



Extreme Selectivity of the Spanish Navy: Only Three Cadets Endure the FGNE 2024 Commando Course

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The "Aptitud de Guerra Naval Especial" Course, aimed at training the commandos of the Fuerza de Guerra Naval Especial (FGNE) of the Infanteria de Marina of the Kingdom of Spain, the Spanish equivalent of COMSUBIN, once again reaffirms its extreme rigor. The 2022 edition was canceled after the elimination of all candidates, highlighting the severity and high expectations associated with this course.

As reported by the Spanish newspaper El Confidencial Digital, after the cancellation of the course in November 2022, a new edition of this extremely rigorous program was launched in March 2023, which is structured in various phases over several months, aimed at training military personnel for the special forces of the Spanish Navy.

The Spanish General Staff specified that the 17th Special Forces Aptitude Course of the Navy began on March 6, with a conclusion scheduled for December 15.

Simultaneously, the seventeenth edition overlapped with the eighteenth. The 18th Course started on September 4 and, barring early cancellations, will conclude on June 2, 2024.

The figures related to the two courses are eloquent. A total of 60 people were called, and 24 cadets were selected to participate in the courses.

Of these 24 initial cadets, only six continue the path. The three from the 17th Course have to endure until December, while the three from the 18th will have to face several more months of extremely rigorous training, therefore, given the difficulties encountered by their peers, it is not excluded that further withdrawals may occur before the end of both courses.

Military personnel affiliated with the Spanish Navy and their special forces express, according to the Spanish newspaper [El Confidencial Digital](#), their appreciation for maintaining high standards of rigor: *"Nothing is taken for granted here; those who wear the green beret of our special forces have earned it with their commitment"*, highlighting how *"in other Spanish special operations units"* there has been a tendency to ensure a minimum number of trained operators per session, trying to ensure that a certain number of candidates complete the course despite a high dropout rate, sometimes ignoring the instructors' recommendations.

In clear contrast to this approach, it has been chosen in the past, as we have seen, to cancel the course rather than risk quality and reduce selection standards.

In response to El Confidencial's questions regarding a possible change in the course entry tests or a redefinition of the course itself, given the high percentage of discarded candidates, the Spanish Navy General Staff stated that *"the redefinition of the course is currently under review by the Personnel Directorate and the Navy General Staff"*.

What is the Fuerza de Guerra Naval Especial, also known as FGNE

The Fuerza de Guerra Naval Especial (FGNE) is the current special forces unit of the Spanish Navy. It was established on June 10, 2009, based on the foundations of the Unidad Especial de Buceadores de Combate (UEBC) and the Unidad de Operaciones Especiales (UOE) of the Brigada de Infantería de Marina (BRIMAR) of the Tercio de la Armada (TEAR).

It is based in Cartagena, directly depends on the General Command of the Infanteria de Marina, and is the flagship unit of the Spanish Navy.

It is qualified to carry out all doctrinal missions of special operations, which include the main ones of direct action, special reconnaissance and surveillance, and military assistance, as well as the additional missions of NEO operations (non-combatant evacuation), hostage rescue, and counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

It is employed in support of naval operations, being part of the Navy's projection, protection, freedom of action, and maritime action capabilities.

Following NATO standards for special forces units, they are primarily organized into small teams, in addition to other command, control, and support units. Recently, [the VI Estol 'Illetas'](#) has begun operations, already deployed on Spanish vessels patrolling the western waters of the Indian Ocean to combat piracy as part of 'Operation Atalanta'.