



# TRICAT Software Streamlines Military Catering Management

**Fretwell-Downing Hospitality (FDH)** is a leading supplier of food service management software systems, with a long and successful track record of working with large scale catering organisations on an international basis.

The UK-based company has successfully delivered systems to contract catering companies such as Elior, ISS and Aramark, retail operations including the National Trust and a host of cost sector clients in education, health and custodial environments.

**FDH** has also built a solid reputation within the military arena for providing software solutions that are proving instrumental in streamlining and increasing the efficiency of the military catering management process.

**FDH** has worked with the UK's Ministry of Defence and with the Defence Food Services-IPT for many years and the TRICAT software management system is now being installed worldwide within all deployed operational units.

## SITE DEPLOYED SOLUTIONS

Based on standard Microsoft technology, TRICAT is an access-based site-deployed solution with the ability to cover the full range of activities from stock management, supply chain procurement, recipe and menu planning, kitchen production routines, sales and meal uptakes and full financial reporting. TRICAT also has powerful reporting capabilities, designed to match and enhance the specific needs of military catering activities, and covering many special accounting policies including Daily Messing Rates (DMR), and endurance capabilities.

The Royal Navy has used TRICAT since 1998, where the system has been installed on ruggedised laptops and local area networks across the fleet, including submarines, Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the supply chain to remote locations.

More recently, the Defence Food Services Integrated Project Team has streamlined the different Catering, Accounting and Provisioning systems used by the Royal Navy, Army and RAF and filled the gap for a land-based operational system, by rolling out TRICAT across the three services. Currently the system is deployed across 320 sites including Gibraltar, Iraq and Afghanistan. Another 100 sites are soon to be added such as Belize, the Falkland Islands, Canada and Brunei.

## ELIMINATING WASTE

With TRICAT, the accuracy of Out of Barracks catering has been improved significantly. For instance, historically there would be a tendency for operational locations to over order, which in-turn led to inefficiencies and extra costs throughout the supply chain, including transport and the need for additional storage facilities. Through TRICAT, the process of ration ordering has become automated, allowing staff to order only those rations required by the menu cycle based upon numbers fed.

The system has also vastly improved the management information reporting, allowing greater budgetary control resulting in substantial cost savings, and forecasting based on accurately measured outputs and trends. A reduction of the current DMR costs by 1p would produce an estimated saving of £370,000 per annum, with further potential reductions identified.

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**Brigadier David Martin, Director Logistics (Commodities)** comments: *“TRICAT has been instrumental in helping transform and improve the efficiency of our foodservice operation, right from supplier through to user.*

*“As well as automating the production planning, we are now also equipped with more accurate management information, providing, for instance, a greater insight into DMR spending and stock holding, that has created further opportunities to reduce the operational food supply budget. In short, we can now project forces into any area for a given duration knowing the exact feeding requirement and costs.”*

## SPECIFIC NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

Working in partnership with DFS-IPT, **Fretwell-Downing Hospitality** has developed a new version of TRICAT that also delivers full nutritional analysis capabilities - a module that will be implemented across the three Services. Using the McCance & Widdowson food tables, TRICAT can now provide full nutritional analysis of a plate, tray or meal, or indeed a full menu cycle for a given deployment. The inputs can also be monitored against specific guidelines defined by, for example, training establishment needs for high intakes and the nutritional requirements for hot and cold climates.

**Captain Paul Cunningham, DFS-IPT Team Leader** added: *“The additional nutritional analysis capability of TRICAT will also prove invaluable in the face of growing interest for ensuring that the correct nutritional and calorie intakes are provided on a daily basis.*

*This would be a huge challenge if conducted manually, particularly given the significant differences in requirements between each operating unit.*

*“FDH has paid close attention to our very specific requirements and has adapted TRICAT to produce a solution that we are extremely confident will deliver further positive results to our foodservice operation worldwide. The software is functional, easy to use and has been well received by military caterers.”*

**FDH** is also proud to work on an international basis, and has supported the New Zealand Army over the past seven years, where TRICAT software is deployed into a number of camps across New Zealand, focusing on operational catering requirements.

## RETAIL FOCUSED APPROACH

In parallel with these operational aspects in the UK and overseas, **FDH** also works with leading contract catering companies that are involved in developing a more commercial approach to military in barracks catering services. Such projects are commonly implemented Pay As You Dine (PAYD) initiatives, and frequently as part of a wider Multi Activity Contract (MAC).

These projects require a more retail focused approach, often involving sales analysis (EPOS) systems and card or cashless requirements, and in this situation, **FDH** markets a web-based, centrally hosted catering management information application under the brand name Saffron. Based on an SQL database, Saffron offers parallel or enhanced functionality to TRICAT, and can span requirements across multiple sites from a single central implementation. The benefits of the system have been recognised by many large-scale multi-site operators currently winning PAYD contracts, including NAAFI operations where Saffron is being used across their PAYD contract in the Army establishments in Germany.

