

## High-tech wizardry behind the Merlin

Lockheed Martin, one of the world's largest aerospace companies, is working closely with the Royal Navy at RNAS Culdrose, situated on the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall. Here, it acts as prime contractor and systems integrator for the £2 billion project for the multi-mission helicopter Merlin Mk 1.

### Workforce

The company's Culdrose operations are supported by around 40 fulltime personnel, mainly highly skilled engineering and IT support staff. Will Gibson, head of Lockheed Martin's Merlin Training System Development, says: "It's a great advantage to have such a welldeveloped skills base locally. A lot of our engineers have learned their trade on active service at RNAS Culdrose itself - which means they really know what they're doing."

### Clients

The nature of its work at RNAS Culdrose means that the company collaborates with other branches of government including the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).



### Technology

RNAS Culdrose is the site for the company's £170 million Merlin training suite as well as being home to 700M Squadron, the Royal Navy's first Merlin squadron. In addition, it houses Lockheed Martin's extensive logistics support operation - the Merlin Helicopter Support and Spares Availability System (MSSAS) - a highly efficient network of IT systems for tracking spares and repairables. This ensures the aircraft are kept in optimum flying condition, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Now, with three Merlin squadrons based at Culdrose, Lockheed Martin has certainly got its work cut out for it at what is considered one of the Royal Navy's prime strategic bases in the UK. This has helped to put Cornwall firmly on the map in respect of aerospace and defence enterprises.