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The dry dock in Rosyth, Scotland, is thought to be the most likely base for any maintenance, given the facility is owned by BAE Systems, the manufacturer of the aircraft carrier.

Suggestions that the ship hit a submerged object have been rejected, the source added.

The 65,000-ton ship has been moved from the Sandown anchorage to nearby Stokes Bay in Gosport, Hants, a more sheltered area that would enable divers to conduct detailed inspections.

It will take days to move the carrier to Rosyth, should such a decision be

A senior defence source said that while they would have to wait for the divers to confirm what the source of the issue was, they had "a good idea what the problem is".

"We think there is significant damage

'You'd think when they were doing trials, they might have spotted it. If it's not a design fault it can be repaired soon'

The source add
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SWORDERS/BWPS

In the red The cape of Esme Robinson, a Second World War nurse, has beaten its estimate to sell for £5,800. The cloak, which Robinson kept until she died in 2017, is adorned with 201 regimental badges of men she treated. Several museums rejected the item before it was put on sale.

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