



Case study

MRO applications for wet blasting at RNAS Culdrose

Royal Navy Air Station Culdrose is a Royal Navy airbase on Cornwall's Lizard Peninsula in the UK. It is one of the largest helicopter bases in Europe. Today, the main role for the base is to serve the Fleet Air Arm's front line AgustaWestland Merlin Helicopter Squadrons.

Their Vapormatt wet blasting machine has helped carry out a wide range of MRO operations at the base over the years, including cleaning rescue winch support assemblies and fairings with, according to RNAS Culdrose, excellent results.

The winch was mounted in the stream of an engine exhaust, so regularly got covered in carbon and soot deposits. Their Vapormatt wet blasting machine allowed them to prepare the winch's supports and fairings to respray standard in just 20 minutes. Previously this process was carried out to an unsatisfactory standard using a white spirit bath that constituted a Health and Safety hazard to the operator and other members of staff due to the vapours given off. After the bath, components still needed to be laboriously rubbed down prior to spraying.



Learn more about the applications and benefits of wet blasting for aerospace MRO operations by visiting our dedicated industry page:

vapormatt.com/aerospace-mro



In addition to the quality, health and safety benefits described above (wet blasting does not use any harmful chemicals) RNAS Culdrose found their turnaround times could be reduced by:

- Eliminating the need for operators to wear and then remove dust suits, gloves and breathing apparatus.
- Reduced time needed to clean the dust bay after parts had been processed, with dust effectively removed from the operation.
- Abrading panels more quickly and efficiently.
- Gaining better coverage over irregular panels and awkward areas with the abrasive flow.

An additional benefit was the removal of pneumatic sanders, therefore removing: noise hazards, ear defenders, and reducing the consumption of abrasive materials required.

Culdrose also commented that their wet blasting machine effectively doubled the productivity of their MRO operation compared to the manual and laborious nature of their previous methods. With these significant labour savings, rapid and efficient cleaning, de-painting and preparation for repainting, it is clear that their long serving Vapormatt wet blasting cabinet is extremely well suited to their MRO operations.

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