



Arctic blitz for the Royal Marines: British commandos emerge from submarine for major NATO exercise

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CAPE WRATH (Scotland) – An **amphibious infiltration operation involving exceptionally high levels of technological and tactical complexity** marked the start of the most spectacular phase of **Exercise Strike Warrior 26**. From the depths of the North Atlantic, **British elite force commandos surfaced aboard a German Navy attack submarine (U-Boat)**, coming ashore on the cliffs of Cape Wrath, in far northwestern Scotland.

The operation is the centerpiece of the most extensive coordinated test for the **UK Commando Force** in the past 15 years, marking the first time since the war in Afghanistan that all specialist components of the British elite formation have operated simultaneously in the field.



The Infiltration: German Submarine and Portuguese Firepower

The operation featured the renowned **148 (Meiktila) Battery Commando Forward Observation Battery** of the Royal Artillery, an elite unit specializing in penetrating behind enemy lines to conduct reconnaissance and direct naval and air fires.

The mission profile (*Full Mission Profile* - FMP) unfolded in several critical phases:

1. **Detection and ISR Support:** The German attack submarine provided intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) support to identify and track the target along the coast.
2. **Infiltration and Float-on/Float-off:** The commandos surfaced from the submarine using rigid-hull inflatable boats, carrying out rapid insertion maneuvers under cover of darkness.
3. **Tactical Landing and Observation Post (OP):** Special observation teams climbed the cliffs of Cape Wrath to establish an advanced tactical Observation Post.
4. **Integrated Naval Fire (Multi-Domain Fires):** From the forward OP, the commandos precisely directed the guns of the Portuguese frigate **NRP Dom Francisco de Almeida**, neutralizing "enemy" positions with live ammunition.

"A level of complexity and coordination involving live assets of this scale had not been achieved by 148 Battery for nearly thirty years" — **Operations Officer, 148 Commando Battery**

Strike Warrior 26: Exercise by the Numbers

Beginning on September 28 and scheduled to conclude on Friday, October 9, the *Strike Warrior* exercise is designed to test Allied operational readiness in responding to high-intensity crises in the **High North** and the **North Atlantic** region.

- **Personnel:** More than 2,000 service members
- **Participating nations (6):** United Kingdom, Netherlands, Canada, Germany, Norway, United States
- **Assets deployed:** 8 warships and 19 aircraft
- **Geographic areas involved:** Outer Hebrides, northwestern approaches to Scotland, Galloway, the Borders region and the North Sea



NATO Interoperability and Future Warfare

In addition to the Portuguese unit, 148 Battery coordinated naval fires from ships integrated into **Standing NATO Maritime Group One** (NATO's standing rapid-response naval group in Northern Europe), operating closely with the Dutch frigate *HNLMS Van Amstel* and the Canadian frigate *HMCS St. John's*.

In addition to traditional amphibious landing, boarding, and anti-submarine warfare operations, *Strike Warrior 26* is testing advanced warfighting doctrines:

- **Unmanned Systems and Drones:** Use of drones for precision-strike missions and tactical resupply of frontline troops.
- **Field Medical Support:** Construction of protected underground medical facilities to manage casualties in contested high-risk environments.

- **Combat Logistics:** Testing operational sustainability and supply chains in polar and subarctic scenarios.

With strategic great-power competition returning to the North Atlantic, the message from London and NATO allies is clear: the UK Commando Force is ready to project its multidomain firepower in any complex operational scenario.