



This is an annual publication which provides information on the numbers and types of equipment and formations of the UK Armed Forces. Equipment and formations statistics have been presented based on the UK Armed Forces components: land, maritime and air. Also provided are data sourced from the Department for Transport (DfT) on militarily-useful British-registered vessels.

Data is provided as at 1 April 2016 (except DfT data which is as at 31 December each year).

Key Points and Trends

Maritime

- At 1 April 2016 there were **11** submarines and **76** vessels in the UK Armed Forces (**64** vessels in the Royal Navy Surface Fleet; **12** vessels in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary). The number of submarines is in line with Joint Force 2025 commitments set out in the Ministry of Defence 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review
- Since 2009, there has been a decreasing trend in the total number of Militarily-useful British-registered vessels. This reduction may be due in part to: a reduction in vessels registered under the British flag or the complete loss of vessels e.g. vessels being scrapped.

Land

- In the UK Armed Forces, there were a total of **4137** Key Land Platforms at 1 April 2016, consisting of:
 - **1945** Protected Mobility Vehicles
 - **1764** Armoured Personnel Carriers
 - **428** Armoured Fighting Vehicles.
- There were also **250** Artillery pieces and **168** pieces of Engineering Equipment.
- At 1 April 2016, there were **31** Regular Army Battalions in the Infantry and **14** Army Reserves Battalions.

Air

- At 1 April 2016 there were **724** Fixed-wing and **372** Rotary-wing aircraft in the UK Armed Forces.
- There were **443** Unmanned Aircraft Systems as at 1 April 2016, the majority of which are Desert Hawk-III (**221**).

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Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2016>

Would you like to be added to our **contact list**, so that we can inform you about updates to these statistics and consult you if we are thinking of making changes? You can subscribe to updates by emailing DefStrat-Stat-WDS-Pubs@mod.uk

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Excel tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2016>

Introduction

This is an annual publication which provides information on the numbers and types of equipment and formations of the UK Armed Forces. Equipment and formations statistics have been presented based on the UK Armed Forces components: maritime, land and air. Statistics are also provided on militarily-useful British-registered vessels (including passenger, tanker and fishing vessels).

In previous years, equipment and formations statistics were published in the National Statistics publication 'Formations, Vessels and Aircraft'¹. An internal review was held during March 2016, followed by a six week public consultation² which aimed to identify whether the definitions, terminology and coverage of this publication still met users' needs. Based on consultation feedback, a number of changes have been made to the publication, including a name change to better reflect the publication's content.

The term 'equipment' for the purposes of this publication refers collectively to vessels, submarines, vehicles, aircraft, artillery and engineering equipment pieces.

Data have been obtained from various Ministry of Defence sources: Navy Command, Army Equipment Department, Army Organisation Branch, Air Command and Joint Helicopter Command (JHC). Data on militarily-useful British-registered vessels has been provided by Department for Transport. Further information about the data sources and data quality can be found in the Background Quality Report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2016>

A National Statistics publication

The United Kingdom Statistics Authority has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Designation can be broadly interpreted to mean that the statistics:

- meet identified user needs;
- are well explained and readily accessible;
- are produced according to sound methods; and
- are managed impartially and objectively in the public interest.

Once statistics have been designated as National Statistics it is a statutory requirement that the Code of Practice shall continue to be observed.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/formations-vessels-and-aircraft-statistics-index>

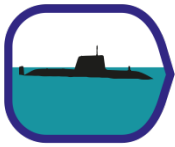
² <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/review-of-the-mods-formations-vessels-and-aircraft-national-statistics-publication>

Key Findings: Maritime Equipment & Formations

This section provides key findings on the UK Armed Forces Maritime equipment, and formations which are all, or primarily sea-based, in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines as at 1 April 2016.

Submarines

There were 11 submarines in the Royal Navy Submarine Service as at 1 April 2016, consisting of:



Nuclear Submarines: 7



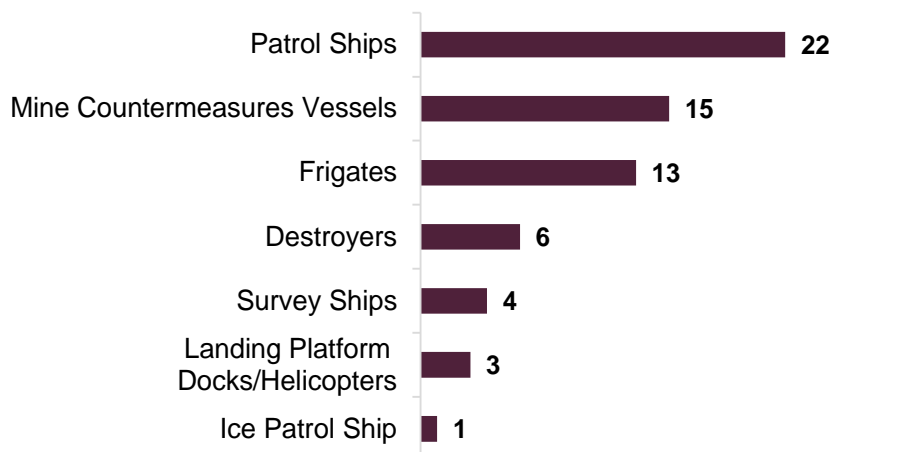
Ballistic Nuclear Submarines: 4

These figures are in line with Joint Force 2025 commitments set out in the Ministry of Defence (MOD)'s Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR)³.

Vessels

At 1 April 2016 there were 76 vessels in the UK Armed Forces: 64 vessels in the Royal Navy and 12 in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary. Patrol Ships (18 Inshore and 4 Offshore) make up the largest proportion of Royal Navy vessels, with 22, as shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1 – Numbers of vessels in the Royal Navy as at 1 April 2016



Source: Table 1

The total number of Destroyers and Frigates (19) as at 1 April 2016 are also in line with SDSR Joint Force 2025 commitments.

Maritime Formations

The Royal Navy has four Fleet Diving Squadrons which incorporates Fleet, Southern, and Northern Diving Groups and an Operational Support Unit. The Fleet and Southern Diving Groups consist of three and two Units respectively. The Royal Navy also has 15 Reserve Units.

The Royal Marines consists of: 1 Assault Group, 3 Commando Brigade, the Royal Marine Band Service and the Commando Training Centre.

Table 1 provides further statistics on Maritime vessels and submarines.

Table 2 provides further breakdowns of Maritime formations.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-security-strategy-and-strategic-defence-and-security-review-2015>

Militarily-useful British-registered vessels

Militarily-useful vessels are defined as vessels that could be requisitioned in appropriate circumstances in support of the UK Armed Forces.

There continues to be a decreasing trend in the total number of British-registered passenger, tanker and dry cargo vessels. At 31 December 2015 there were 701, a reduction of 140 vessels since the same point in 2009.

The number of British-registered merchant specialist and fishing vessels has also continued to decrease, falling by 20 to 82 vessels since 31 December 2009.

These reductions may be due in part to: a reduction in vessels registered under the British flag or the complete loss of vessels e.g. vessels being scrapped.

Tables 3 and 4 provide further breakdowns of militarily-useful, British-registered vessels.

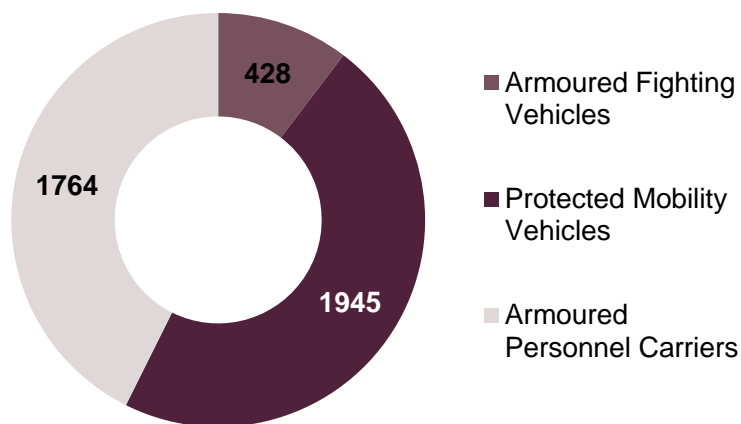
Key Findings: Land Equipment & Formations

This section provides key findings on the UK Armed Forces Land equipment, and formations which are primarily land-based, in the Army as at 1 April 2016.

Land Equipment

In the UK Armed Forces, there were a total of 4,137 Key Land Platforms as at 1 April 2016.

Chart 2 – Numbers of Key Land Platforms in the UK Armed Forces as at 1 April 2016



Protected Mobility Vehicle:

A wheeled armoured personnel carrier (APC) serving as a military patrol, reconnaissance or security vehicle.

Source: Table 5

The majority of Key Land Platforms at 1 April 2016 were Protected Mobility Vehicles and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC), with Armoured Fighting Vehicles making up 10% of the total.

The most common types of land platforms in the UK Armed Forces are:

- Bulldog (APC) - 895
- Warrior (APC) - 770
- Jackal (Protected Mobility Vehicle) – 437

The UK Armed Forces had 250 Artillery and 168 Engineering Equipment pieces at 1 April 2016. Just over half of the 250 Artillery pieces are L118 105mm Light Guns.

Land Formations

The Army can be split into three main component parts: Combat Forces, Combat Support Forces and Combat Service Support.

The Combat Forces includes the Infantry and Royal Armoured Corps. At 1 April 2016 there were 31 Regular Army and 14 Army Reserves Infantry Battalions, and 13 Royal Armoured Corps Regiments (nine Regular; four Reserves).

Table 6 provides further breakdowns of Army formations (excluding the Army Air Corps which are included in Table 9).

Key Findings: Air Equipment & Formations

This section provides key findings on the UK Armed Forces aircraft, and formations which are primarily air-based, as at 1 April 2016.

Fixed-wing Aircraft



Typhoons are the most common type of Fixed-wing platform with 132 aircraft at 1 April 2016.

At 1 April 2016 the UK Armed Forces had 724 Fixed-wing platforms. Just under a third (223) of these platforms are operated under contracts. Of the 501 Fixed-wing aircraft (for which figures are recorded⁴), 310 (62%) are in service.

'In service' Fixed-wing platforms:

All aircraft in active fleet management, which can include aircraft in storage (to preserve airframe hours).

Unmanned Aircraft Systems

There are 443 Unmanned Aircraft Systems in the UK Armed Forces as at 1 April 2016. Just under half of these are Desert Hawk-III (221), with 160 Black Hornet, 52 Watchkeeper and 10 Reaper.

Rotary-wing Aircraft



Chinook are the most common type of Rotary-wing platform with 60 aircraft at 1 April 2016.

The UK Armed Forces had 372 Rotary-wing platforms at 1 April 2016. Of the 327 Rotary-wing aircraft (for which figures are recorded⁴), 241 (74%) are in service⁵.

Table 7 and 8

provide further Fixed- and Rotary-wing aircraft statistics.

Air Formations

At 1 April 2016, there were 80 squadrons in the Royal Air Force, 49 of which are categorised as 'Flying Support'.

The Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm consists of 16 squadrons and 5 HQs, whilst the Army Air Corps incorporates five Regiments (four Regular; one Reserve).

Table 9 provides further breakdowns of Air formations.

⁴ In service figures are not available for platforms operated under contracts. See accompanying Excel Tables for further information.

⁵ The definition of 'in service' differs slightly for aircraft owned by Navy Command.

Further information

Definitions

Definitions and further information about the types and categories of UK Armed Forces equipment and formations can be found on each of the Services' websites:

Royal Navy & Royal Marines: www.royalnavy.mod.uk
Army: www.army.mod.uk
Royal Air Forces: www.raf.mod.uk

Some additional definitions have been provided in the Glossary on page 8 for additional information.

Symbols

- * Not applicable
- .. Not available
- Zero

Rounding

All figures in this report are actuals and have not been rounded.

Revisions

Corrections to the published statistics will be made if errors are found, or if figures change as a result of improvements to methodology or changes to definitions. When making corrections, we will follow the Ministry of Defence [Statistics Revisions and Corrections Policy](#). All corrected figures will be identified by the symbol "r", and an explanation will be given of the reason for and size of the revision. Corrections which would have a significant impact on the utility of the statistics will be corrected as soon as possible, by reissuing the publication. Minor errors will also be corrected, but for convenience these corrections may be timed to coincide with the next annual release of the publication.

Further Information (continued)

Contact Us

Defence Statistics welcome feedback on our statistical products. If you have any comments or questions about this publication or about our statistics in general, you can contact us as follows:

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If you require information which is not available within this or other available publications, you may wish to submit a Request for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Ministry of Defence. For more information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/make-a-freedom-of-information-request/the-freedom-of-information-act>

Other contact points within Defence Statistics are:

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Please note that these email addresses may change later in the year.

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Glossary

Ballistic Nuclear Submarine	A Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear (SSBN) is a nuclear-armed, nuclear-powered submarine.
In Service	The definition of 'in service' varies across equipment types and between Services. To assist interpretation, a definition of 'in service' has been provided in the footnotes for each table where 'in Service' figures have been used. Note that in service figures are not available for platforms operated under contracts. See footnotes for further information.
Key Land Platforms	Collective term used for Protected Mobility Vehicles, Armoured Personnel Carriers and Armoured Fighting Vehicles.
Militarily-useful British-registered vessels	Vessels that could be requisitioned in appropriate circumstances in support of the Armed Forces. It is required by international law for all merchant ships to be registered in a country, called its flag state. Flag refers to the country in which the ship is registered. Other types of ship might also be used in certain cases. Foreign-flagged but British-owned ships could also be requisitioned in certain circumstances.
Nuclear submarine	A Ship Submersible Nuclear (SSN) is a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine.
Protected Mobility Vehicle	A wheeled Armoured Personnel Carrier serving as a military patrol, reconnaissance or security vehicle. Protected Mobility vehicles were developed in response to the threats of modern counter insurgency warfare, with an emphasis on Ambush Protection and Mine-Resistance. Until recently these vehicles were termed 'Protected Patrol Vehicles'.