

# CASE STUDY



## RFA CARDIGAN BAY

- **REMOTE VIDEO SUPPORT KEEPS RFA CARDIGAN BAY OPERATIONAL DESPITE COVID-19**



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## OVERVIEW

A&P Defence's use of video to provide remote support to RFA Cardigan Bay while in operational theatre, proved a highly effective way to carry out vital repairs, despite the restrictions of Covid-19, and has resulted in a new cluster-wide approach to remote support.



## SOLUTION

RFA Cardigan Bay developed an operational defect (OPDEF) while working as the command ship for the Royal Navy's minehunters in the Middle East. With travel restrictions in place due to the global pandemic, it was not possible for the Cluster Support Team (CST) based at A&P Falmouth, to fly out to the ship and assist with repairs.

The team determined that video support via a 4G-enabled portable computer system, which included an endoscope, antenna and 4G router, would provide the quickest and most cost-efficient way to support the vessel remotely.

Although a first for A&P Defence, the team quickly acquired a Commercial Off The Shelf system and configured it with the appropriate hardware and software. This was carried out by a member of A&P's IT department who was working at home due to the pandemic, before it underwent commissioning testing at A&P Falmouth. As RFA Cardigan Bay's sister vessel RFA Mounts Bay was undergoing her annual refit at A&P Falmouth at the same time, she was determined to be the perfect test vessel for a live simulation of the video link system.

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Once configured and tested, the equipment was installed on RFA Mounts Bay exactly as it would be required on RFA Cardigan Bay, including mapping the exact locations for the antenna, cables runs and other equipment and producing concise set-up and operating instructions. Once complete, the equipment was sent to RFA Cardigan Bay via the MoD's reduced operational airbridge.

While the system was in transit, a dedicated control room was set up within A&P Falmouth's CST office to act as a communications hub and a flexible working rota was drawn up to ensure a member of the CST was always available.

Once the new system was installed on RFA Cardigan Bay by the vessel's engineering team, the benefits were quickly reaped. One of the most significant was the ability to live stream video from the vessel's machinery spaces to the CST in Falmouth. This allowed a first-hand view of the implications of the OPDEF and was instrumental in planning the required repairs.

The system also allowed the chief engineer to communicate daily with the CST via Microsoft Teams and to participate in discussions with key stakeholders to monitor progress, share Covid-19 updates and discuss available resources and scheduling.

Such was the success of this video link solution that other Cluster Support Contract vessels have now requested the same system and support when they are in operational theatre.



*The use of remote support using a 4G enabled portable computer system to rectify RFA Cardigan Bay's OPDEF has been deemed extremely successful by A&P, the MoD and the front-line vessel receiving the support. Other ships supported by A&P within the Cluster Support Contract have already requested an identical system so that they can be afforded the same live support whilst on operational deployments. The quick resolution of this OPDEF and the appetite for this solution across our cluster vessels is testament to the CST's determination, efficiency, agility and vessel knowledge which demonstrates the well proven collaborative nature of the support contract.*



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