

# News story: UK agrees sale of HMS Ocean to Brazil

Sold to the Brazilian Navy for around £84M, the profit generated from the sale will be reinvested in defence at a time when the Royal Navy is being strengthened with two types of brand new frigates and two huge aircraft carriers.

HMS Queen Elizabeth, which will eventually take on the role as the nation's new flagship, recently set sail from the port of Gibraltar carrying two Chinooks and four Merlin helicopters as she readies for helicopter trials at sea.

Throughout HMS Ocean's impressive 20 years since entering service in 1998, she has covered more than 450,000 nautical miles. The long-planned decision to take her out of service in 2018, as she reaches the end of her planned service life, was confirmed in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015.

Her military record spans from Operation Palliser during the Sierra Leone civil war to Operation Ellamy as part of an international coalition in Libya in 2011.

Most recently, HMS Ocean demonstrated her humanitarian and disaster relief capabilities when she bolstered the hurricane relief effort on Operation Ruman in the Caribbean last summer. It is fitting that one of her final operations mirrored that of her first, when in early 1999 she was deployed at short notice to render assistance to Honduras and Nicaragua in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch.

The sale of HMS Ocean was managed by the Defence Equipment Sales Authority (DESA), which is part of the MOD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support. The Authority provides an efficient sale and disposal services to the armed forces as well as customers in the UK and overseas.

Clive Walker, Head of DESA, said:

We have a proven track record of supplying surplus defence equipment on a government to government basis. The successful sale of HMS Ocean to the Brazilian Navy will provide a financial return to the UK which will now be reinvested in defence.

HMS Ocean will decommission from the Royal Navy in March, with plans for the Brazilian Navy to take possession of the ship in June 2018. Modifications to the ship will be made by UK companies Babcock and BAE Systems in the meantime, with this work funded by Brazil.

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## [News story: £260m deal signed to keep RAF giants flying](#)

The Foreign Military Sale agreement will provide support for the RAF's fleet of eight C-17A Globemaster III aircraft, which provided lifesaving humanitarian relief following Hurricane Irma last summer.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

Our C-17 giants take everything from heavy equipment to vital troops to where they're needed right across the globe. This deal keeps them in the air into the next decade and affirms our leadership, alongside our American allies, in providing global security and humanitarian aid as we stand together in defence of our shared values.

This bilateral deal will deliver spares, design services, reliability and maintenance improvements, access to technical resources, and RAF aircrew and maintenance crew training programmes.

It will sustain more than 50 jobs in the UK through the support of a Boeing team at RAF Brize Norton, the home of the UK's C-17 operators, 99 Squadron RAF. Further work will be carried out in the US at Boeing facilities in San Antonio, Texas.



An RAF C17 transport aircraft pictured in transit. Crown Copyright.

The new agreement, which extends and builds upon support arrangements that have existed since the C-17 came into UK service in 2001, will run until 2022.

As part of the UK's Joint Rapid Reaction Force, the C-17 provides the RAF with long-range strategic heavy-lift ability, meaning it can deliver equipment and supplies close to where UK troops are on operations. Support for the RAF's C-17 fleet is delivering an important need laid out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015.

Defence Equipment & Support Chief of Materiel (Air), Air Marshal Julian Young, said:

The signature of this deal has come about through the close relationship the Ministry of Defence has with our counterparts in the US, and will deliver world-leading support for the front line.

It means the UK will be able to continue to depend on the C-17's remarkable capabilities in support of operations all over the world.

With a maximum airspeed of around 510 miles per hour, the jet can transport 77 tonnes of cargo, equivalent to three Apache attack helicopters or a Challenger 2 tank, and has a wingspan equivalent to the length of five double-decker buses.

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## News story: Ministry of Defence expands counter-poaching training into two new parks in Malawi

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced today that deployments to Nkhotakota and Majete Wildlife Reserves will begin in May, following a successful pilot scheme in Liwonde National Park alongside the conservation non-profit African Parks, doubling the number of rangers mentored by British soldiers to 120.

A conservation crisis occurring around the globe is causing the loss of countless species, and one of the main factors behind this is the illegal wildlife trade, which drives the decline of many of Africa's animals, including elephants, rhinos and lions.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Poaching is a horrific and cruel trade that is putting the very existence of this planet's most majestic wildlife in jeopardy.

Our brave Armed Forces are the best in the world and are playing their part in putting an end to this sickening and illegal industry, to protect these magnificent mammals.

By providing training and mentoring to the park rangers, they will form a skilled network to ensure that the world's precious species are here for generations to come.

Under the guidance of British Army troops, African Parks rangers will learn tracking, infantry skills, bushcraft and information analysis to improve the interception of poachers.

The long-term goals of training park rangers in Malawi are for them to effectively police their parks and respond appropriately to the threat of poaching, which is worth approximately £7bn to £17bn year.

Training in the two new parks has been funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

Liwonde Park Manager, Craig Reid, said:

The MOD deployment to Liwonde in 2017 was very beneficial to the African Parks effort in securing the integrity of this park which was once overrun with poaching.

The soldiers helped mentor the Rangers as part of the long-term project aimed at ensuring a sustainable law enforcement effort. We are very appreciative of the ongoing support rendered to our team on the ground.

All three parks, Nkhotakota, Majete and Liwonde, are managed by African Parks in partnership with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

Brighton Kumchedwa, Director of National Parks and Wildlife, said:

We are really pleased that the British Army will be returning to Malawi to work in partnership with the Malawian authorities and African Parks on counter-poaching activities. This will build on the success of their previous deployment and ensure that life becomes increasingly difficult for those intent on wildlife crime in Malawi.

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## **News story: Firing of 50,000th simulated round from turret trainer signals savings of £125M**

The trainer, based at Tidworth Garrison in Wiltshire, was first introduced in 2005 to train the commander, gunner and loader of an AS90 – a self-propelled 155mm Howitzer gun.

It is designed to allow gun crews to practice their routine firing drills, turret operating procedures and crew duties without the expense of live firing and offers the immersion and realism of firing, with a reduced safety risk and a highly reduced cost.



Based on a real AS90 turret, the trainer uses an electro-mechanical system to fully replicate a complete firing cycle. This includes the weight and size of the artillery rounds and the noise and turret movement on firing.

Since the trainer was introduced more than 8,500 soldiers have used the equipment. This experience enhances their safety for when they progress to live firing and allows them to focus on more advanced training scenarios.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

This equipment provides high quality training for the British Army that's also cost efficient. As live firing events are extremely expensive and can be logistically challenging, using the AS90 turret trainer is a great alternative. It also offers immersive training that prepares users for live firing both in practice and on the battlefield.

The 50,000th simulated round was fired by Lieutenant General Paul Jaques, Chief of Materiel (Land) at Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S), the MOD's procurement agency based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol.

Lt Gen Paul Jaques said:

This firing marks another milestone demonstrating Defence's innovative and cost-saving approach to deliver effective and

worthwhile training for our personnel. I'm exceedingly proud of the team's work and the benefits gained by the soldiers that get to use the training equipment.

The milestone, on February 14, represented savings of approximately £125 million over a 12-year period on the basis that live rounds cost £2,500 per use.

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## [News story: UK steps up commitment to a modernised NATO](#)

Mr Williamson signalled that the UK will meet its commitments, including an uplift of around one hundred personnel in our contribution to NATO's modernised Command Structure – the precise numbers will be determined through further work between now and the Summit. This will help to ensure that NATO can meet the security challenges of today and tomorrow.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

NATO is the cornerstone of our defence but we live in an uncertain world, with the confrontation and conflict we face shifting and evolving. NATO must modernise at the same pace, so we can respond better and faster to deter those that threaten our safety and way of life.

NATO will today discuss a range of issues including burden sharing, cooperation with the European Union, and efforts to modernise the Alliance. A key element of modernising NATO will be the adaptation of the Alliance's Command Structure. Defence Ministers will decide whether to implement a design which includes proposals for a new Command for the Atlantic and a Command to improve the movement of military forces across Europe.

The proposed Command Structure, which has been influenced by senior British staff, represents a key aspect of the UK's priority to modernise and strengthen NATO so it remains able to command and control its missions and operations wherever they are required.

Over the two-day Ministerial, Defence leaders will discuss efforts to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Britain's Armed Forces have taken a leading role in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, providing the Framework battlegroup in Estonia and a providing a company to the US-led enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Poland. The Defence Secretary welcomed the arrival of Danish forces in Estonia and the announcement that

France will return in 2019 to support the UK-led force. NATO's role in the fight against terrorism was also discussed with the Defence Secretary welcoming the progress that has been made.

NATO remains the cornerstone of UK defence and, as one of the largest contributors, is one of only a few NATO countries pledging at least 2% of their GDP to defence.