

Fact Sheet 6: Future Force 2020 – Royal Navy

Re-structuring and re-equipping to be relevant for the 21st Century

By 2020, the Royal Navy will be structured to provide:

- maritime defence of the UK and our Overseas Territories, including the South Atlantic;
- nuclear Continuous at Sea Deterrence; and
- a credible and capable presence within priority regions of the world that contributes to conventional deterrence, coercion and containment.

The Royal Marines will provide:

- a very high readiness response force and a contribution to enduring land operations.

The Trident Force

Currently, there are four Vanguard-class submarines, one of which is always on patrol. Each submarine is equipped with up to 48 nuclear warheads in 12 operational launch tubes. The Vanguard-class will be replaced by new submarines from 2028. Further details are set out in the separate Trident Fact Sheet.

Carrier Strike

Our carrier strike capability will be based around a single operational carrier, with a second planned to be kept at extended readiness. This leaves open options to rotate them, to ensure a continuous UK carrier strike capability; or to regenerate more quickly a two carrier strike capability. Alternatively, we might sell one of the carriers, relying on cooperation with a close ally to provide continuous carrier strike capability. Further details are set out in the carrier strike Fact Sheet.

Frigate and Destroyer Force

The Royal Navy will be equipped with 19 frigates and destroyers to protect a Naval Task Group and meet our standing commitments at home and overseas. These will include six new Type 45 destroyers and new Type 26 frigates. This force, though smaller than at present, will provide military flexibility and choice across a variety of operations from full-scale warfare to maritime security (in particular protecting trade and energy supplies).



Type 45 destroyer

Hunter Killer Submarines



Astute Submarine

Seven new Astute class submarines will contribute to the protection of our nuclear deterrent and naval task groups. These nuclear powered submarines have a global reach and provide autonomous strategic intelligence and Tomahawk land attack strike capability.

Royal Marines – 3 Commando Brigade

The Royal Marines' 3 Commando Brigade will provide one element of our very high readiness response force.

The Royal Marines will be able to land and sustain a Commando Group of up to 1800 personnel by helicopter and landing craft, with protective vehicles, logistics and command and control support from a specialist landing and command ship.



A Royal Marine

Maritime Helicopters



Merlin helicopters

Merlin and Wildcat maritime helicopters will provide the destroyer and frigate force with essential search and attack capabilities.

These helicopters will support counter-piracy, counter-narcotics and humanitarian missions.

Mine Countermeasures

14 Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMVs) will help to provide free and secure access for trade and military vessels through vulnerable sea lanes and provide a significant tier of security and protection of our nuclear deterrent.

Future MCMVs will use a common hull and modular design to support modern counter mine systems, hydrography and patrol requirements.



Mine Countermeasures Vessel in the Gulf

Logistic Support

We will have a fleet of resupply and refuelling vessels scaled to meet the Royal Navy's requirements, and 6 roll-on, roll-off ferries.

In order to meet the Future Force 2020 structure, the Royal Navy will:

- reduce by around 5,000 to a total of c30,000 by 2015;
- decommission HMS Ark Royal immediately;
- decommission either the helicopter landing ship HMS Ocean or HMS Illustrious following a short study of which would provide the most effective helicopter platform capability, and place one landing and command ship at extended readiness;
- decommission 4 frigates and a Bay-class amphibious support ship;
- rationalise the Royal Navy estate.