

# Royal British Legion Industries commissioned to make road signs for HS2

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HS2 has commissioned the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) to make over £80,000 worth of temporary signage for its construction sites.

The signs will be displayed across an 80-kilometre section of the new railway between the North Chilterns and South Warwickshire.

HS2's construction partner EKFB (a team made up of Eiffage, Kier, Ferrovial Construction and BAM Nuttall), and representatives from their Derbyshire-based Traffic Management subcontractor, HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd, met with talented veterans and the armed forces community at the RBLI's operations hub in Kent this week to see the production process underway.

HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd forged the relationship with RBLI, Britain's Bravest Manufacturing Company, in March 2020 and pledged to help the social enterprise grow after it suffered major production losses during the pandemic. In 2021, it commissioned over £21,000 worth of signage and this year, it set to more than triple its support by placing over £80,000 worth of orders.

Steve Randall, senior traffic manager at EKFB said: “High Speed 2 is a great opportunity for businesses to support the build of the new railway and collaborate with a wide network of people from all around the UK.

“Working with HW Martin and the RBLI is an example of how this project is helping growth for companies near to our line of route and those further afield. EKFB signed the Armed Forces Covenant this year, and I’m pleased to see our commitment being honoured through our working partnership with the RBLI. For those visiting or working on our sites, it’s a great feeling knowing that our temporary road signage is being made by this very special charity.”

The RBLI’s social enterprise arm currently employs around 150 people, and more than 70% of its workforce are disabled military veterans or civilians. The talented team has already made over 600 temporary signs for EKFB’s construction sites, and the order book is set to keep them busy until at least the end of the year.

The sizeable programme of work that HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd commissioned has enabled RBLI to promote four members of staff and recruit one additional full time and part time role. The contract with EKFB has so far contributed a value of over £20,000, helping the traffic management expert make up 75% of its £80,000 target as of September 2022. The RBLI has also invested in upgrading its digital printing and signage cutting machines, so it is better placed to respond to the fast timescales HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd requires to deliver its programme of work on HS2.

Jay Taylor, sign compliance manager at HW Martin (Traffic Management) Ltd has nurtured the partnership with RBLI for the past two years, saying: “We chose to explore a partnership with Britain’s Bravest Manufacturing enterprise primarily because they supply products that are of high quality and meet the stringent requirements at a competitive price. The added bonus is that profits go into helping soldiers integrate back into civilian life.

“The RBLI works differently to many of our other suppliers so we’ve changed the way we procure our signage to smooth out any peaks and troughs in their manufacturing programme: This ensures they can employ staff all year round which is far more beneficial to the reassimilation programme. We are delighted to become part of RBLI’s story making a tangible difference to the individuals they support with each sign we purchase.”

A workforce of almost 30,000 are now helping to build HS2, with thousands more jobs supported in offices and factories across the UK-based supply chain, which is made up over 2,700 companies. The opportunity to play a part in Europe’s biggest infrastructure project is helping to raise awareness of the work the RBLI delivers and the team behind its success hope it will help them to secure more new contracts in the future.

Michelle Ferguson, managing director at the Royal British Legion Industries said: “We are incredibly proud to be joining forces with EKFB and HW Martin on this nationally significant project. By working with our social enterprises, not only will they receive first class products, but they will be providing direct employment to our Nations Heroes. Together, we are genuinely improving lives.”

As a further sign of its commitment to supporting those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, EKFB has become the first of HS2’s construction partners to sign the Armed Forces Covenant. The

commitment reinforces EKFB's drive to support veterans, reservists, spouses, and their family members into employment. Through its partnership with Buildforce, EKFB has already recruited ex-military personnel into civilian employment on HS2, and its newly established Forces Affinity Network ensures they receive continued support.

*Image credit: HS2 Ltd*