

BARONESS GOLDIE DL
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

4/8/1/1/ap

29 September 2023

Dear Richard,

During the Lord Soames debate on the role of the Armed Forces and the UK's Defence Policy on 7th September 2023, you asked about the 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery's training, AS90 self-propelled artillery guns, and the Challenger 3 Main Battle Tank programme.

I can confirm that the 1st Regiment Royal Horse Artillery do still train with real weapons.

The Regiment will be equipped with Archer 6x6 when it enters service next year. This platform has been procured as an interim capability, following the granting-in-kind of part of the Army's AS90 capability to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Several AS90 platforms were however retained for training purposes and to ensure our enhanced forward presence commitment to Op CABRIT in Estonia could continue. The Mobile Fires Platform will deliver the enduring replacement to the AS90 which will enter service later this decade.

The Army's Challenger 3 Main Battle Tank Programme will deliver 148 modernised Main Battle Tanks, providing Defence's only guaranteed, 24hr, all weather, mobile anti-tank capability, delivering a step change in lethality and survivability over its predecessors. Challenger 2 will continue to meet the Army's operational commitments until Challenger 3 enters service.

The war in Ukraine has reinforced the importance of maintaining a heavy armour capability, and we are reviewing the number of Challenger 3s we are building to ensure the Army's Main Battle Tank fleet is sufficient to meet Defence's needs.

I hope this explains the position.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

*Yours sincerely,
Annabel Su Goldie*

BARONESS GOLDIE DL

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