

DCI: TRANSFERRING THE FRENCH ARMED FORCES KNOW-HOW

To disseminate the know-how of Europe's finest armed forces to French industry customers and friendly countries. Such is the raison d'être of Défense Conseil International (DCI). With its unique organisation mirroring the Defence Ministry, DCI positions itself ahead of armament exports and is an efficient component of Defence's international influence strategy. It builds links with would-be customers and is a differentiating element of the technological excellence of French industry. The group, which has a navy department (DCI-NAVFCO), an air force department (DCI-AIRCO), an army department (DCI-COFRAS) and an armament department (DCI-DESCO), can accompany French manufacturers of equipment when it comes to the transfer of the military

know-how required to implement it. DCI can also act directly at the request of countries where it is present, as is the case with training of cadets in French military schools. Thanks to its complete independence, DCI can work with the entire spectrum of defence industry manufacturers. Building on the culture and skills of their service branch, DCI employees maintain a close relationship with each of the French armed forces, of which they are "legitimate offspring." Building on this "French armed forces" label, DCI guarantees its partners will acquire the same knowledge and skills as those of the French armed forces. While DCI is a company, it also leverages France's activities to help friendly countries. The combination of both characteristics makes for the

group's originality and guides its development. Offering customised solutions for countries that approach France, DCI works as much for France as for those countries that place their trust in the company. That is its core business: to facilitate the transfer of French armed forces know-how for the benefit of friendly countries. Faithful to its principles, DCI is also an innovative group that is diversifying its offer to address growing needs in fields such as cyber security, with the creation of the Cyber Defence Management Institute (CDMI), or light ISR, with the acquisition of Vigie Aviation. The group is also updating its training tools, for example with further development of e-learning and the design of training methods that use "serious games."



L'Almak, DCI's multipurpose training ship

ALMAK: TOP-OF-THE-RANGE NAVAL TRAINING

To better address the naval training requests of its customers, DCI and Piriou Shipyard have developed a modern and multi-purpose training ship, the *Almak*. Operated by NavOcéan (a subsidiary of DCI and Piriou), the *Almak* has been operational since October 2013 and is based in Concarneau (France). Since then, more than 100 trainees from the Middle East and Africa have been welcomed on board this robust and comfortable ship. They've learnt navigation techniques as part of the CENOE programme (French Naval Academy training courses for foreign officers), a long-duration academic training, or during practical training sessions at sea. DCI sets itself apart from its competitors by offering top-of-the-range training: cadets and their fa-

milies benefit from the support of DCI instructors when they arrive in France and are never left to face everyday worries alone. This friendly environment also accounts for very high pass rates: a marked difference with other "low cost" training programmes offered by competitors, which, in the end, are more expensive. DCI is also able to quickly respond to its customers' needs: last summer 42 Saudi cadets joined the *Almak* a few weeks after the Kingdom's naval academy made the request. It was a very rich experience for these seamen, who experienced their first major stay at sea, with three crossings in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Building on the success of the offer, with 36 weeks of training at sea in its first year of activity, the group is going to

launch the building of a second training ship to rapidly meet the needs of present and future customers.

Diving expertise

The DCI-NAVFCO military diving school is expanding, with the inauguration of the international military diving school (CIFPM) in Saint-Mandrier. DCI's diving school has already trained 360 foreign trainees from five different countries (Qatar, Kuwait, Libya, Slovenia and Malaysia) since 2003. It offers a comprehensive range of military diving courses, including unexploded ammunition identification and disposal, in cooperation with the French Navy's diving school, which offers the use of its land and sea practice areas.

AERONAUTICAL TRAINING: HÉLIDAX, AIR ACADEMY

Created in 2008, HéliDax provides the helicopter pilot training school (EALAT) with the flight hours required for the basic training of pilots from the three branches (land, air, sea) and the Gendarmerie Nationale. DCI holds 50% of the shares of this very successful company. DCI also performs the maintenance of helicopter engines and avionics equipment on its premises. The fleet of 36 EC120B helicopters makes it possible to carry out an average of 20,000 flight hours each year. More than 500 pilots have been trained there since 2010, and the 100,000 flight hour milestone will be reached in September 2015. This school complements the training activities carried out by the group in friendly countries, where it offers a comprehensive range of training programmes for cadets, pilots and mechanics, in either French or foreign schools, particularly in the Gulf. In Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), DCI has just



EC-120 helicopters from Helidax, France (crédit photo : HéliDax)

completed Search and Rescue (SAR) training for Naval Air Force Panther helicopter pilots. In Qatar, nine awardees from the Doha Air Academy, a helicopter pilot training school resulting from the long-term partnership between DCI and the Qatar Emiri Air Force, were recently decorated. Lastly, in the United Arab Emirates, DCI has wrapped up a course that is part of the new logistics training offer for helicopter bases and is launching a logistics training

offer focused on air operations and based on innovative simulation tools. A first two-week course was completed last summer. Held for senior officers from the United Arab Emirates air force, this course was successfully carried out within framework of the cooperation agreement between French and Emiri air forces. DCI intends to offer its two-level training (advanced and intermediate) to other foreign countries, particularly in the Gulf and in Asia.

CYBER DEFENCE TRAINING PROGRAMME

Since the Cyber Defence plan was launched in February 2014 by French Defence Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, DCI, whose core business is the transfer of know-how from across the Defence Ministry to friendly countries, has offered a cyber-security training programme. There is growing demand in this field: countries where the group is located are interested in France's expertise, notably because of France's unique position, one that is both original and independent. This French specificity and its renowned know-how are considered by many countries as an alternative to Anglo-Saxon offers, often perceived as a threat to strategic autonomy. DCI created the Cyber Defence Management Institute (CDMI) to organise a biannual training seminar aimed at decision makers eager to reinforce the cyber capabilities of their respective organisations. Several workshops address the main cyber defence issues through scenarios and role plays. The content of these workshops is defined according to DGA requirements and in partnership with large French manufacturers in the sector. DCI also offers technical training dealing with specific cyber is-

ssues such as virology, legal aspects, weaknesses, code analysis and surveillance. Moreover, from 30 September to 3 October 2014, DCI carried out the first joint exercise simulating an attack on national computer systems. Named DEFNET 2014, it took place at the Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan school, in Brittany. DCI played a major part in the preparation of this exercise by designing the computer platform that allowed the armed forces to perform their first large-scale electronic warfare exercise. DEFNET 2014 was based on a realistic scenario: hackers attacking air base networks and taking advantage of a weakness in one of the military facilities' subcontractors. About 60 cyber defence experts worked on this scenario in order to organise the response. The results of the exercise were commended by the defence minister, Jean-Yves Le Drian: "Thanks to DCI and the private actors involved in this project and their quick response, the system was completed in record time. This first exercise is in keeping with the dynamics of the centre for cyber excellence in the Brittany region, barely six months after the announcement of its creation."

Academic training

DCI offers full academic training courses, ranging from one to seven years of instruction at the most prestigious civil and military schools in France, allowing officers from friendly foreign armed forces to obtain renowned French diplomas. Each year, DCI trains more than 100 new foreign officers who join the ranks of French schools: Brest Naval Academy and Saint-Mandrier Naval Training Centre for seamen; Ecole de l'Air since 2013 for airmen; and Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan special military school for army, national guard and royal guard cadets. In 2014, DCI signed an agreement with Aix Marseille University, where master's and bachelor degrees are offered to cadets trained within the group, in France or in partner countries such as Qatar. In the latter country, 100% of the first group of trainees at the Qatar Air Academy were awarded their helicopter pilot licence in January, and 100% of cadets obtained their bachelor's degree.

HEALTH TRAINING OFFER

DCI recently signed a framework agreement with the French military health service (Service de Santé des Armées - SSA) to provide a comprehensive offer for military medical training. This unique military health service in Europe has proven its high degree

of efficiency in overseas operations carried out by France in recent years. Building on the expertise of the SSA, DCI will be able to offer academic and operational training, consulting and services (such as equipment and medication) in France and abroad. DCI aims to

offer foreign armed forces customised optimisation of their medical and surgical support in land, sea and air branches. Whether initial or specialised, these training programmes will be validated by the SSA.

THE WHOLE WORLD IS OUR HORIZON

France has strong ties with many countries around the world, which appreciate France's ability to lead an original and independent path buoyed by universal values. DCI is one of the players in this international outreach. Its main partners are found outside of the traditional sphere that might be referred to as the "NATO sphere," "European sphere" or "North American sphere." These are countries with which France has, throughout its history and for a long time, maintained ties that are often very strong and that remain ever present.



DCI international presence (crédit photo : DCI)

Gulf as the group's cradle

The Arabian Gulf is the historical cradle of the group. The Middle East now accounts for 55% of DCI's activity. DCI has four permanent offices in the region: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates. The objective is to reinforce DCI's presence in the region, where its teams are seamlessly integrated and have established very strong relationships with its partners based on trust.

Heading to Asia, Latin America and Africa

The group is also active in Asia, particularly in Singapore (where it has a permanent office) and in Malaysia, where helicopter pilots train to fly at night with night vision goggles. In Kota Kinabalu (Borneo island), DCI has created a submariner school to train Malaysian Scorpène crews. Increasing defence budgets have generated a strong demand here that DCI wishes to address through

the significant development of its position in the coming years.

DCI is also regaining momentum in Latin America, a region where the group has also been active in the past and where expectations exist today regarding DCI. In Brazil, DCI-NAVFCO is taking part in the PROSUB programme, headed by DCNS, as the partner responsible for providing Scorpène submarine crews with the skills needed for operating systems and elementary on-board level maintenance. DCI is responsible for selecting the first crew, its training and the writing of operational and training documentation.

In Africa, the group is notably present in Niger where nine helicopter pilots and 12 mechanics are being trained by DCI-COFRAS, first in France and then in Niamey. This training is being carried out in collaboration with the Defence and Security Cooperation Directorate (DCSD) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of a cooperation programme that in-

cludes the donation of three French Gazelles. Similarly, support was provided to the Gabonese Army Light Aviation in 2014. This involved the training of Gabonese helicopter mechanics in France, and the programme could be extended this summer.

European Union partner

DCI was selected by the European Defence Agency (EDA) for a helicopter pilot training study and, more recently, for research on existing synergies within the E.U. in the fields of navigation, diving and mine warfare training. These studies will help to better understand the reality of the implementation of the capabilities pooling and sharing concept within the framework of the Common Defence and Security Policy. Moreover, DCI's experience in the transfer of French armed forces know-how should position the company at the cornerstone of European reflections on possible harmonisations within the security and armed forces.