

# NUKEWATCH

[www.nukewatch.org.uk](http://www.nukewatch.org.uk)

## Warhead convoy movements summary 2012

The log below is based principally on observations by Nukewatchers, but complemented by deduction as to the purpose of each convoy journey and whether or not warheads were carried.

Nukewatch considers that during 2012 at least four loaded convoys travelled between the Coulport nuclear arms depot in Scotland and the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) at Burghfield in Berkshire. Our best guess is that between five and twelve nuclear warheads were dispatched to AWE and two to six warheads returned to Coulport.

As with last year, there is a discrepancy in our observations between the numbers of loaded convoys transporting warheads from Coulport to the Atomic Weapons Establishment and the number of loaded return journeys to Coulport. A balance of between three and six warheads (more likely at the lower end of this range) appears to have been retained at AWE. This would be consistent with a programme for decommissioning around three warheads per year between 2011 and 2025 to bring the UK's total warhead stockpile down from around 225 warheads to around 180 warheads, as the government committed to in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (see <http://bit.ly/KMzCiD>). Sustained monitoring over a period of a further 2-3 years will be needed to confirm whether a gradual annual reduction in warhead numbers is indeed taking place.

It must be stressed that this is an estimate and that convoy journeys will have taken place that Nukewatch was unable to monitor. The overall picture of convoy movements during the year represents a slightly higher level of activity than over the past three years, possibly because the Trident nuclear weapons submarine HMS Vengeance temporarily left service for refit at Devonport dockyard in March 2012. Warheads removed from the submarine would be available for return to AWE for servicing. In general, however, the level of convoy activity continues to remain consistent with the baseline necessary to allow the movement of nuclear weapons for maintenance and surveillance purposes, with a slow rate of return of warheads to AWE for decommissioning.

Convoy training activities are also thought to have taken place in January and September.

## Special Nuclear Materials convoys

Nukewatch also observed movements of Special Nuclear Materials (SNM) convoys with High Security Vehicles during 2012. An SNM convoy was observed at RAF Brize Norton on Monday 23 January and convoy vehicles were observed at AWE Burghfield on Sunday 11 March. Nukewatch also received an uncorroborated report of a sighting of an SNM convoy on the A1 in Lincolnshire on Monday 21 May. Further SNM convoys which Nukewatch was unable to monitor would also have made journeys over the year.

**IF YOU SEE A CONVOY PLEASE RING ONE OF THESE NUKEWATCH NUMBERS  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:**

Di:	07880 557035
Jane:	07778 267833
Nigel and Margaret:	01865 248357
Peter	07790 409339

We need to know what you saw, when you saw it, where, and what direction the convoy vehicles were travelling in.

For more information please see the Nukewatch website at [www.nukewatch.org.uk](http://www.nukewatch.org.uk)

**NUKEWATCH  
2012 Truck Cargo Heavy Duty (TCHD) Warhead Convoy Log**

<b>Trip purpose</b>	<b>Date Out</b>	<b>Date In</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Load</b>	<b>No trucks</b>	<b>Route</b>
	Thurs 18.01.12	Thurs 18.01.12	AWE Aldermaston	AWE Burghfield	Unladen	3?	
Exercise	Fri 19.01.12	?	AWE Burghfield	RNAD Coulport?	Unladen	3?	
	?	Wed 01.02.12	RNAD Coulport?	AWE Burghfield	Unladen	3?	A1 <sup>1</sup>
	Thurs 02.02.12	Thurs 02.02.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Unladen	3?	
1 Return Trident	Tues 06.03.12	Wed 07.03.12	RNAD Coulport	AWE Burghfield	Loaded	3? <sup>2</sup>	
	Fri 09.03.12	Fri 09.03.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Loaded	3?	
	Mon 23.04.12	Mon 23.04.12	AWE Aldermaston	AWE Burghfield	Unladen	3?	
	Mon 23.04.12	?	AWE Burghfield	?	Unladen	3?	
1 Return Trident?	?	Sun 29.04.12	?	AWE Burghfield	Loaded?	3?	
	Tues 01.05.12	Tues 01.05.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Unladen	3?	
	Tues 12.06.12	Tues 12.06.12	AWE Aldermaston	AWE Burghfield	Unladen	3	
	Wed 13.06.12	Thurs 14.06.12	AWE Burghfield	RNAD Coulport	Unladen	3	
1 Return Trident	?	Tues 19.06.12	RNAD Coulport	AWE Burghfield	Loaded	3	
	Fri 22.06.12	Fri 22.06.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Unladen	3	
	Mon 17.09.12	Mon 17.09.12	AWE Aldermaston	AWE Burghfield	Unladen	3	
Exercise	Tues 18.09.12	Wed 19.09.12?	AWE Burghfield	AWE Burghfield <sup>3</sup>	Unladen	3	
	Wed 19.09.12	Wed 19.09.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Unladen	3	
	Mon 01.10.12	Mon 01.10.12	AWE Aldermaston	AWE Burghfield <sup>4</sup>	Unladen	4	
2 Trident up	Tues 02.10.12	Wed 03.10.12?	AWE Burghfield	RNAD Coulport?	Loaded	4	M6
2 Return Trident	?	Thurs 11.10.11	RNAD Coulport?	AWE Burghfield	Loaded	4	
	Mon 15.10.12	Mon 15.10.12	AWE Burghfield	AWE Aldermaston	Unloaded	4	
?	?	Mon 26.11.12	?	AWE Burghfield	?	3? <sup>2</sup>	
	Wed 27.11.12	?	AWE Burghfield	?	?	3?	

**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> Sighting reported by member of the public but not corroborated by Nukewatch.
- <sup>2</sup> No information available on outward trip, which was unobserved by Nukewatch.
- <sup>3</sup> Round trip returning to Burghfield.
- <sup>4</sup> May have left Burghfield overnight on 1 October and returned on 2 October