

[News story: Defence Secretary names new warship HMS Belfast in Northern Ireland](#)

The second to be named in the City Class of eight brand new, cutting-edge, anti-submarine warfare frigates, HMS Belfast will provide advanced protection for the likes of the UK's nuclear deterrent and Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers. The Defence Secretary revealed the name at Belfast shipyard Harland and Wolff, which built the Royal Navy's last HMS Belfast, in 1938.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I'm hugely proud that the second name announced of our eight cutting-edge new Type 26 frigates will be HMS Belfast. She and her sister ships will form the backbone of our Navy well into the 2060s, keeping us safe by protecting the country's nuclear deterrent and new aircraft carriers.

It's apt to name this ship at the famous site which built the very first HMS Belfast. Thanks to our ambitious new National Shipbuilding Strategy, this shipyard once again has the chance to be involved in building a British warship thanks to the competition to build a new class of light frigates for our growing Royal Navy.

The Defence Secretary launched the [ambitious National Shipbuilding Strategy earlier in the month](#), and as part of that laid out plans for a first batch of another new class of frigates – the Type 31e.



A concept image of the new Type 26 frigate, one of which will be called HMS Belfast.

A competitive procurement process for those ships could see them shared between yards and assembled at a central hub. The warships will be built in the UK, with a price cap of no more than £250m, and will be designed to meet the needs of both the Royal Navy and the export market.

The Defence Secretary has personally committed to visiting all of the UK's major shipyards in the run-up to industry bringing forward its solutions for the Type 31e class, as he looks to grow the Royal Navy fleet for the first time since World War Two.

Just before the start of the Second World War, the original HMS Belfast was commissioned, having being built at Harland and Wolff shipyard. She went on to support the Battle of North Cape, the Normandy landings and the Korean War.

The original ship now belongs to Imperial War Museums and is permanently docked in London. Before the new HMS Belfast commissions, the original HMS Belfast will be renamed 'HMS Belfast 1938', the year the ship was launched.



The original HMS Belfast, belonging to the Imperial War Museum, based on the Thames. the ship will now be renamed as HMS Belfast (1938).

Diane Lees, Director General, Imperial War Museums:

IWM is delighted that the name HMS Belfast will return again to the Royal Navy's front line as a major warship. We welcome the opportunity this will bring for our internationally significant museum to have a close affiliation with the new Belfast, enabling a powerful link between the Royal Navy's past and present. Before the new HMS Belfast commissions, IWM's ship's identity will evolve to HMS Belfast (1938), the year the ship was launched, in order to prevent any possibility of confusion.

The new HMS Belfast is set to enter service in the mid-2020s and, along with her fellow Type 26 frigates, will have a truly global reach, protecting the UK's strategic interests as well as the likes of the UK's nuclear submarines, and delivering high-end warfighting capability wherever it is needed.

Its flexible design will also enable these capabilities to be adapted to counter future threats, whilst the ships will also benefit from the latest advances in digital technology.

Part of the MOD's £178bn equipment plan, the three ships being built under the first contract will safeguard 4,000 jobs in Scotland and across the UK supply chain until 2035. The Defence Secretary cut steel on HMS Glasgow, the first Type 26, in July, whilst the other is yet to be named.



The Defence Secretary visited Harland & Wolff, near Belfast, one of the UK shipyards that could bid for the new Type 31e frigates.

Admiral Sir Philip Jones, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, said:

The City class theme has been chosen for the Type 26 frigates in order to reaffirm the bond between the Nation and its Navy. We want to honour some of the great centres of industry and commerce in all parts of the United Kingdom, and few cities have such a rich maritime heritage as Belfast.

The previous HMS Belfast (1938) is one of the most famous ships of the twentieth century, serving at the Battle of North Cape, in the Arctic campaign and at the Normandy landings, and later with the United Nations forces sent to Korea. It is wonderful that she survives today as a museum, but the Royal Navy believes that such a distinguished fighting name deserves to take its place once more in our operational fleet. A world leader in anti-submarine warfare, the new HMS Belfast will work with our allies in NATO and around the world to preserve the freedom and security that her predecessor fought so hard to secure.

The possible block building solution for the Type 31e reflects the way that the UK's huge new aircraft carriers were built, and also the UK's new polar research ship, the RRS Sir David Attenborough. That ship's central assembly

hub is Merseyside shipyard Cammell Laird, which the Defence Secretary paid a visit to on Tuesday. The company already provides the in-service support for a number of the Navy's Royal Fleet Auxiliary support ships.

Before heading to Harland and Wolff today, the Defence Secretary also visited Thales' air defence facility in Belfast. The site produces the 'Starstreak' short-range missile for the British Army and is also producing a new lightweight, multirole missile for the Army's Wildcat helicopters.

Whilst the second to be named, HMS Belfast is Ship 3 in the Type 26 programme. Ship 1 is called HMS Glasgow and Ship 2 is yet to be named.