

Case Study



Army harnesses UK bridging Innovation

EasiBridge®
Specialist Military Access Systems
EasiBridge.co.uk info@EasiBridge.co.uk +44 (0)774 6955097

EasiBridge – A lightweight revolution in quick-bridging

Idea

With components 85% lighter, 80% more compact, and many times cheaper than incumbent Infantry Assault Bridges, EasiBridge, the aptly named bridging concept from Bright Structures Ltd, is a new range of man-portable, long-span rescue/assault bridges.

Bright Structures Ltd is a micro SME from Devon whose engineering expertise led to the innovation of EasiBridge which uses short-section ladders that connect easily like building-blocks. This facilitates the creation of a huge range of products that fulfil mobility, gap crossing and force protection challenges.

EasiBridge offers a ground-breaking solution for gap crossing, infantry carriage support, troop protection, logistics handling – and can even operate as a man-portable SVBIED (suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device) barrier. This clever feat of engineering has many uses, all from one common ‘super-kit’ of parts.

Implementation

DASA continually seeks to develop innovative ideas that have the potential to positively impact on the operational effectiveness of the UK’s military. Through the DASA open market competition which finds and funds the ‘next generation of troop protection, access and mobility systems’ EasiBridge was funded £77,086.80 to adapt their innovation for military use and for wider government applications over a one year project.

DASA’s funding not only recognised the distinctive nature of the innovation, but also the unique expertise of Stephen Bright, the EasiBridge entrepreneur who is a skilled Bridge Engineer in both traditional structural forms and lightweight alloy/advanced composite materials.

Brigadier Kev Copsey, Head of Future Force Development, says, “The Army is embracing emerging technologies and adopting innovation that eases the tasks of our people. We are delighted to be supporting a UK innovator, turning new ideas into military capability and putting it into the hands of soldiers quickly for trials and testing.”

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The DASA funded project has enabled EasiBridge to conduct front line experimental development of a wide range of new gap crossing, force protection and difficult access capabilities. Under the expert guidance of DASA's partner and project technical advisers at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) EasiBridge products have also undergone a series of rigorous military trials, deploying on international exercise. Such opportunities has enabled EasiBridge to develop seven new capabilities.

Impact

EasiBridge has already commenced work to deliver: 3 Bridges, 3 conveyors, and 1 footbridge to the UK Armed Forces. Attracting their first military order from the Army Rapid Innovation and Experimentation Laboratory (ARIEL), the equipment delivers brand new innovative bridging equipment into the hands of the Royal Engineers.

The equipment is supplied as trial structures for the Royal Engineers Trials and Development Unit (RETDU).

EasiBridge proved its credibility in many other areas during the DASA funded project, testing a wide range of new gap crossing, force protection and difficult access capabilities. The new capabilities that have been developed, from footbridges to materials-handling conveyors, fence-breaching frameworks to blast-resistant roofing systems have attracted significant interest from industry and military, as well as Bright Structures receiving substantial international enquiries.

Further evidence of EasiBridge's adaptability was demonstrated during the DASA project, particularly for use in emergency and rescue services. The EasiRoof "Lite", for example could offer lower-cost, light-duty roof support or emergency accommodation in disaster relief situations.



Contact

Dr. Stephen Bright
info@easibridge.co.uk

