

## Partnering Profile

Royal Navy

VT Flagship team plays key role supporting Royal Navy's warfare training simulation facility



### Introduction

The Royal Navy (RN) delivers elements of their Warfare Officer's training programme at the 'Cook' simulator facility in Southwick Park, Hampshire. This facility houses three static warship simulators, designed to accurately replicate the Operations Room on-board the Navy's Type 22 and 23 Frigates and Type 42 Destroyers.

Working on an 11 week cycle designed around the Principal Warfare Officer's course, the facility delivers operational team training to, on average, 100 personnel each week.

In the simulators, RN trainees practice various procedures, from safely landing a helicopter to firing missiles and combating enemy air threat. A 'game' is played which portrays a realistic battle environment, testing their problem solving skills and ability to operate as a cohesive crew.

### VT Flagship's Role

A joint RN and VT Flagship team makes sure that the training programme is kept in full flow and meets the exacting training performance standards.

VT Flagship has supported the Royal Navy's simulation training at this location since 1997. In the early years a small team of VT Flagship 'Role Players' helped to add realism to the training scenarios. This team, which has now swelled to 28 VT Flagship employees, 'acts' the part of anyone the trainees would speak to outside of the ship's company; from Officer of the Watch to helicopter pilots, or even submarines.

Our 15 strong team of skilled maintainers provide technical support to keep the three Operations Room simulators, and the central simulation system that drives them, running during the demanding training regime. These multi-skilled engineers carry out routine maintenance, fault finding and defect repair on a wide range of systems and software.

Meanwhile VT Flagship's Exercise Preparation team creates the many simulated vehicles involved in the exercises, whilst our 'front of house' team looks after the facility management requirements of the building and visitors.

“The VT Flagship partnership within the Command Team Trainers is an excellent example of how the RN and VT Flagship should work. They consistently demonstrate an enthusiastic and “can do” attitude that mirrors our own ethos.”

**Lt Cdr Paul Schillemore RN**  
**Officer in Charge, Simulators, Cook Building**



## Partnering Benefits

The VT Flagship team plays an important role in the delivery of the Navy’s training output at Southwick Park. Each week the entire Cook team - including RN, VT Flagship and contractors – meet to discuss any issues which may impact on the continuous 11 week training cycle.

Assisted by a small team of RN subject matter experts the VT Flagship Role Players make sure the training reflects current procedures and conforms to RN standards.

Unlike their naval colleagues, who typically move on every couple of years, the VT Flagship support team remains constant. Many of our employees have worked at Southwick Park for 10 years, so they bring stability and consistency of approach to the training environment.

Our Role Players are all ex-RN so they bring relevant on-board experience which helps to enhance training for the naval personnel. They also keep up to date with current RN operating procedures through strong relationships with the Navy and via a programme of external visits to familiarise themselves with new equipment.

Our maintenance team looks after a wide range of software applications and simulators, some of which date back 30 years. Keeping the older legacy equipment running can be challenging, especially when the training cycle allows for only a limited amount of down time to conduct maintenance. However, thanks to our highly skilled team of electronic engineers availability levels are kept high - currently running at over 98%.

The facility support team controls access to the building and makes sure that everything runs smoothly for people using the facility, day or night.

The entire VT Flagship team also supports the Navy when they take part in international synthetic exercises, which link up shore based simulators around the world. Our flexible employees change their working hours to take part in the exercises, which can run for 56 hours continuously.

Thanks to a strong ‘Cook team’ ethos, mature relationship and open communication channels, the integrated team is viewed as an example of successful partnering. Adds Lt Cdr Schillemore; *“As a management team we work closely together, sharing ownership of the business needs and ensuring that these are met in a flexible and positive manner.”*