

News story: UK set for new Birmingham warship and will keep amphibious assault ships, Defence Secretary announces

Speaking in Birmingham, the Defence Secretary outlined that one of Britain's new cutting-edge Type 26 frigates will be called HMS Birmingham, becoming the fourth Royal Navy ship to bear that name.

The 6,900-tonne frigates will be world-class anti-submarine warships and will provide cutting-edge protection for the likes of the UK's nuclear deterrent and the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, with the ability to conduct a whole range of other operations anywhere in the world.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Three of our nation's ships have proudly borne the name Birmingham. Those ships won five battle honours. Today, in honour of this great city, we will be naming one of our eight Type 26 global combat ships HMS Birmingham.

HMS Birmingham is the fourth of the UK's eventual eight Type 26 frigates to be named, with HMS Glasgow, HMS Belfast and HMS Cardiff the first three to be built. The frigates will begin to enter service in the 2020s. All the ships are being constructed by BAE Systems on the Clyde in Scotland, where the project is guaranteeing 20 years of work and safeguarding over 4,000 jobs. HMS Birmingham will be part of the second batch of ships to be ordered in the early 2020s.

She will be the fourth ship to be named in honour of the Midlands city, with the first being launched in 1913 and playing a key role in the First World War. The last, a Type 42 destroyer, took part in a range of missions including safeguarding international shipping during the Iran-Iraq War and patrolling the Falkland Islands before leaving service in 1999. The Defence Secretary also put to bed any speculation about the future of amphibious assault ships HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion being withdrawn from service early.

He said:

To deliver what seems impossible, the Royal Marines need to be able to bring the fight from the sea to the land. As such, I am happy to announce today that I am protecting their vital landing platforms HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark.

The two ships deliver the punch of the Royal Marines ashore by air and by sea. Boats from the landing dock in the belly of the ship can be sent ashore with Marines on-board, whilst assault helicopters can be launched from the flight deck.

Throughout their time in service, the ships have conducted a range of vital missions including securing Iraqi oil platforms, tackling terror and piracy in the Horn of Africa, playing a key role in migrant search and rescue operations and evacuating British citizens from warzones in Libya and the Ivory Coast. HMS Albion is currently supporting peace and security in the Asia-Pacific, promoting UK interests across the world as the nation's flagship.