



Ministry of Defence

## 120/2012 - MOD Sets out future of Invincible Class carriers

### An MOD [Press Release](#)

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**Plans to preserve the legacy of the Royal Navy's Invincible Class aircraft carriers have been outlined today by the Ministry of Defence.**

HMS Invincible, HMS Illustrious and HMS Ark Royal came into service in the early 1980s and have spent the last thirty years protecting the UK's interests across the world.

The last of the ships to be decommissioned, HMS Illustrious, is due to retire from the Royal Navy in 2014 and the MoD is announcing the intention to seek proposals from organisations interested in preserving her as a lasting tribute to the work of the Invincible Class, who have played key roles in conflicts in the Falkland Islands, Iraq and Bosnia.

**HMS Invincible was decommissioned in 2005 and later recycled. The 31 year old HMS Ark Royal was withdrawn from service last year, following the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review. The MoD can announce today that she will also be recycled as part of a deal with Leyal, the same company responsible for recycling Invincible in 2011.**

Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology Philip Dunne said:

It is important that we preserve the legacy of the Royal Navy's Invincible Class aircraft carriers. When the last of these - HMS Illustrious - retires from the Royal Navy, we would like to see her preserved as a legacy to the work she, Invincible and Ark Royal have done to protect the UK over three decades. We would be keen to seek innovative proposals from a range of organisations, including private sector companies, charities and trusts.

HMS Ark Royal, like her sister ships, served this country with great distinction. Retiring her five years earlier than planned was a difficult decision but it was the right one that, combined with her sale, has saved over a hundred million pounds. That has helped the MoD achieve a sustainable and balanced budget for the first time in decades.

The Royal Navy's new Queen Elizabeth Class carriers and the Lightning II aircraft that will fly off them are among the biggest projects of the now fully funded equipment programme that will see around £160 billion spent on equipment and support for our Armed Forces of the future.

Preparatory work will be carried out on HMS Ark Royal over the winter to enable her to travel from Portsmouth to Turkey, where she will be recycled, at the same location where HMS Invincible was also recycled. Bids received for further use for HMS Ark Royal were considered, but were judged either not feasible or appropriate, or carried too much risk.

As the out of service date for HMS Illustrious approaches, the MoD will look to industry to provide viable proposals to keep her available for future private use in a different capacity while still offering taxpayers good value for money.

Notes to Editors:

For further information, please contact the MoD Press Office on 0207 218 7907.