

## A vision of the future...

It's 2038. HMS Indefensible has been handed over to the Royal Navy...

Today in a grand ceremony at Portsmouth dockyard HMS Indefensible was commissioned into the Royal Navy. Described as the most stealthy warship in the world, she is now the only vessel in the Royal Navy and replaces 2 mothballed aircraft carriers, 6 destroyers and 4 submarines.

Responding to criticism about the shrinking fleet, the MoD replied *"It's not about numbers, it's about quality not quantity. HMS Indefensible represents a revolution in naval procurement, stealthy, light and agile she will provide a highly flexible platform. She is invisible to radar and almost immune to torpedo or missile attack. Her shallow draft makes her ideal for work in the littoral (coastal) areas. She is also highly efficient with virtually zero carbon emissions and zero fuel consumption"*

Admiral Sir James Bland added *"She is ready to respond instantly to events and can be deployed to trouble spots anywhere in the world. The RAF have promised to fly her to wherever she's needed provided (1) They are not busy, (2) The weather is OK, (3) There is a large airfield provided by a friendly foreign nation with top quality hotels nearby"*.

Constructed by Britain's only ship builder BATEY Systems in Birmingham, taking 8 years to build, and costing just £1.5 Billion she is a triumph of British engineering. Her forward section was built in China in 2 weeks and then shipped to the UK. The forward section was then joined to the stern built in Birmingham and the complex technical systems installed.

However the programme was not all plain sailing and has not been without its problems *"The original design included an outboard motor but early in the building process the Treasury insisted cost savings had to be made so out went the motor. After a major 2-year re-design and research project we selected oars"* said a BVATe spokesperson.

Although £1.2 Billion over-budget and 3 years late, Secretary of State for Defence, William Bragg says we can all be proud *"The Type 48 programme has sustained 10,000 British manufacturing jobs in addition to 30,000 civil servants in the MoD project team. She will represent the leading edge of British manufacturing wherever she goes and is worth every penny"* Bragg is also says he is hoping to see export orders soon although as yet there has been little interest.

Some observers have commented that her lack of any armament could be a problem but the MoD answered robustly *"The Foreign Office advised us that carrying weapons can be seen as provocative and that actually firing a weapon at someone would definitely infringe their human rights. We considered this advice at an early stage in the design process and together with the fabulous cost-savings, the case for having no armament was overwhelming"*.

Her commanding officer, Commander Rupert Tubworthy-Pollock said *"To be selected from the 1,200 officers still serving in the RN for the only seagoing command available is a great privilege. Bringing her out of build and into commission has been a huge challenge but I'm confident she will prove to be a great asset"*.

With a crew of just 2, she is a fine example of lean-manning, reducing running costs and manpower headaches. Her crew, AB "soapy" Watson said *"On my last ship I had to share the mess with 40 other men but on the new Type 48 sharing is far a less of a problem. As I'm now the only rating in the Royal Navy I have a lot of responsibility"*.

HMS Indefensible is expected to complete sea trials shortly, go to Plymouth for Operational Sea Training, have a short refit in Rosyth and then and be deployed as part of the new Euro-Navy task force.

