

Defence Secretary Visits Oman for Joint Exercises

HMS Queen Elizabeth – the Royal Navy’s flagship aircraft carrier – is docked at Duqm port in Oman, as the UK Armed Forces carried out joint land, sea and air exercises with the Omani Forces.

The visit represents the UK’s integrated approach to defence and foreign policy and the UK’s enduring commitment to working with Oman and Gulf partners on promoting regional security and stability.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

HMS Queen Elizabeth is here to demonstrate our commitment to the Omanis as invaluable partners and to show our support to the wider Gulf region.

This visit presents an opportunity to see UK forces working hand in hand with our Omani partners across land, air and sea exercises, promoting stability and security in the region and confronting our shared threats.

The Defence Secretary hosted the Omani Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, His Highness Shihab bin Tariq, onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth. They observed the impressive capabilities of the aircraft carrier and met UK personnel onboard the ship. HMS Queen Elizabeth leads the UK Carrier Strike Group which is on its maiden operational deployment to the Indo-Pacific and Middle East, embodying the Government’s Global Britain vision.

The Defence Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs also had the opportunity to see Exercise KHANJAR OMAN at the Ras Madrakah training area. This is a joint battlegroup exercise involving UK and Omani troops, with ground forces supported by the Carrier Strike Group at sea and F-35 jets from the air.

Exercise KHANJAR OMAN represents a key part of the Army’s Future Soldier concept, which will see British soldiers more integrated with our partners in regional hubs around the world.

Brigadier Marcus Mudd, Land Component Commander in Oman said:

The Future of the British Army out here in Oman is extraordinarily exciting.

This is all about partnership. Oman is a strategic partner to the UK, particularly within the Gulf region. Being able to draw from each other's strengths and the specialist capabilities that we have is an incredible opportunity.

Captain Kate Breeze, Wildcat Pilot, 1 Army Air Corps:

Ex Khanjar Oman has really given us an unparalleled opportunity in terms of air, land, sea integration. We've got our partners in the Navy who are with the Carrier Strike Group and we've got the opportunity to work with F-35s and the Marines.

This is also a chance to work with our Omani colleagues and partners. We've been fully integrated with an Omani Reconnaissance Company throughout the exercise and that's been a fantastic opportunity".

The Defence Secretary observed urban training exercises which showcased the impressive range of skills and equipment at the disposal of our Armed Forces.

During the visit, RAF Typhoon jets arrived in Oman in advance of Exercise MAGIC CARPET – a joint air exercise between the UK, Oman and Qatar Air Forces which will take place in the coming weeks. The annual event gives Typhoon pilots the opportunity to conduct a range of training sorties.