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Corus triumphs on home front

Company to provide innovative army homes for Ministry of Defence

By DAVE JONES

NORTH Wales-based Corus Living Solutions has boosted productivity to help it tackle a major Ministry of Defence contract for soldiers' living quarters.

Corus Living Solutions was established five years ago in response to the steel industry's need to diversify from its core business.

The business started with just 40 employees, but the awarding of a substantial five-year MOD contract to supply modular living quarters for soldiers based in Aldershot and Salisbury Plain transformed the operation.

The Shotton-based business now employs 300 people, and says it expects turnover to rise to £70-£100m in five years.

The MOD contract forms part of

the government's plan to upgrade soldiers' living quarters.

The magnitude of the MOD contract drove Corus Living Solutions to rethink its operations with help from Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) Wales.

MAS Wales advisors, supported by Knowledge Bank for Business – the organisation aimed at improving the skills, financial strength and business strategy of companies in Wales – were called in to help enhance existing systems, and the company was able to achieve a one-third improvement in productivity.

Simon Bell, operations manager with the company, said: "The size of the MOD contract brought about rapid business growth, and with it a massive increase in staffing levels."

"Dramatic growth of this nature

will inevitably bring up issues. Therefore, we called upon MAS Wales expertise to help us bring stability to the operation and secure high productivity levels.

"Managing the production lines effectively means that we can accept other business too, and we are currently looking at a contract with a major supermarket chain."

He added: "Our aim is to improve productivity to the extent that we can complete a module every 75 minutes by the end of 2008."

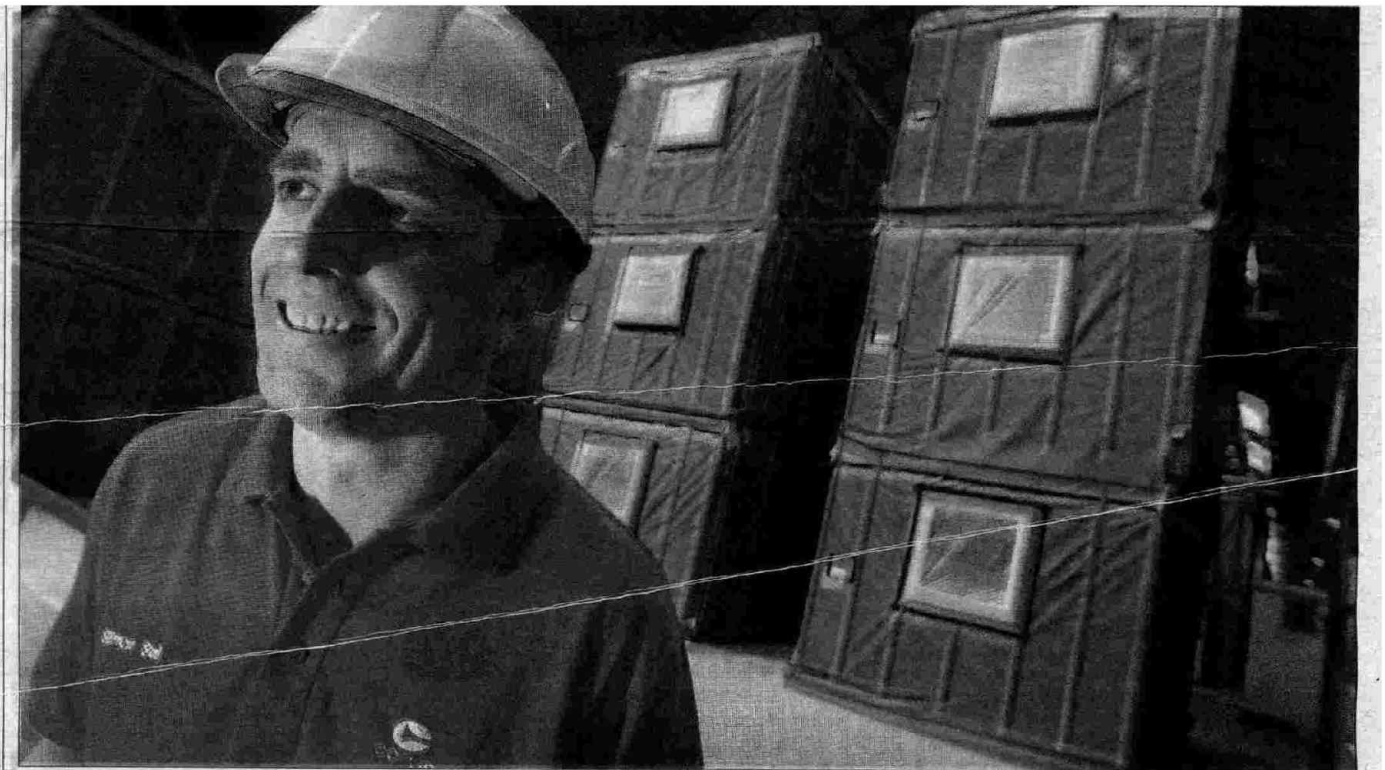
Corus Living Solutions is also looking at expanding into other sectors, among them hotels, care homes and prisons.

Paul Byard, MAS Wales chief executive said: "In five years' time Corus Living Solutions wants to be the clear leader in the manufacture of modular volumetric buildings. MAS Wales is happy to have set the company on the right track to achieving that."



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Corus employee Simon Bell checks the living quarters that will provide modular accommodation for soldiers based in Aldershot and Salisbury Plain