

Title: Satellite Evolution  
Date: September 2007  
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Date	Heading
12/09/07	NSSL awarded prestigious MoD communications contract until 2020

London, September 2007: NSSL, the international satellite communications provider, has been awarded the extension of a major contract to become the sole provider of commercial satcoms for the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD). The contract, which comes under the umbrella of the Skynet 5 PFI, is until 2020 and reflects the good relationship enjoyed between the Ministry of Defence and NSSL over the past 20 years.

The value of the contract is in excess of £200m and will involve NSSL supplying handsets, DVB services, BGAN (Broadband Global Area Network) and integration assistance to MoD units around the world. The equipment will be used by MoD personnel for support and administrative purposes, as well as strategic communications. This extension of contract will save the MoD money as it provides for efficient economies of scale, which means funds can be assigned elsewhere.

MoD spokesperson Lt John Gordon (CINCFLEET Staff) said: "It is vital that MoD personnel can rely on competent and secure communications wherever they might be in the world. NSSL has worked with the MoD for a number of years and we have always been delighted by the high quality of customer service and technical support. We are looking forward to working with NSSL for the foreseeable future."

Commenting on the contract win, Bob Chewter, Managing Director of NSSL said: "NSSL has always had an extremely good relationship with the MoD. Indeed, we have been providing them with equipment for over 20 years now. That doesn't take away the significance of this contract win for us, especially at a time when remote communications are ever more vital to the British military, and we look forward to providing an excellent level of customer support."

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12/09/07	NSSL helps speed up contact between UK families and soldiers in the field

London, September 2007: International satellite communications provider NSSL is helping UK troops to keep in touch with home while they serve abroad. Some relationships between soldiers and their loved ones are negatively affected due to the lack of speedy communication. Now, thanks to NSSL's support, communication has vastly increased in speed from weeks to days and sometimes even hours. Military experts believe that regular communication with home is an essential part of retaining effective fighting forces and enhancing general morale.

The system is called 'Bluey' and enables soldiers stationed in areas like Afghanistan, which suffers from poor terrestrial coverage, to get messages to and from family members quickly and easily. The name 'Bluey' derives from pre-electronic messages which were printed on blue paper. There are 3 types of 'Bluey':

1. eBluey (text only: email via web portal converted into letter)
2. FaxBluey (scanned copy of fax converted into letter format)
3. PhotoBluey (text and photo via portal converted into letter)

At present, 90% of messages from UK forces in Afghanistan to loved ones comprise of 'FaxBluey', which works by scanning in written letters and then printing them off in the UK. In comparison, only 10% of messages being sent to Afghanistan comprise of 'FaxBluey'; the rest are made up of 'eBluey' and 'PhotoBluey' messages. Family members simply log onto the internet, type their message and click send. The message is sent from a web server to the nearest Forces Post Office 'in field' where it is printed and supplied to the soldier.

'Bluey' makes use of entry level BGAN which enables remote access from virtually anywhere in the world. To connect to entry level BGAN users simply plug in a highly portable satellite terminal to their laptop. Prior to 'Bluey', UK forces relied on Iridium satellite phones which, at 2.4 kb/s, were notoriously slow. NSSL is now providing support to seven 'Bluey' sites in Afghanistan.

Major Adrian Spicer, who has hands-on experience of using 'Bluey' 'in field' commented: "NSSL support has been fantastic. At the moment the 7,000 UK troops based in Afghanistan are receiving 12,000 messages per week and sending 8,000 messages. This sort of technology means that more families can keep in touch, which means better relationships and ultimately happier and more motivated soldiers."

Danielle Edwards, Product Marketing Manager at NSSL said: "Providing satellite equipment to the British Army was a great way to prove that the kit we supply not only works in the toughest of environments but is often the only way to keep in touch. We're glad that the technology we provide is having such a positive impact on the morale of UK forces and helping them feel just that little bit closer to civilisation."