

# News story: Defence Secretary announces Devonport will home all new Type 26 frigates

The eight Type 26 warships will start being delivered to the Royal Navy from the mid-2020s, heralding yet another new era in the role of a base which has played a central role in the defence of the UK for hundreds of years – from the Napoleonic wars to the Falklands Conflict.

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:

The largest Naval Base in western Europe, Devonport is the lifeblood of Plymouth and is as synonymous with this city as it is with our famous Royal Navy.

Ships have set sail from Devonport's dock to defend our great nation for hundreds of years, and I can reveal that the truly world-class Type 26 frigates will follow in their wake.

We are living in increasingly dangerous times, with threats intensifying both on and beneath the water. Plymouth should be in no doubt that it will be right at the heart of Britain's fight for a safer world by homing these formidable warships.

Devonport has been supporting the Royal Navy since 1691, with the vast site covering more than 650 acres with four miles of waterfront. Alongside frigates, it is home to Britain's survey vessels and amphibious ships. Recently the Defence Secretary put to bed any speculation about the future of amphibious assault ships HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion by announcing he is protecting them.

The Base employs 2,500 people, supporting around 400 local firms and generating around 10% of Plymouth's income. It is a key part of defence's huge footprint in the South West, where the MOD spends £5.1bn with industry – more than in any other part of the country.

The eight Type 26s will replace the current anti-submarine warfare Type 23 frigates. They will make up the next-generation of the Navy's fleet, along with a first batch of five Type 31e frigates. The decision on where the Type 31e frigates will be based is still to be made.

The first Type 26 ships have already been ordered for £3.7 billion from BAE

Systems' yards on the Clyde. The first four have already been named as HMS Glasgow, HMS Cardiff, HMS Belfast and HMS Birmingham. The flexible design of the frigates will also enable these capabilities to be adapted to counter future threats, and the ships will benefit from the latest advances in digital technology.

The formidable anti-submarine warship will include an embarked helicopter, powerful sonar detection systems, ship and helicopter-launched torpedoes and a design which makes the Type 26 extremely difficult for enemy submarines to detect.

The move follows the announcement last year that the eight Type 23 ships fitted with a towed array sonar tail would all be based in Devonport, making the site a centre of excellence in anti-submarine warfare. The five general purpose Type 23 frigates are now based in Portsmouth, which is also the home of the UK's Type 45 Destroyers and new aircraft carriers.

Australia recently decided to build nine of the British-designed Type 26 warships, confirming the world-leading capability they will offer. The deal, which could be worth up to £20 billion, has been hailed as the biggest Naval ship deal for a decade.

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## **News story: New £1bn deal to support Navy operations will support over 700 British jobs for a decade, Defence Minister announces**

The contracts, which will secure over 700 jobs at shipyards across the country, will support the UK's Royal Fleet Auxiliary ships and the Royal Navy's Survey and Hydrographic Fleet. The deal covers 17 ships and will improve how spares, repairs and maintenance work are carried out.

The successful companies will work on the ships at dockyards around the UK to ensure they are serviced and fitted with the latest equipment and systems, whether they are undergoing a refit, undertaking training or on operations.

Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

This £1bn deal secures work for some of our world-leading shipyards into the next decade, supporting over 700 jobs for workers to ensure our ships remain at sea to defend the nation. This vital work is not only great news for our Navy, but also underlines the importance of defence to our national skills and prosperity.

Agreements following a competition include expected to be worth:

- £357 million with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead to support the RFA's Fort and Wave class tankers
- £262 million also with Cammell Laird in Birkenhead, to support the RFA's new fleet of four 39,000-tonne Tide class tankers
- £239 million with A&P in Falmouth to support the RFA's Bay class landing ships as well as the casualty ship RFA Argus and Royal Navy ocean survey vessel HMS Scott
- A £150 million contract with UK Docks Ltd on Tyneside to support the survey ships HMS Echo and Enterprise and the ice patrol ship HMS Protector.

The deal is expected to deliver savings worth over £100M for defence, with agreements including delivering improved support and greater efficiency in ways such as new support solutions and improved performance targets. The whole contract is underpinned by a robust set of performance measures to ensure continued value-for-money.



HMS Protector. Crown copyright

In addition to the four already signed, a further three contracts under the Future In Service Support (FISS) project are expected to be signed within the next year. The news is the latest development in supporting the nation's military ships, after the MOD unveiled a new model worth around £1 billion to support the Royal Navy fleet and sustain over a thousand British jobs.

Defence Equipment and Support acting Chief of Materiel Ships, Neal Lawson

said:

Through the placing of these contracts and making changes to the way we provide support under this agreement, we will be able to deliver significant financial benefits.

These include savings expected to be more than £100 million over the course of ten years, as well as improvements in the performance, reliability, safety and sustainability of the RFA and hydrographic fleets.



RFA Tidespring. Crown copyright

Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels supply all Royal Navy ships from the Queen Elizabeth class carriers to destroyers, frigates and patrol vessels with fuel, ammunition, food and spares, wherever they are in the world. They also undertake disaster relief, counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and humanitarian operations around the world.

Hydrographic vessels conduct oceanographic survey duties and safeguard the integrity of the UK's territorial waters, while the Ice Patrol Ship, HMS Protector, is the MOD's sole capability in the ice.

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## [Press release: UK deepens defence cooperation with Germany](#)

Gavin Williamson, alongside his German counterpart Ursula von der Leyen, signed a Joint Vision Statement today deepening the already strong UK-German relationship and increasing defence cooperation across a range of areas, from tackling violent extremism to building new military capabilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Although we are preparing to leave the EU, our commitment to European security is resolute.

The statement signed today strengthens UK-German ties and bolsters the defence of two key NATO partners. This is an alliance we both hold dear.

The Defence Secretary also attended a demonstration from UK and German personnel who form part of the combined river crossing capability in Minden – a capability vital to NATO operations. The visit comes after the announcement that the British Army will be permanently based in the country beyond 2020.

The events in Germany followed a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers in Brussels, in which Mr. Williamson stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Allies in condemnation of reckless and indiscriminate Russian cyber-attacks.

At NATO HQ, he discussed the importance of the alliance being ready to respond not only to the threats from the East but also from the South. He announced that the British Army would be deepening cooperation with partners through linking 1 Div HQ, which leads overseas military capacity building, to NATO's emerging Defence Capacity Building initiatives.

He also attended NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), consulting with counterparts to ensure the alliance has the necessary tools and procedures in place to respond to a nuclear crisis.

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## [News story: Defence Minister reaffirms UK commitment to the Gulf](#)

Gulf security is our security, Defence Minister Mark Lancaster reaffirmed whilst visiting Iraq, Bahrain and Oman. As part of the five-day visit, the minister also officially opened the UK-Oman joint exercise, Saif Sareea 3,

alongside Oman's Minister Responsible for Defence Affairs, His Excellency Sayyid Badr bin Saud bin Harub Al Busaidi.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

The security of the Gulf is of the utmost importance to not only regional stability, but to the world's economic stability.

Our commitment to our international responsibilities in the region is unwavering. Saif Sareea is far more than just a bilateral military exercise, it is a demonstration of our commitment and will leave behind a legacy for decades to come.

The official opening of Exercise Saif Sereea 3 signals the start of the UK's largest military exercise in 17 years, which will see over 5,500 UK troops train alongside Omani counterparts. It is the largest and the most complex of a series of events which will see the UK Armed Forces work with every single one of our Gulf partner nations in a combination of engagements on land, sea, and in the air over the coming months.

Mr Lancaster also visited Duqm port, opening the Joint Logistics Support Base, which will support UK forces operating and exercising in Oman and the region, including Queen Elizabeth Class carrier operations from 2021.

In Bahrain, the minister met the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the Prime Minister, His Royal Highness Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa; building on the strong and close UK-Bahraini relationship and discussing the shared threats faced in the region. He also met Rear Admiral Paul J. Schlise, Deputy Commander U.S 5th Fleet and the Combined Maritime Forces, reviewing the operational challenges in the Gulf including current maritime threats facing the UK and partners. He also visited the recently opened UK Naval Support Facilities at Mina Salman port, home to just over 300 British military personnel.

In Iraq, Mr Lancaster met Iraqi Defence Minister Erfan al-Hiyali, discussing the close cooperation between the UK and Iraq in the fight against Daesh as well as confirming that the UK will be contributing 10% of the total personnel to the NATO Mission in Iraq to help build a strong security service. He also met UK troops who are currently deployed as part of the 79-member Global Coalition, commending their efforts in training nearly 80,000 Iraqi Security Force members in battle winning infantry, engineering, and combat medical techniques as well as providing courses on countering IEDs and other critical skills.

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## News story: UK aid arrives: Vital relief lands in Indonesia

The A400M Atlas touched down at the international relief centre at Balikpapan, which is the humanitarian operational hub for the affected region, at 1302 local time (0602BST).

On board were 1,280 much-needed shelter kits and 288 hygiene kits, as part of the £3 million pledged by the Department for International Development (DFID) to the relief effort. The aircraft was also carrying 3 tonnes of Indonesian supplies, in addition to the 17.5 tonnes of UK aid.

A DFID aid flight also departed for Balikpapan, Indonesia, from the UK last night, carrying vital supplies to support the earthquake and tsunami relief efforts.



UK aid being unloaded at the international relief centre at Balikpapan. Crown copyright.

The UK aid package includes much-needed air cargo handling equipment. This includes a forklift truck and conveyor belt that will rapidly increase the rate that humanitarian aid can be transferred off flights and distributed to affected communities. Other equipment includes transport trucks and a lighting tower generator. This will speed up the delivery of aid to those that need it most by facilitating a greater turnaround of aid-carrying

flights at Balikpapan Airport.

The UK has responded to information from the Indonesian government about the needs of the residents. There is a DFID team of humanitarian experts in Indonesia coordinating the response.

In addition, the UK Government has also announced it will match pound-for-pound the first £2 million raised by the generous British public to the Indonesia Tsunami Appeal launched yesterday by the Disasters Emergency Committee.



UK aid being unloaded at the international relief centre at Balikpapan. Crown copyright.