



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 each year (except DfT data which is as at 31 December each year).

Key Points and Trends

Maritime

- At 1 April 2019, there were **10** submarines and **73** vessels in the UK Armed Forces (**60** vessels in the Royal Navy Surface Fleet; **13** vessels in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary). The increase from 10 Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels in 2018 is due to three additional Fleet Tankers.

Land

- In the UK Armed Forces, there were a total of **4093** Key Land Platforms at 1 April 2019, consisting of:
 - **1759** Armoured Personnel Carriers
 - **1906** Protected Mobility Vehicles
 - **428** Armoured Fighting Vehicles.
- At 1 April 2019, there were **32** Regular Army Battalions in the Infantry and **16** Army Reserves Battalions.

Air

- At 1 April 2019, there were **601** Fixed-wing aircraft and **322** Rotary-wing aircraft in the UK Armed Forces.
- In addition, there were **289** Unmanned Aircraft Systems as at 1 April.

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Background quality report: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2019>

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.gov.uk

Contents

Introduction..... Page 2

Key Findings:

Maritime Equipment and Formations Page 3

Land Equipment and FormationsPage 4

Air Equipment and FormationsPage 5

Further InformationPage 6

Glossary.....Page 8

Excel tables can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-armed-forces-equipment-and-formations-2019>

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).

Prior to 2016, 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 were 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 the 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-2019>

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 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.

Submarines

There were 10 submarines in the Royal Navy Submarine Service as at 1 April 2019, consisting of:



Nuclear Submarines: 6



Ballistic Nuclear Submarines: 4

Vessels

At 1 April 2019, there were 73 vessels in the UK Armed Forces: 60 vessels in the Royal Navy and 13 in the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA). The only change since April 2018 is the addition of three Fleet Tankers.

Patrol Ships (18 Inshore and three Offshore) make up the largest proportion of Royal Navy vessels, with 21, as shown in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1 – Numbers of vessels in the Royal Navy as at 1 April 2019

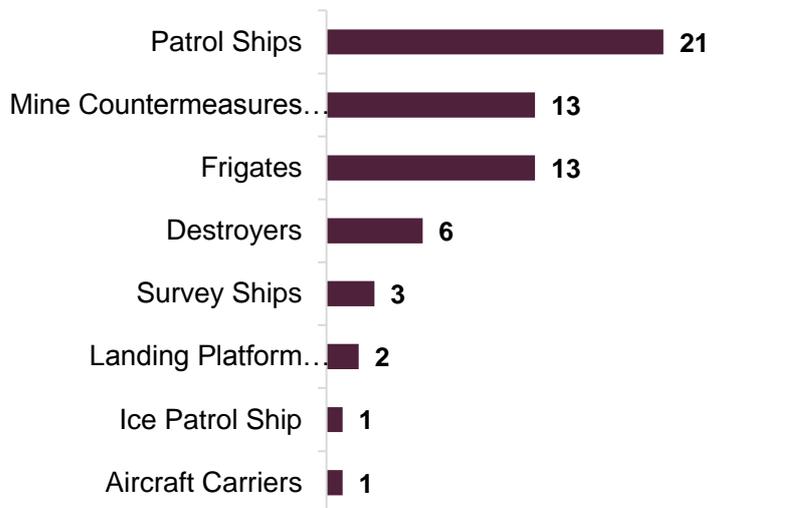


Table 1 provides further statistics on Maritime vessels and submarines.

Table 2 provides further breakdowns of Maritime formations.

The total number of Destroyers and Frigates (19) as at 1 April 2019 is in line with SDSR Joint Force 2025 commitments.

Maritime Formations

The Royal Navy has 15 Reserve Units and a Fleet Diving Squadron consisting of 11 Units. The Royal Marines consists of: 1 Assault Group, 3 Commando Brigades, the Royal Marine Band Service, the Commando Training Centre and four Reserve Units.

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.

The number of general cargo vessels continued to increase between 2017 and 2018 (from 166 to 176), while all other categories of passenger, tanker and cargo merchant vessel stayed static or reduced in number. Overall, the count of these vessels reduced from 728 to 721.

The number of British-registered merchant specialist and fishing vessels reduced slightly from 81 in 2017 to 77 in 2018.

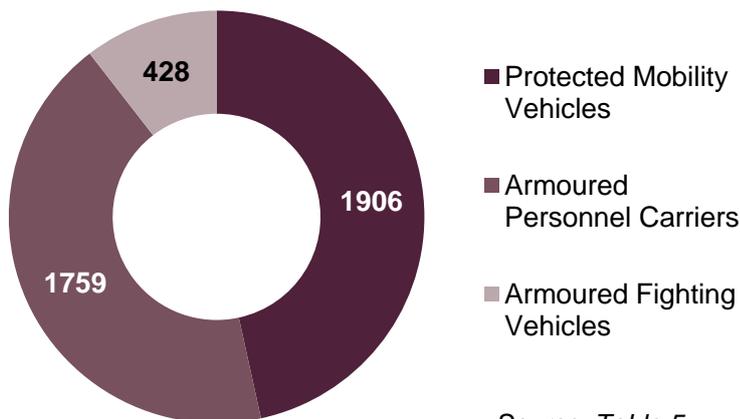
Tables 3 and 4 provide further breakdowns of militarily-useful, British-registered vessels.

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.

Land Equipment

In the UK Armed Forces, there were a total of 4,093 Key Land Platforms as at 1 April 2019, a reduction of one platform since 2018 due to the disposal of 1 Foxhound Protected Mobility Vehicle.



Source: Table 5

Protected Mobility Vehicle:

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

Most Key Land Platforms at 1 April 2019 were Protected Mobility Vehicles (47% of the total) and Armoured Personnel Carriers (APC; 43%), with Armoured Fighting Vehicles making up the other 10%.

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

- Bulldog (APC) - 891
- Warrior (APC) - 769

The UK Armed Forces had 250 Artillery and 162 Engineering Equipment pieces at 1 April 2019. 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 2019 there were 32 Regular Army and 16 Army Reserves Infantry Battalions, and 15 Royal Armoured Corps Regiments (11 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 2019.

Fixed-wing Aircraft



Typhoons are the most common type of Fixed-wing platform with 153 aircraft at 1 April 2019.

The UK Armed Forces had 601 Fixed-wing platforms at 1 April 2019, a decrease of 45 since 2018. The Tornado fleet has been disbanded since April 2018 and the number of Hawk TA is gradually reducing as it moves towards its Out of Service date in 2030. The planned arrival of additional next generation F-35 Lightning aircraft will see the number of fixed-wing Aircraft rise again. Of the 420 Fixed-wing aircraft (for which 'in service' figures are recorded³), 314 (75%) are 'in service' showing little change since the previous year (74%).

'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 were 289 Unmanned Aircraft Systems as at 1 April 2019, eight more than the previous year. The majority of these Systems are Desert Hawk-III (230).

Rotary-wing Aircraft



Chinook are the most common type of Rotary-wing platform with 60 aircraft at 1 April 2019.

The UK Armed Forces had 322 Rotary-wing platforms at 1 April 2019, a reduction of 10 since 2018. Of the 290 Rotary-wing aircraft (for which 'in service' figures are recorded³), 204 (70%) were in 'service'⁴ which is unchanged since 2018.

Table 7 and 8 provide further Fixed- and Rotary-wing aircraft statistics.

Table 9 provides further breakdowns of Air formations.

Air Formations

At 1 April 2019, there were 77 squadrons in the Royal Air Force, the same as in 2018. The Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm consists of 15 squadrons and four Headquarters, whilst the Army Air Corps incorporates five Regiments (six Regular; one Reserve).

³ 'In service' figures are not available for platforms operated under contracts. See accompanying Excel Tables for further information.

⁴ 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.

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.

Following the 2019 data collection process, revisions have been made to previously published figures due to errors in the administrative data. Further information is available in the supplementary Excel tables.

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>

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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'.