

£34 million boost to frigate weapon systems sustains 150 UK jobs

During the next five years, Royal Navy ships will undergo a series of technical upgrades to their Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems and threat countermeasure capabilities, the latter of which will help ensure the ships continue to counter the threat of hostile anti-ship missiles.

The contract was awarded to Systems Engineering & Assessment (SEA) in Devon.

Sustaining 150 UK jobs across Barnstaple, Beckington and Bristol in the south west of England, the upgrades will ensure that critical systems on Type 23 frigates continue to operate reliably, and that upgrades can be seamlessly adopted and installed until their out of service dates.

The Type-23 frigate carries out a wide variety of operations, including securing the UK's vital maritime trade routes East of the Suez Canal and safeguarding British interests in the South Atlantic. This week the Royal Navy deployed HMS Somerset to play a leading role in protecting critical energy infrastructure, working with Norway and our allies in the North and Norwegian Seas.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Alec Shelbrooke, said:

These crucial upgrades will help to ensure our Royal Navy ships remain equipped with the latest counter-threat capability.

Supporting 150 jobs at sites across the UK, this contract is another example of how we are investing in the future, sustaining UK jobs and securing cutting-edge defence capabilities.

Type 23 frigates will have electronic upgrades to Seagnat, a system which safeguards the vessel against incoming missiles by firing a variety of decoys to defeat incoming missiles.

Some ships will also undergo a further technical upgrade to their Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems – a close range, quick reaction Anti-Submarine weapon system which launches torpedoes from tubes mounted in the vessel's magazine.

The contract was placed by the Maritime Equipment and Warfare (MEWT) team at Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S), the procurement arm of the UK Ministry of Defence.

DE&S' Director Ships Support Rear Admiral Jim Higham:

I'm incredibly proud of our team which has worked so hard to place this contract, ensuring Type 23 has the battle-winning capability

it needs to perform their critical role in the Royal Navy fleet now and into the future.

In addition to Type 23 updates, the contract will also upgrade Seagnat systems during the next five years on Type 45 destroyers and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) tankers, which provide fuel, food, fresh water, ammunition and other supplies to Royal Navy vessels around the world.

The contract also secures five further years of support for the systems on board the vessels with improved provision for spares.

The equipment supported under this contract (Magazine Torpedo Launch Systems, Seagnat and Air Weapons Handling) are used on various ships in the Royal Navy such as Type 23 frigates, Type 45 destroyers, Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC), Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels and Albion-class Landing Platform Docks.

Richard Flitton, Managing Director at Systems Engineering & Assessment said:

This major contract, SEA's largest to date, demonstrates the systems knowledge and maritime domain expertise within our UK-based team and builds on our long-standing partnership with the Royal Navy.