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French Paratroopers Drop into UK as Macron Visits

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French paratroopers from the 11e Brigade Parachutiste (11eBP), France's 11th Parachute Brigade, have conducted joint training with the UK's 16 Air Assault Brigade at RAF Brize Norton during French President Emmanuel Macron's state visit. The operation showcases continued defence cooperation under the 2010 Lancaster House Treaties.

The troops took part in parachute jumps using British low-level parachutes and received instruction on UK airborne procedures. They later earned British parachute wings as part of the long-standing “Bonds of Friendship” initiative. Around 20 French soldiers worked alongside British instructors, enhancing operational compatibility through the Airborne Combined Joint Expeditionary Force (ACJEF – a rapid-response Franco-British military unit).

A French paratroop commander described the training as a symbol of shared military culture: “We are all paratroopers, with similar training and mindset. Earning a different nation’s parachute wings celebrates that bond.” A British Parachute Jump Instructor added that the exchange deepens mutual understanding of kit, safety, and procedures.

President Macron’s visit places defence ties high on the bilateral agenda. Both nations reaffirmed their strategic partnership through the Lancaster House Treaties, which focus on improving rapid reaction capability, intelligence sharing, and joint operations.

This exercise not only reinforces the practical side of military cooperation but also sends a strong diplomatic signal about the UK and France’s shared commitment to European security and readiness in a volatile global environment.