

[News story: Defence Minister announces successful first firings of Sea Ceptor missiles to protect new aircraft carriers](#)

The Minister visited defence company MBDA's site in Filton, near Bristol, meeting with local graduates, apprentices and other employees working on the Sea Ceptor system.

The new air missile defence system can intercept and destroy enemy missiles travelling at supersonic speeds and will form part of the protection for the nation's new aircraft carriers. The first firings were conducted from Type 23 frigate HMS Argyll whilst off the coast of Scotland.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

Sea Ceptor will protect our interests against threats both known and unknown. It will launch from the Royal Navy's new Type 26 frigates as they keep our nuclear deterrent submarines and the UK's two new aircraft carriers safe on operations around the globe.

Sea Ceptor supports 600 UK jobs and is yet another example of how our rising defence budget is being spent on cutting-edge kit to help our Armed Forces meet future threats.

The Royal Navy Type 23 frigate HMS Argyll, which fired the Sea Ceptor missiles earlier this Summer.

Sea Ceptor, which uses MBDA's next-generation Common Anti-air Modular Missile (CAMM), is being fitted to replace the Sea Wolf weapon system on the Type 23 frigates. The air defence system will also be used on the new Type 26 frigates and Land Ceptor, which will replace Rapier for the British Army.

Using innovations in radar and datalink technology that will guide these potent missiles with pinpoint accuracy, Sea Ceptor will provide the Royal Navy with an improved shield against airborne threats such as the new generation of supersonic anti-ship missiles, fast jets, helicopters and unmanned aerial vehicles.

Commander Toby Shaughnessy, the Commanding Officer of HMS Argyll, said:

This is an exciting upgrade in capability and a great opportunity for HMS Argyll to demonstrate what the missile system can do to

protect our ships from future threats.

Sea Ceptor is an impressive and innovative system, demonstrating that the Royal Navy is at the cutting edge of technology and working hard to keep Britain safe. I am immensely proud of my ship's company and the work they put in to make this test firing possible.

HMS Argyll will conduct further firing trials of the Sea Ceptor system before she deploys to Japan next year. Alongside providing robust self-defence, importantly Sea Ceptor defends escort vessels within a maritime task group, such as for the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers.

One of the Sea Ceptor missiles fired by HMS Argyll earlier this Summer. MBDA Copyright.

The system uses a new UK-developed missile capable of reaching speeds of up to Mach 3 and will have the ability to deal with multiple targets simultaneously, protecting an area of around 500 square miles (1,300 square kilometres) over land or sea.

As part of MBDA's CAMM programme, Sea Ceptor supports around 600 MBDA jobs and its supply chain in key locations across the UK such as Stevenage, Filton and Bolton.

Tony Douglas, Chief Executive Officer for the MOD's procurement organisation Defence Equipment and Support, which is based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol, said:

The firings are an important step forward in proving the significant improvements over previous air defence systems and further evidence of our commitment to provide the very best equipment to our armed forces.

The Defence Minister also visited Airbus' plant in Filton, near Bristol, which is the heart of the design and manufacture of some of the world's most technologically advanced aircraft. The Minister met with some of Airbus' 6000 local employees, including engineers working on research and technology for future aircraft projects.

The news comes after the Defence Minister confirmed a [£100m contract to fit the Sea Ceptor system to the Type 26 frigates](#) last year. Earlier this year Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon also announced a [£539 million investment in new missile systems](#).