

UK and US Join Two-Carrier Strike Group in Pacific Drills

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The United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) have launched a powerful twin-carrier strike group in the Pacific as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 25, marking a significant moment for British Indo-Pacific strategy and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) interoperability. The deployment, which integrates HMS Prince of Wales and

USS George Washington, underscores the UK's commitment to global power projection and deterrence in a shifting security environment.

Over 3,000 British troops from the Carrier Strike Group 25 (CSG 25) have deployed across Australia, spanning Queensland, Western Australia, New South Wales, and the Northern Territory, for the largest Australian-hosted drill to date. More than 35,000 personnel from 19 nations are participating, making this the most extensive iteration of Talisman Sabre yet, with operations extending into Papua New Guinea.

HMS Prince of Wales, accompanied by HMS Dauntless and support ship Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Tidespring, operates in tandem with USS George Washington, USS Robert Smalls, and USS Shoup. Allied contributions include Australia's HMAS Sydney, Norway's Roald Amundsen, Canada's Ville de Québec, and Spain's Méndez Núñez. This multinational force showcases interoperability between British and allied carrier strike capabilities.

Commodore James Blackmore, commander of the UK Carrier Strike Group, described the operation as a powerful demonstration of “war-fighting capabilities” and highlighted opportunities to integrate systems, streamline target-engagement cycles, and build deeper coordination with US, Australian, and other allied forces.

This exercise also serves to highlight the UK's commitment to the AUKUS partnership, comprising Australia, the UK, and the US, with trials underway for artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled systems and uncrewed underwater vehicles. Algorithms are being tested for rapid target identification and engagement, demonstrating the growing importance of autonomy and digital systems in modern warfare.

All three UK armed services, the Royal Navy, the British Army, and the Royal Air Force (RAF), are contributing. Royal Marines, an Army Ranger battalion, and RAF Voyager transport aircraft support the deployment, while sub-sea warfare assets and seabed reconnaissance platforms are being tested in conjunction with AUKUS navies.

The deployment supports the UK's "Plan for Change," which aims to raise defence spending to 2.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and includes a £75 billion uplift for modernisation and interoperability.

From a centre-right perspective, this move represents both strategic prudence and credible deterrence. The double-carrier strike group boosts the UK's ability to respond rapidly in regions critical to global trade and security, strengthens alliance cohesion, and sends a clear message of resolve. Continued investment in air wings, advanced technology, and expeditionary capability will be vital to maintaining this forward posture.