

Royal Marines Execute Ferry Boarding Drill in Sydney Harbour

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Royal Marines from 42 Commando successfully boarded a passenger ferry in Sydney Harbour during a live maritime counter-terrorism exercise, part of the broader multinational Exercise Talisman Sabre 25. The training operation, staged close to the Sydney Opera House and in full view of onlookers, showcased the UK's capability to execute rapid maritime

interventions in cooperation with allied nations, including the United States, Japan, and Singapore.

The simulated operation saw commandos storm a suspect vessel painted in the iconic green and yellow colours of Sydney ferries. Working alongside United States Special Forces, the assault team deployed from fast raiding craft and helicopters to demonstrate a precision boarding and hostage rescue scenario. The exercise highlighted the complexity of maritime interdictions and reinforced the importance of regular, high-intensity joint training.

Exercise Talisman Sabre 25 is Australia's largest-ever military drill, involving around 35,000 troops from 19 partner nations. The United Kingdom's contribution includes approximately 2,500 Royal Navy sailors and marines, 900 British Army personnel, and 600 Royal Air Force (RAF) staff. The aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales leads the naval element, operating in conjunction with the USS George Washington strike group. Notably, the British carrier integrated operations with US Marine Corps Osprey aircraft, showcasing full interoperability between the allied forces.

From a centre-right standpoint, the drill represents sound defence diplomacy in action. It signals Britain's global presence and commitment to the Indo-Pacific region without overextending domestic resources. By participating in such high-profile exercises, the UK reinforces its strategic partnerships and boosts deterrence credibility in line with national security goals and the Government's "Plan for Change" defence strategy.

In addition to the ferry operation, British forces conducted close quarters combat training at dedicated facilities in New South Wales. Troops from 42 Commando, based in Plymouth, leveraged recent real-world

operational experience, such as anti-smuggling missions in the Gulf conducted from HMS Lancaster, to hone tactics relevant to maritime boarding scenarios.

This training forms part of Operation Highmast, the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment (CSG25) across the Indo-Pacific. Stretching from Western Australia through Queensland and New South Wales, this mission underscores Britain's intent to uphold international maritime norms and enhance regional security.

Ultimately, the Royal Marines' ferry boarding drill represents more than just a visual spectacle. It embodies the UK's evolving expeditionary capability, combining operational precision with international cooperation. It sends a clear message: Britain remains a reliable, adaptable partner on the global stage, committed to countering shared security threats through action, not rhetoric.