FUJITSU

# Case Study
# CRFCA

»Fujitsu vShape is an all-inclusive package with no hidden extras that is easy to deploy and support and by far the most reliable and dependable part of our infrastructure.«

Jonathan Challis, National Systems Administrator, CRFCA



## The customer

Country: United Kingdom
Industry: Reserve Forces' & Cadets' Associations
Founded: 1908
Employees: 800
Website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/reserve-forces-and-cadets-associations

RFCA
Reserve Forces'
Cadets' Associations

## The challenge

The CRFCA needed to upgrade its existing server infrastructure as the number of users had increased from 100 locally to 800 nationally.

## The solution

Working with long-time partner ABS IT Services, the CRFCA deployed Fujitsu vShape, a combined server, storage and virtualisation solution.

## The customer

Established in 1908, the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations (RFCAs) were originally formed to provide local support to the Territorial Force in every UK county. Over 100 years later the name has changed, the number of associations has reduced and the RFCA dependency has grown to provide administrative support to the reservists and cadets of all three armed services.

The RFCAs, through professionally qualified staff of 800, are responsible on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) for the upkeep of some 460 tri-service reserve forces' sites and 1,700 cadet centres.

## The challenge

There are 13 RFCAs across the UK, with one central authority (Council of RFCAs – CRFCA) designated to provide advisory and ancillary services, including administering the national IT infrastructure. This uses a virtual platform which is accessed by the end-user devices through a physical network. It is largely responsible for providing email, file storage, backups, end-user device management, issuing Windows updates and security updates.

Depending on credentials users can access either the standard PH2E system or, for those with higher clearance, the MOD-linked PH2 virtual system. These interconnected networks were running on legacy servers that lacked the processing power and storage capacity to support the national infrastructure.

"Our infrastructure was originally designed to only support 100 local users but, with recent organisational changes, we have had to scale that up to support 800 users nationally," explains Jonathan Challis, National Systems Administrator, CRFCA. "It simply wasn't geared up to serve as a national hub so we needed to find a way to quickly and securely migrate to a platform that is fit for purpose."

For over 20 years, the CRFCA has worked with systems specialist Paul Aujla, himself a former member of the armed forces. It turned to him for guidance on how best to upgrade its IT architecture.

## The benefit

- Stable, scalable and secure platform which can support further growth at one fixed price
- Simple migration of existing system without disrupting day-to-day operations
- Boasts the best in stability and has not presented any issues in its first six months
- Reduced hardware incidents results in an improved user experience
- Frees up the IT team to focus resources on more strategic business objectives
- Meets stringent security demands, enabling effective connection with security & performance driven networks

## Products and services

- Fujitsu vShape

The new solution also meets the high security standards required. The PH2 System is the only network that can connect to both the public internet and the MOD's secure RLI network. Users with PH2 credentials now have VMware virtual desktops which can be accessed from anywhere through the physical PH2E network managed by the vShape.

## The benefit

Fujitsu vShape provides the CRFCA with a stable, scalable and secure platform which can support further growth – all at one fixed price. It also makes management and maintenance much simpler, enabling Challis and his team to focus on more strategic objectives.

"It is an all-inclusive package with no hidden extras that is easy to deploy and support and by far the most reliable and dependable part of our infrastructure," continues Challis. "It runs like clockwork and if we need to add more power under the hood, it is a simple task. If you look at our systems as a pyramid, vShape is the bottom layer, underpinning everything, so it is vital it works 24/7."

In the six months since its installation, vShape has presented no issues, while incidents in other areas have also decreased: "Hardware incidents have almost been eliminated as have issues with VMware. It provides a much better and more flexible user experience while making my life easier."

## Conclusion

With Fujitsu vShape in place, Challis and his team are free to focus their resources elsewhere in the organisation in order to concentrate on driving the business forward. The new data centre is nearing completion and we are looking to add further Fujitsu vShape solutions to deliver services and applications to all our users across the organisation.

"Fujitsu vShape is the perfect fit for our needs – a cost-effective, flexible, scalable and robust solution that combines servers and storage in one neat package. I would have loved to run a virtualised system like vShape in my previous roles."

Jonathan Challis, National Systems Administrator, CRFCA

"We had built up the systems piecemeal over the years which led to performance issues," says Paul Aujla, Director, ABS IT Services. "We were in the process of designing a new data centre from the ground up in Aldershot but, in the meantime, needed to find a solution that could properly support the expanded user numbers."

CRFCA and Aujla developed a Proof of Concept based on Fujitsu vShape, which demonstrated that it had the storage, memory and processing power to support all users securely. This enabled vShape to gain security accreditation and thus have its funding approved by the MOD.

## The solution

Fujitsu vShape is a flexible, scalable solution that combines all aspects of a virtual environment, based on optimised technologies and best practice solutions, with simple implementation and operation. This enables the CRFCA to benefit from validated reference architectures by having a more streamlined, reduced risk experience.

The solution consists of Fujitsu PRIMERGY RX300 servers, Fujitsu ETERNUS DX200 storage, VMware vSphere and Brocade switches for an all-in-one IT platform. It now runs Active Directory for 800 users and connects to 70+ servers around the country for Active Directory Controls and file backup purposes.

"Fujitsu vShape essentially works out-of-the-box which made migration straightforward. We simply physically connected vShape to our existing system and copied the relevant virtual machines across," adds Challis. "That took a couple of days after which we were good to go."