

News story: From Lancashire to Texas: 10% production milestone achieved for F-35 Lightning II fighter jets

The 318th rear section for an F-35 Lightning II combat jet has rolled off the BAE Systems production line in Samlesbury, Lancashire meaning that 10% of the global requirement has now been produced.

The aft fuselage is the back part of the state-of-the-art aircraft's main body and with more than 3,000 aircraft currently on order it is estimated that 25,000 jobs will be sustained across the UK by more than 500 companies in the supply chain when at peak production.

The rear section has now transferred from BAE Systems' advanced manufacturing suite to Lockheed Martin's Final Assembly and Check Out line in Fort Worth, Texas to be connected with other major assemblies to become one of three aircraft variants. The 318th aft fuselage in particular will form part of a UK 'B' model variant of the combat jet.

This variant has the short take-off and vertical landing capability which makes it ideal for Britain's new Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers. With HMS Queen Elizabeth set to enter her new home in Portsmouth imminently, the F-35B jets are on track to make their first flight trials from her deck next year.

The F-35 programme is the world's largest single defence programme, and as a key partner, the UK has been working closely with the US from the outset.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin, said:

This is an important milestone and the latest example of how the F-35 programme is benefitting the UK's defence industry, creating thousands of jobs and helping to keep Britain safer and more secure.

Britain is a leading partner in the development of the F-35, supporting not just the aircraft that will operate from RAF Marham and our two new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, but also the thousands of jets that will serve our allies around the world.

Andrea Thompson, F-35 Lightning II Director for BAE Systems Military Air & Information, said:

Reaching the 10% mark of production on the F-35 programme shows how far we have come, but also highlights that there is an enormous

amount of work still to do.

With an order book of more than 3,000 aircraft for the global F-35 fleet, the investments we are making in our advanced manufacturing facilities are key to ensuring we continue to deliver on our commitments.

To add to this, we are also working closely with our supply chain to ensure they are equipped to meet the ramp up in production at the same time as delivering against our existing commitments.

Eric Branyan, vice president of F-35 Supply Chain Management for Lockheed Martin said:

BAE Systems is a valued partner on the F-35 program, and we congratulate them on this significant milestone. The United Kingdom is the F-35 program's only tier one partner and the work of BAE Systems and other in-country suppliers has a significant positive impact on the UK economy. We look forward to many more years of partnering to deliver the most advanced and capable 5th generation fighter jet to our allies around the world.

BAE Systems is responsible for 15% of the work on each aircraft including every aft fuselage as well as other mission critical systems for the F-35 Lightning II programme.

The first operational Lightning II squadrons will be the RAF's 617 Squadron (The Dambusters) and 809 Naval Air Squadron. Combined with the QEC aircraft carriers they will transform the UK's ability to project influence overseas.

Press release: Dstl's award winning apprentices

Four apprentices from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) have won prestigious QinetiQ Apprentice Training School Awards and one was also recognised as the best student by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET). The awards underline the quality of Dstl's programme for school and college leavers, which was also recently rated as being in the top 100 by All About School Leavers and Rate My Apprenticeship.

The award winners were:

- Oliver Kemp: 1st Year Mechanical Manufacturing engineering apprentice

- George Sweeney: 2nd Year Electrical engineering apprentice
- Cameron Fitze: 3rd Year Electrical engineering apprentice
- Zac Hall: 3rd Year Mechanical Manufacturing engineering apprentice

In addition, Zac also won the IET, Student Excellent Prize. Zac's nomination highlighted his outstanding attitude, strong work ethic, willingness to learn and his ability to work in a team environment.

Commenting on his award, Zac said:

I was shocked – but delighted to have won the award! I've really enjoyed the work I've been doing and the Dstl apprenticeship scheme has given me great support and many opportunities.

Della Williams, Engineering Apprentices Team Leader at Dstl added:

Ollie, George, Cameron and Zac have done exceptionally well to receive these awards. Zac is the first Dstl engineering apprentice to be awarded the IET Student Excellence Prize which is a huge accolade. It is clear that the apprentices really enjoy the variety and nature of the work that they are doing at Dstl.

Dstl apprentices get to work on some of the UK's most exciting and interesting science and technology programmes, many of which have international and well as national implications. In recent years, for example, current and former apprentices have worked on space satellites, drones, aircraft and tackling the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

This year Dstl has recruited 31 apprentices. The next recruitment campaign is expected to start in early 2018. Details of Dstl apprenticeship vacancies will be published on the Civil Service Jobs site and on the Dstl Early Careers Facebook page.

The awards were presented by Alan Woolford from QinetiQ and Tim Heywood from IET.

Press release: UKHO supports safe arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth into Portsmouth

The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office supported HMS Queen Elizabeth's entry by providing hydrographic and marine geospatial expertise

The United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) helped with preparations for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth into Portsmouth by providing specialist marine geospatial expertise and validating hydrographic survey data.

Following initial dredging operations to make Portsmouth's navigation channel and entrance deeper, hydrographic data was collected by the survey launch HMS Gleaner using modern multibeam echosounder technology to confirm the available water depth.

As well as providing advice during data collection, the final dataset was then validated by the UKHO to ensure it was the to the highest Category Zone of Confidence – a criteria used to determine the accuracy and data quality of seafloor coverage for safe navigation purposes. The UKHO then used this information to update ADMIRALTY chart coverage of Portsmouth Harbour and Approaches, to support the safe arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Working in close collaboration with the Royal Navy, Queen's Harbour Master and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, the UKHO also provided its wider marine geospatial expertise to prepare for the arrival, by providing detailed tidal stream predictions and supporting the placement of navigational aids.

[Portsmouth fly-through](#)

News story: New Director appointed for Office of the Advocate General

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Neil Taylor appointed Director Office of the Advocate General

Speech: HMS Queen Elizabeth, Portsmouth: Theresa May's Speech

It is a great pleasure to be here with you aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth today. Let me start by thanking you all, a great partnership of ship's company and contractors, for your tremendous work putting this great ship through her paces during her sea trials. I know it's been a major undertaking.

This is the biggest and most complex warship ever built for the Royal Navy. So to test her capabilities thoroughly, and to make sure that her 17 million components are working as they should, is a very big job. The fact that she

was ready to come in to port ahead of schedule is testament to your hard work.

As the first generation of sailors to form this ship's company, you have a special privilege and responsibility. You are setting the standard for those who come after you. Decades from now, when this ship is carrying our flag around the world, protecting our interests and ensuring our security, you will be able to look back on this time with pride. And the whole country is proud of you. The skill and professionalism of the Royal Navy are world-renowned. Your service is critical to our country's security and success in the world. In doing your vital work, you and your families are often called upon to make enormous sacrifices.

I know that you make them unstintingly and that you always give of your best. Britain truly has the best sailors, marines and officers in the world and I believe that you deserve the very best equipment. That is what we have with HMS Queen Elizabeth. This ship is a symbol of the United Kingdom as a great global, maritime nation.

Clearly, she is a stunning piece of twenty-first century engineering and a true testament to British shipbuilding and design. Six shipyards from across the United Kingdom contributed sections of this vessel. In Glasgow, Devon, Tyneside, Merseyside, Portsmouth and Fife, the skill of British shipbuilders were on display in her construction. Over 10,000 people, including 800 apprenticeships, 700 businesses helped build the mighty ship we see today. We are determined to build on the success of the Queen Elizabeth class carriers with a National Shipbuilding Strategy to open up new opportunities for our great British shipyards in the future.

Britain can be proud of this ship, and what it represents. It sends a clear signal that as Britain forges a new, positive, confident role for ourselves on the world stage in the years ahead, we are determined to remain a fully engaged global power, working closely with our friends and allies around the world.

As a leading member of NATO, the foremost military power in Europe and a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Britain has an enduring responsibility to help sustain the international rules-based order, and to defend the liberal values which underpin it.

To ensure we can do so effectively, we will increase defence spending every year and continue to meet NATO's target to spend 2% of GDP on defence. Our carrier programme is an example of what that spending can deliver. As highly versatile and potent assets, they will be able to meet the widest range of challenges around the world. Whether the task be high intensity war fighting, targeted action to fight terrorism or humanitarian relief to save lives overseas, these ships will transform the UK's ability to project power around the world.

Alongside her supporting task-group, including state-of-the-art aircraft, helicopters and escorts, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales will in time give the UK a truly world class carrier strike capability for decades to

come. Here in Portsmouth, the home of the Royal Navy and the new home of this great ship, we are surrounded by reminders of the Royal Navy's proud past. It was from this harbour that Nelson embarked aboard HMS Victory before the battle of Trafalgar; from here the allied forces left for the Normandy beaches to defeat fascism on D-day; and from here that the task-force set sail for the South Atlantic to liberate the Falklands.

Many times in our history we have called upon the Royal Navy to defend our island and protect our interests and those of our citizens around the world. The threats we face may have changed, and naval technology advanced beyond all recognition. But in the fifty years of service to come from this vessel, we can be inspired by those traditions to face the new challenges of the twenty-first century with the same determination and resolve which have always been the Royal Navy's hallmarks.

I hope that you can all enjoy some respite before you take the ship out of harbour again for the next phase of her sea trials, and let me once again thank you all for your service to our country.