

## RAF Cosford plans shelved

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Plans to move more than 2,500 troops from Germany to RAF Cosford have been shelved for two years leading to fears up to 400 civilians could lose their jobs at the Shropshire air base.

Defence minister Bill Rammell confirmed the delay in a written statement to Parliament today on Operation Borona.

Mr Rammell said the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE), currently based at Cosford providing training for aircraft engineers and tradesmen across the British armed forces, would still move to St Athan in Wales as planned from 2014.

But the minister said the planned movement of 2,600 troops from Germany to Cosford to replace them, due to start in 2016, would now not take place until 2018 at the earliest.

Military chiefs blamed the need to 'accommodate other defence resource priorities' for the delay in moving 102 Logistic Brigade to Cosford.

It will leave no military presence at the base, currently home to more than 3,000 staff and trainees, after the St Athan switch and has led to claims from Wrekin MP Mark Pritchard that RAF Cosford would be effectively 'mothballed'.

The Conservative also claimed up to 400 civilian staff based there could lose their jobs.

Mr Pritchard, whose Wrekin constituency includes Cosford, said: 'Ministers are still intent on forcing the RAF into Wales while no longer having a jobs plan for the West Midlands.'

But Mr Rammell, Minister of State for the Armed Forces at the Ministry of Defence, insisted the MOD would continue to make 'full use' of RAF Cosford after the move of troops to Wales.