



Drones, Artificial Intelligence, and Electronic Warfare: The New Training Cycle of the British Paratroopers of 2nd PARA

Published on 18/07/2026

The British paratroopers are preparing to fight on a battlefield where drones, sensors, electronic warfare, and artificial intelligence are no longer specialized capabilities but integrated tools in the daily operations of the infantry.

In Canada, at the British Army Training Unit Suffield, the 16 Air Assault Brigade conducted the exercise “Rhino Bizz,” a training activity focused on the so-called “recce-strike” system: identifying the enemy, quickly sharing information, and striking before they can act against friendly forces.

2 PARA at the Center of the Exercise

The main unit employed was the 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, better known as 2 PARA, supported by artillerymen, engineers, signalers, and medical personnel from the 16 Air Assault Brigade.

About 350 British and Canadian military personnel participated in the activity. The British airborne component was joined by a heavy weapons company from the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, a unit of the Canadian Army equipped with light tactical vehicles, mortars, heavy machine guns, and snipers.

The goal was not simply to learn how to pilot drones but to experiment with a new combat method where reconnaissance, command and control, electronic warfare, and weapon systems are connected within a single network.



Soldiers of the UAS platoon of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment prepare an FPV Scorpio 1000 drone before a mission to release an ordnance on a target.

Identify and Strike the Enemy First

The “recce-strike” concept combines reconnaissance and attack capabilities. Drones and sensors identify enemy positions, while the collected information is processed and transmitted to elements capable of intervening.

Once the target is located, forces can employ attack drones, mortars, Javelin anti-tank missiles, or infantry units. Electronic warfare is simultaneously used to locate enemy emissions and disrupt GPS signals and radio communications.

The principle is simple: see further, understand more quickly what is happening, and strike the enemy before they can organize their attack.



Soldiers of the 21 Air Assault Battery of the Royal Artillery during the Rhino Bizz exercise.

FPV Drones and Reconnaissance Systems

Among the systems tested is the Scorpio 1000, an aerial system piloted through FPV goggles and designed for the transport and release of military loads.

The soldiers of the Uncrewed Aircraft Systems platoon of 2 PARA prepared and employed these aircraft during attack missions against ground targets. During the exercise, Puma drones were also used, employed by the 21 Air Assault Battery of the Royal Artillery for reconnaissance and battlefield observation.

According to the manufacturer XTEND, five Scorpio 1000 systems were used directly by the British paratroopers without the operational support of company personnel. The missions involved targets at distances of 3.6, 6.5, and 7.5 kilometers, using real kinetic loads. However, these data come from a company communication and should therefore be considered as manufacturer statements.



Corporal Jack Southworth, belonging to the UAS platoon of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, performs pre-flight checks.

Artificial Intelligence in the Decision-Making Cycle

Two systems played a central role in the experimentation: Cain and Cobalt.

Cain constitutes the communication network used to connect soldiers, sensors, and weapon systems. Cobalt, on the other hand, employs artificial intelligence to gather, compare, and analyze information from various sources.

The goal is to provide soldiers on the ground and commanders with a common and updated representation of the battlefield, reducing the time needed to identify, assess, and engage a target.

It is not about entirely entrusting artificial intelligence with the decision to strike, but using it to process large amounts of data and speed up the human decision-making process.



Soldiers of the UAS platoon of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment prepare an FPV Scorpio 1000 drone before releasing an ordnance on a target.

Soldiers Building and Programming

One of the most significant aspects of the exercise concerns the transformation of the skills required of the individual soldier.

The commander of 2 PARA, Lieutenant Colonel Craig Shephard, explained that soldiers have learned to build and program electronic devices, pilot drones, and configure systems based on artificial intelligence, while simultaneously applying traditional infantry tactical skills.

According to Shephard, the British Army is trying to learn lessons from contemporary conflicts, adopting already available technologies and collaborating directly with industry to quickly adapt doctrine, equipment, and operational methods.

2 PARA had already established a platoon specialized in the use of Uncrewed Aircraft Systems at the end of 2024. The unit has experimented with drones both as a friendly force and simulating the enemy threat, with the aim of understanding how to coordinate these systems with artillery, air support, and command and control.



Corporal Jack Southworth, of the Uncrewed Aircraft Systems platoon of the 2nd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment, with the FPV Scorpio 1000 drone during the Rhino Bizz exercise.

The Advantage of Canadian Spaces

The Suffield range, in the Canadian province of Alberta, offers spaces hardly available in the United Kingdom.

The vast size of the area allows drones to fly over long distances, employ live ammunition, and use electronic jamming systems against GPS and communications without the limitations normally imposed by the density of airspace and British civil regulations.

The troops also trained against a simulated opposing force, also equipped with drones, sensors, and electronic warfare capabilities. A way to avoid one-sided training and more faithfully reproduce an environment where both sides simultaneously try to observe, disrupt, and strike.



A soldier of the 21 Air Assault Battery of the Royal Artillery monitors images transmitted by the Puma drone during the Rhino Bizz exercise.

A Transformation That Also Concerns the Infantry

The experience of 2 PARA demonstrates how the drone is no longer considered just a tool belonging to aviation or intelligence units.

Small unmanned systems enter directly into sections and platoons, changing the way of moving, observing, communicating, and fighting. At the same time, the spread of drones forces units to reduce their electronic footprint, disperse men and equipment, frequently change positions, and protect communications.

For the British paratroopers, traditionally destined to operate quickly and often far from main friendly forces, the ability to combine sensors, drones, electronic warfare, and precision fire can greatly increase autonomy and lethality.

But technology alone is not enough. Effectiveness depends on the ability to integrate it with the traditional skills of the soldier: initiative, discipline, camouflage, movement on the ground, and the ability to make decisions under uncertainty.

The Rhino Bizz exercise thus shows the evolution of an airborne unit that does not abandon its characteristics but seeks to adapt them to a battlefield where whoever is identified first risks also being the first to be hit.

News link: <https://www.army.mod.uk/news/strike-fast-strike-first-paratroopers-rehearse-the-future-of-warfare/>