year contract. This would ensure vital mission critical equipment is available to UK personnel around the globe.

On the 9th May 2018 a brand new, state-of-the-art £3.7m facility was declared open by Major General Colin McLean CBE, Director Land Equipment at the MoD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support. Major General Colin McClean, said: "This exceptional facility will ensure our Armed Services have the Surveillance and Target Acquisition devices they require, be it in training or on the battlefield, today and in the future. DE&S worked innovatively with industry and our customer to secure an exceptional solution that has resulted in a reduction of cost to the tax payer, as well as also securing the future of a world-class engineering capability here in the United Kingdom."

Work under the new STAS contract merges 20 individual support contracts into one, saving the MoD £47 million over the next six years. The contract covers equipment used right across the UK Armed Forces delivering capability to all three front line commands. Chief Executive Officer of the MoD's Defence Equipment and Support organization, Tony Douglas said, "Crucially, the STAS contract will deliver improved support to Her Majesty's Armed Forces."

The Surveillance and Target Acquisition Support (STAS) contract with Qioptiq will provide:

- An Integrated Logistic Support (ILS) capability for over 50 types and 200 thousand pieces of battle-winning STA equipment out to 2023 and beyond
- A flexible, firm priced, fit for purpose and value for money support solution
- Our troops with the equipment capability they need to stay safe

Major General McLean unveiled a plaque commemorating the opening. Others in attendance included Major Gareth Davies - Chief of Staff, James Hennessey - STAS Project Manager, Colonel Paul Armstrong - Army HQ, Sue Towell - Supply Chain Manager, Dickie Davis - Deputy Director, Adv Materials & Manufacturing (Welsh Gov), others



STAS building

included representatives from Industry, Cardiff University and the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association. Excelitas Qioptiq were represented by Doug Benner – EVP Defence and Aerospace, Peter White – MD at St. Asaph and VP of Land Equipment, Chris Bigwood – VP Advanced Optronics, and Phil Ainscough – STAS Director and others. A tour of the facility, product and capability briefings, and video presentations were also included as part of the event.

Peter White, Managing Director at Qioptiq said, “For this opportunity we acknowledged we needed to take a more collaborative approach, which has helped secure a major contract from UK MoD to support equipment vital to the safety of our soldiers in front line operations.”

Welsh Government played an important role in supporting the growth and expansion of Qioptiq in St. Asaph, North Wales by investing in the new purpose-designed facility, which opened next to the current Qioptiq plant in the St. Asaph Business Park. Economy Secretary Ken Skates commented, “Qioptiq is one of our most innovative, high-value manufacturing companies working in a priority sector. The partnership has significant economic impact on the local economy through local employment and supply chains.”

Welsh Government also supported Qioptiq by co-founding the innovative Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) toolbox – developed by Cardiff University for Qioptiq. Experts from Cardiff Business School spent two years developing the toolset to improve Denbighshire-based Qioptiq’s inventory forecasting operations.

This approach is innovative and affective but the concept is nothing new for us. Qioptiq has long been considered the in-service support partner for many of our customers around the world. With 30+ years of experience in providing tailored through life support solutions designed to optimise our service levels and value for money, driving down overall cost of ownership with resilient support solutions integrate seamlessly with our customers supply chain.

The Qioptiq Mission:

- To deliver a fully integrated support service that totally satisfies the customers’ needs
- Qioptiq has the skills, experience and commitment to meet the challenges of Customer Services – today and in the future
- Tailored to provide flexible, cost effective, Customer-focused services
- Applied by experienced, highly trained staff with widely acknowledged expertise in all aspects of support
- Working in partnership with the customer to drive down costs across the life of the equipment
- Maximise equipment availability Guarantee continuous through-life customer service

Doug Benner, Excelitas Executive Vice President Defence and Aerospace said “it is an honour to be selected for the STAS contract. We appreciate the confidence the UK MoD has placed in us. This selection will allow us to continue the mission of ensuring STA equipment is available to the end user when needed. Whether serving defence ministries around the world or meeting the critical requirements of the world’s largest defence prime contractors, Excelitas’ Defence and Aerospace mission is “Keeping our Troops Safe” with the best technology/products/services.”

Excelitas’ Qioptiq is a recognised, first-tier supplier to many of the defence and aerospace sector’s leading companies with a product range that includes some of the most sophisticated advanced optical technologies ranging from Night Vision Sights... to Head Up Display Optical modules... through to Space Components. Excelitas Technologies is a US corporation with locations throughout Europe, Asia and North America employing more than 6000 people. It employs over 500 people in North Wales on two sites at St Asaph and Bodelwyddan. Qioptiq are proud to provide in service support to the UK MoD’s Surveillance Target Acquisition and Night Observation (STANO) equipment supply chain. ■

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