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HMS Hi-tech, the warship of the future: Royal Navy's Dreadnought 2050 has space-age control room, 'see-through' hull and a crew of just 50

- Images have emerged of intimidating vessel, dubbed Dreadnought 2050, that could be the future of the Royal Navy
- The stunning vessel pushes today's engineering boundaries to the limits, with hulls that can make them invisible
- Engineers believe it could be crewed by 50 people, rather than the current 200, thanks to remote-control technology
- New-style operations room could allow commanders to focus on specific areas from up to thousands of miles away

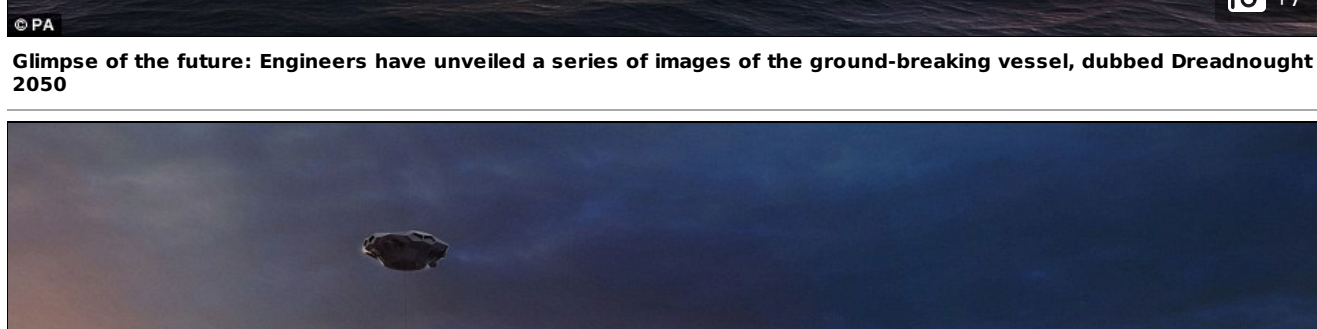
By SEAN POULTER FOR THE DAILY MAIL
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Sleek and stealthy, it resembles something from Star Wars. In fact, this is what British warships could look like in as little as 35 years.

With RAF jets already being replaced by drones piloted by men sitting at computer screens many miles away, the Royal Navy is now investigating how technology will change the fleet.

The answer, it seems, could be a generation of largely remote-controlled seafaring beasts with 'speed of light weapons' and a hull that can make them invisible to the naked eye.



Glance of the future: Engineers have unveiled a series of images of the ground-breaking vessel, dubbed Dreadnought 2050



Intimidating: The stunning vessel would push today's science and engineering boundaries to the limit, but experts believe there is no reason elements of it couldn't be incorporated into upcoming designs

- Tethered quad-copter could be flown above the ship with high-powered laser weapons to knock out enemy missiles or aircraft.
- Ultra-strong acrylic hull, coated in graphene to reduce drag, which can be made to appear see-through.
- Large extendable flight deck and hangar for remotely piloted drones, many equipped with weapons.
- 'Moon pool' or floodable dock area to deploy Royal Marines and other troops on amphibious raiding missions, or unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) to detect mines.
- Missile tubes along the sides for defensive hypersonic missiles. Also directed energy weapons to stop small enemy craft.
- Powered by a fusion nuclear reactor or turbines driving silent electric motors for waterjets.
- Outrigger hulls would contain tubes to fire torpedoes capable of 300+ knots through the water.
- Electro-magnetic railgun capable of firing projectiles the same distance as today's long-range cruise missiles.
- Ops Room with 3-D holographic command table and communications hubs. Manned by five sailors/computer experts.
- Total ship's crew: 50

The Dreadnought 2050 seen here is a concept ship that could be controlled by only five sailors sitting at screens, much like games consoles. And the entire ship's company could be as little as 50, which compares to the 200 needed for current vessels of this size.

Concept images of the ship have been released by a group of leading British electronic systems companies working with naval defence experts Startpoint.

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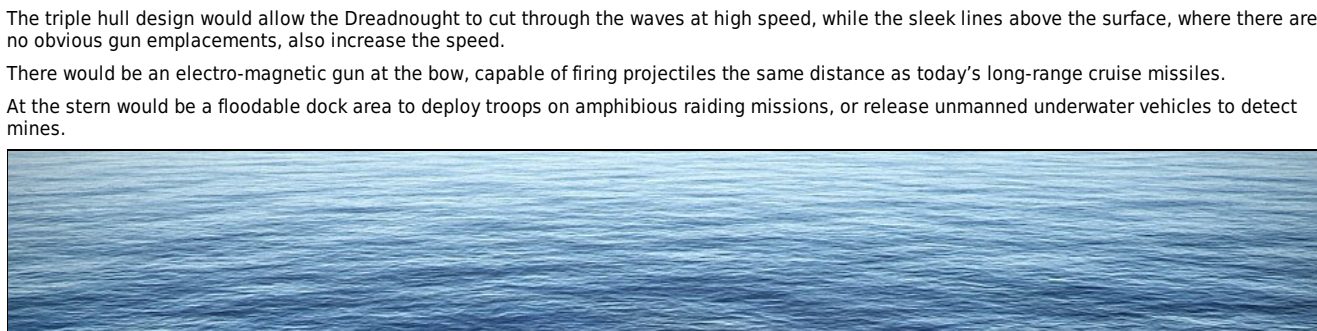
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The design includes a new-style operations room allowing commanders to focus on specific locations and threats thousands of miles away, from the deep ocean to deep space, using 3D holographics.

The ship is fitted with speed of light weapons, while the ultra-strong acrylic hull, coated in a form of carbon called graphene, could be made see-through.

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Worthy of USS Enterprise: The new-style operations room that would give commanders the ability to focus on specific zones from up to thousands of miles away

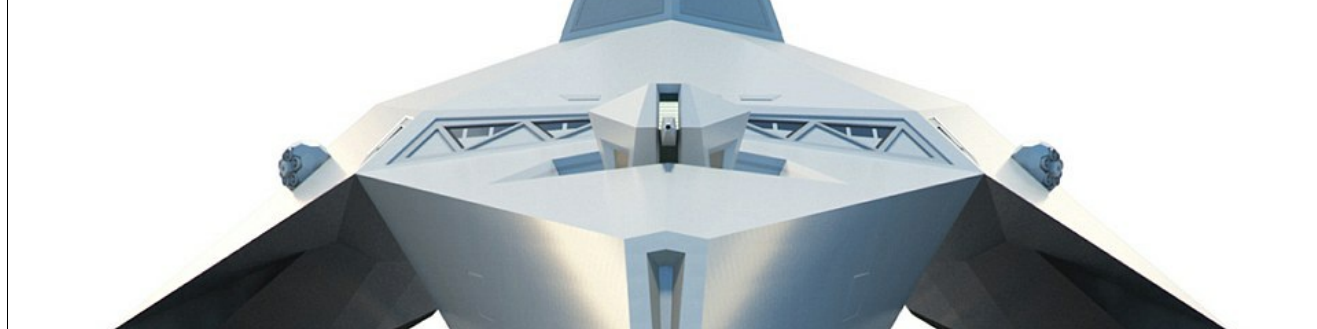
The triple hull design would allow the Dreadnought to cut through the waves at high speed, while the sleek lines above the surface, where there are no obvious gun emplacements, also increase the speed.

There would be an electro-magnetic gun at the bow, capable of firing projectiles the same distance as today's long-range cruise missiles.

At the stern would be a floodable dock area to deploy troops on amphibious raiding missions, or release unmanned underwater vehicles to detect mines.



Innovation: The Royal Navy's fleet robotics officer believes the designs answer the demand for the defence ministry to produce an operational robot



Predecessors: The surface ship is named for the original battleship HMS Dreadnought, which entered service in 1906

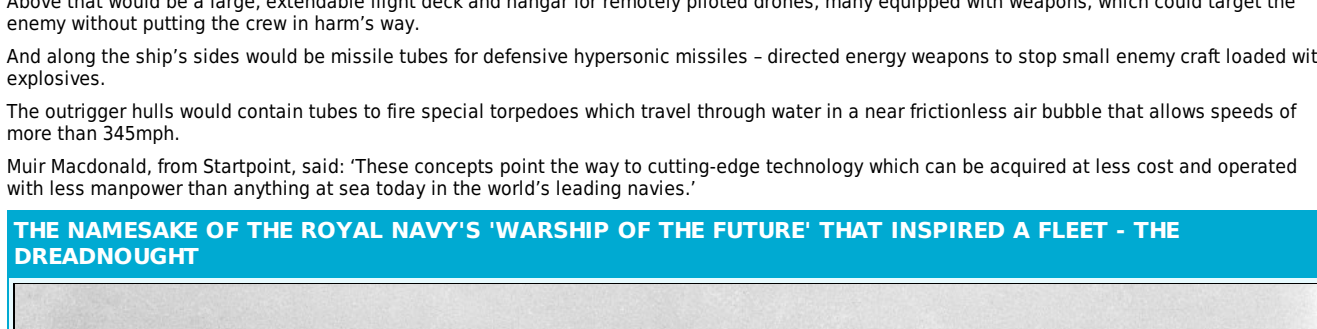
Above that would be a large, extendable flight deck and hangar for remotely piloted drones, many equipped with weapons, which could target the enemy without putting the crew in harm's way.

And along the ship's sides would be missile tubes for defensive hypersonic missiles - directed energy weapons to stop small enemy craft loaded with explosives.

The outrigger hulls would contain tubes to fire special torpedoes which travel through water in a near frictionless air bubble that allows speeds of more than 345mph.

Muir Macdonald, from Startpoint, said: 'These concepts point the way to cutting-edge technology which can be acquired at less cost and operated with less manpower than anything at sea today in the world's leading navies.'

THE NAMESAKE OF THE ROYAL NAVY'S 'WARSHIP OF THE FUTURE' THAT INSPIRED A FLEET - THE DREADNOUGHT



Battle-ready: Dreadnoughts at sea in the English Channel in 1914, named for the original HMS Dreadnought which entered into service in 1906

When the HMS Dreadnought was entered into service in 1906, she represented such an advance in naval engineering that her name came to be associated with an entire generation of battleships.

The previous generation of vessels became utterly obsolete, and were given the unfortunate term, 'the pre-dreadnoughts'.

She was the first battleship to have a uniform main battery, rather than having a few large guns backed up by a few second battery of smaller guns.

She was also the first to be powered by steam turbines, making her the fastest battleship in the world at the time of her completion.

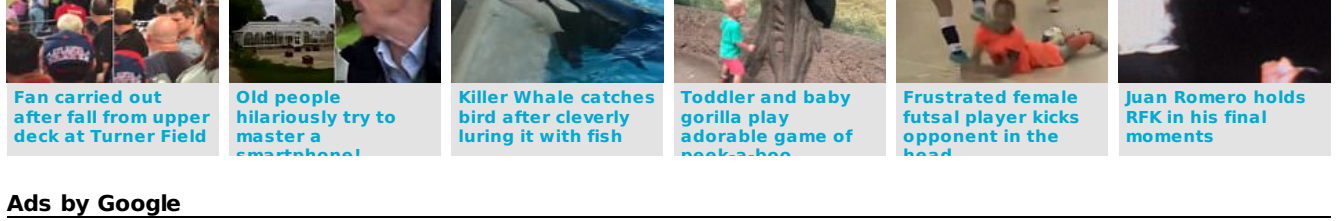
The vessel was relegated to coastal defence duties in the English Channel after Jutland, only rejoining the Grand Fleet in 1918. She was reduced to reserve in 1919 and sold for scrap in 1923.

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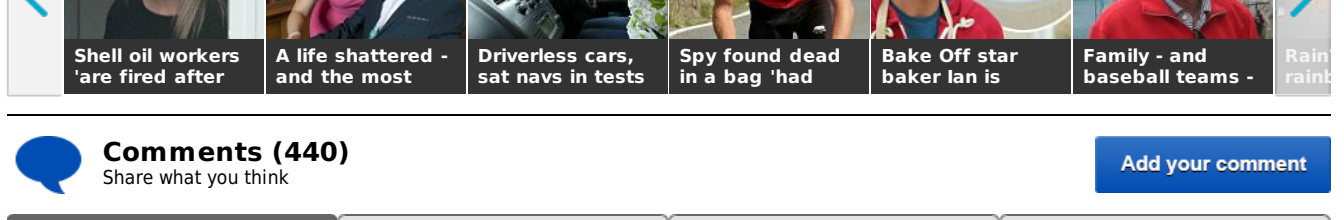
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jasper, Newbury, United Kingdom, less than a minute ago
Shame, I thought the Eagle comic had returned!!

Briton37, Norwich, United Kingdom, 8 minutes ago
We don't learn, do we. In the 30s we gave Germany the RR Kestrel engine - result, the ME109. In the 40s, we gave the USA the digital computer - result, IBM and Apple. A Labour government gave the jet engine and turbo-prop to the USSR. Now, we cheerfully pass on to the world our ideas on how to replace the Navy's old steam tug and rowing-boat.

HaterHater, Leeds, United Kingdom, 8 minutes ago
Would be share that with the French or would it be British?

Steve, Red Arrow Display team, 8 minutes ago
what good are warships like these, when the enemy is already amongst us and still pouring through Calais as we speak?

badger, Oxford, 10 minutes ago
So going by the name it'll be due by 2050? So it real terms it will be 2087 and £30bn over budget

Invinceble Truth, NGC Qld., 13 minutes ago
Why didn't they call it " Victory " after Nelsons flagship or do they know something we don't !

Chatsboy100, Plymouth, 14 minutes ago
Only 50 crew? Not much good when it has multiple fires and shell holes (below the water line) in it... There's only so much computers can do - and whacking several softwood wedges into a hole below the waterline is not one of them!!

Retired Old Guy, near Glasgow, United Kingdom, 14 minutes ago
The Royal Navy could put to sea right now in a boat with a crew of ony 3.....if only they could find the key to the shed where the oars are kept.

HumptyGrumpty, West Sussex, United Kingdom, about a minute ago
Multiple up votes for you sirl

Onfiah, Merthyr, United Kingdom, 14 minutes ago
Looks like Jean Luc Picard in the control room. So at least they have an experienced Captain.

DMJ, Oxford, 16 minutes ago
Looks interesting, but the important thing is to get the unit cost down and reduce overall size - that way we might end up with more than a very few hulls in the water.

gerum12345, wherever, 17 minutes ago
2050 this. 2050 that. I've lost count of the Government papers with that branding. (Sadly I get to read a lot of them). All BS smokescreens to cover ongoing systemic failure. Fusion reactors - yeh, right.

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