

## Royal Norwegian Air Force turns to IFS to combat future problems

**The Royal Norwegian Air Force (RNoAF) has selected IFS as its ERP partner as it prepares itself for the challenges presented by the coming millennium. IFS Applications 99™ will provide the RNoAF Materiel Command with added control of the entire life cycle of its operations. The ability to forecast needs and thereby optimize inventory is one of the main benefits provided by IFS Applications™, leading ultimately to savings for the air force and a more efficient organization.**



FOTO: FRM

### The Problem

Since the early 1970s the RNoAF Materiel Command has been using a material management system based on a variety of systems developed either by the air force or external consultants. These controlled logistics and maintenance at the 17 air force bases spread throughout Norway. However, the RnoAF Materiel Command felt that a system based on leading technology would provide greater efficiency and allow the air force to meet the demands of the coming millennium.

### The Solution

To handle the very complex operations of the air force and to meet the demands for control and traceability, the RNoAF purchased IFS Applications™ for distribution and maintenance, which use standard systems for the aviation and defense industries. The reasons for this choice were clear. “For the air force it has always been important that we have and use state-of-art technology, to use systems from companies that we are sure will survive in the market,” comments Major Rune Lindseth, RnoAF Materiel Command, who is responsible for the project. After examining what a number of suppliers had to offer, IFS was selected because the RNoAF was particularly impressed by the flexibility it offered both as a company and as a producer of applications. A further factor was its willingness to take on board

the customer’s expertise. As Maj. Lindseth points out: “A lot of the specifications for fleet management have come from air force specifications because IFS has been willing to take into the standard IFS Applications™ package our requirements for fleet management, which means that we get the standard functionality that we need.” Furthermore, the component-based architecture of IFS Applications™ offers added flexibility, an essential feature in a system supporting 1100 users at 17 bases spread over an area the size of California. Another point in its favor was the fact that IFS uses standards such as SQL Windows, which provide an extremely user-friendly environment.

### The Implementation

The work of replacing the existing six systems with IFS Applications began with a preliminary study in 1997, followed by a period of customization during the first half of 1998. In these initial stages two further strengths of IFS became evident. Maj. Lindseth again: “One thing that is very positive about IFS is they have a very good knowledge of different areas of business. Most of the people that worked for IFS in this project had worked with logistics and those sorts of problems. That’s one of the strengths IFS has. They are very good at starting with the customer’s

needs and understanding what requirements we have to fulfill.” The other feature was the flexibility of IFS. “IFS are solution-oriented, not problem-oriented” was the way Maj. Lindseth chose to describe the IFS approach. IFS was prepared to adapt and modify the standard systems so that the RNoAF Materiel Command received a solution that met their needs and yet was based to a great extent on standard solutions.

In the second half of 1998, three pilot installations were made, with expected rollout at all 17 bases between January and November 1999.

**Benefits**

The benefits of the new system will be seen primarily in greater control of inventory, due in part to the ability provided by IFS Applications™ to generate forecasts for future requirements. An air force is not run the same way as a commercial company—there must always be a certain amount of war-readiness material in stock in addition to material for day-to-day operations. Controlling the size of this stock and being able to plan for future needs has enormous money-saving potential. “What we need to do is not just to be able to base our procurement strategy on historical data, as we do with our existing systems. We need to make forecasts for the coming years. What happens if we increase the number of flying hours, which in turn affects the amount of maintenance we need to do? How will that affect our materiel requirements? Considering that some of the materiel we use has lead times of 2–3 years, it really requires that you plan well,” comments Maj. Lindseth, who sees the long-term benefits as very great. He explains: “It didn’t take us very long to find out that the real benefit is in the life cycle, the whole flow from generating the maintenance need based on operational budgets to how we purchase our materiel.”



FOTO: FRM

**Advantages for the users**

- Standardized, user friendly interface
- Systems support throughout the value chain
- Better management decision support
- Introduction to bar coding throughout the internal supply chain
- Reuse of data in all areas of operation
- Better quality of information

**Software**

Oracle version 7.3.4.3 databases  
 IFS Applications 99™ (32 bit)  
 Unix database servers  
 Novell Netware operation system  
 Windows NT Clients

**Hardware**

HP (V-class and K-class) servers  
 2 MBPS communication

**Work stations**

Compaq Pentium/Pentium II 90–350 MHZ clients