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## **UK & ALLIED FORCES TRI-SERVICE TRAINING FOR OPERATIONS**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

During the period of March 24 to April 12 - 2014 The United Kingdom was in the spirit of the exercise Joint Warrior (JW) which is a tri-service and multinational exercise conducted in the UK twice every year, once during spring and once in the autumn. The exercise is lead by the UK and it provides high quality coordinated training at the tactical level for all three UK Armed Services and numerous visiting units from invited allied nations. It aims to generate UK Defence contingent capability within a contemporary operating environment. A&D was able to visit Scotland's airbase 'Lossiemouth' and report from there. The JW exercise is actual the largest live, tactically focused exercise held in Europe this year with participation of some 13.000 personell !

### **COMPLEXITY**

To get an idea of the complexity hereby a view in this large exercise without too many details and the possibility to loose survey. Exercise JW is coordinated, planned and delivered by a joint team of Royal Navy and Royal Airforce personnel that form the Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff (JTEPS) based at Northwood Head Quarters in London. There were nine 'one star' commands across the maritime, land and air environments, the majority of these were commanded by UK's High Readiness deployable Joint Task Force Headquarters which deploys to RAF Halton. At sea some 34 naval units participated comprising 31 ships and 3 submarines from the UK, US, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Turkey and Norway. Commander UK Task Group embarked in the HMS Bulwark commanded the UK Responsive Force Task Group with 3 Commando Brigade embarked and work alongside the Netherlands Commander Maritime Forces in the HNLMS Johan de Witt. Maritime theatre entry, amphibious assault culminating in a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation, sea control and maritime security operations were exercised.

The Danish Task Group Commander lead a multinational Task Group including the Standing NATO Standing Maritime Group 1 and representing the maritime opposition forces. The UK's deployable Joint Force Air Component Command HQ based at RAF High Wycombe rolled out in full and commanded all fixed wing air activity. Quite a job, about 30 fixed wing aircraft participated including air-to-air refuelling tankers from Brize Norton and Waddington, Tornado's from Marham, Eurofighter Typhoons from Leuchars and Hawks from Leeming. Special and less regular seen in this environment were the maritime matrol mircraft from the US, Canada, France, Norway and New Zealand, hosted by Lossiemouth Airbase, including even night and weekend operations. The Joint Warrior exercises provide in general excellent opportunities to further reinforce air maritime integration and air land integration techniques tactics and procedures as well as large scale air operations in a complex and demanding operational environment. For the several United Kingdom's units the

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JW exercises are a very good opportunity to train in unforeseen operations with their foreign participants to keep up to their mandatory annual validations. Some content examples of the recent JW event:

On the west coast of Scotland an amphibious landing was executed by 3 Commando Brigade led by 40 Commando Royal Marines and a Dutch and Belgium Marine Commando Group. 3 Commando Brigade executed an amphibious landing on the west coast of Scotland, 16 Air Assault Brigade performed an airborne insertion of 3 Para in the North East of Scotland. UK Support and Attack Helicopters gave support in this training. A variety of other UK and Allied Land forces conducted Core Military Training and Mission Specific Training in Scotland and Northern England. This training utilised Defence Training Estate range areas, commercial ranges, Highland Agency and private land areas. It enabled Forward Air Control (FAC) training for UK units as well (such as US, German and Dutch Marine FAC's). Rapier fire units from 16 Regiment Royal Artillery conducted air defence training and Land/Air/Maritime integration throughout the whole period.

## **JW AREA AND SCENARIO**

The operation area conducted a wide variety of battlespace including UK live ranges and Managed Danger Areas (MDA). To meet the needs of the participating nations, To meet the participant nations training needs JW simulated a broad range of evolving crisis and conflict scenarios that could be realistically experienced in operations, involving multiple sovereign nations, disputed territory, terrorist activity and piracy developed over three weeks. A period was created holding simulated military and political tension, warfighting and potentially state on state hostilities; all of which is designed to provide quality collective training opportunities across the Air, Maritime and Land environments. Key to JW is the opportunity to practice and improve the tactics, techniques and procedures that are required of modern Armed Forces in a time that - as now appears - a threat can suddenly appear in reality. This very moment we cannot exactly find Europe in a state of relaxation without any threats, looking at the powder keg called Ukrain.

## **JW TRAINING-CONTENT**

The JW exercises provided opportunities for training in a variety of many different disciplines. An overview of some major separate items. In Maritime Task Force Training multinational tactical formations trained in improving the inter-operability, and discovering other than the traditional threats. The Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Anti-Surface Warfare (ASuW) by multinational maritime patrol aircraft actions supported for instance overland Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance tasks. Piracy and narcotics also implicate a form of (not traditional) war. Therefore a combination of maritime and air units cooperated in deterrence (counter-piracy) and getting control over danger and criminal areas, even achieved with the use of submarines. Contracted 'criminals' were used for this purpose. The submarines off course were also to train in sub-versus-sub and sub-versus-ship situations, and in combination with the foreign participants this provided

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a better understanding and 'oiled machine', it improved the understanding of battle space management and interoperability between the international units. Important items are of course nature, environment, specific companies and quiet villages of whom was taken care of very well. Still there was a good opportunity for live firing for the concerning units including real naval gunfire, air to ground munitions delivered by fast jets and land based light guns and mortars. Interesting item are the 'Composite Air Operations' involving aircraft of different types and roles. Nice example will be given by the cooperation of a Falcon-20 with two Hawks. The Falcon can pretend to be another type of aircraft by generating signals with highly advanced avionics, while two Hawks fly as close as possible next to each other and just below the Falcon with minimum distance (due to enemy-radar). At certain moment (but far too late to find out by the enemy) this three-ship formation breaks and the Hawks are able to attack for instance a targeted ship. Close Air Support (CAS) was performed by a combination of air-maritime and air-land Integration events with even live firing weapons on licensed ranges, allowing even practising rapid engagement of unforeseen targets.

## **NO GAME**

War is not gaming, but supporting products such as digital images, electro-optical and infrared techniques and full-motion video's were used. Live Tactical Communication Data Link networking will allow the creation of a Common Operational Picture. The electronic warfare (EW) was practised by the use of emitters, simulating they were mobile surface-to-air missiles (SAM) and even SCUD surface-to-surface installations. Temporary radar and communications jamming is routinely practised in military exercises and is an essential part of preparation for operations, called GPS Denial Operations. None of this significant military activity can be sustained without comprehensive logistics support. JW offers participants the opportunity to plan and exercise many aspects of this vital logistics support and training skill. The maritime units will practice Replenishment at Sea drills, embarking fuel and provisions and the air participants will similarly be able to practice in-flight refuelling using the RAF's newest aircraft, the KC30 Voyager. Interesting item to end the overview of this mass-exercise is the use of media. Not the regular ones, no, fictional media that generates such kinds of coverage which leads to tension and confusion. This trains various groups within the exercise to experience where media coverage can result to, and how to check and interpret it.

Overall, the JW exercise mirrors the large scale and complexity of modern warfare. It is one of a diminishing number of exercises which can validate both HQ Staffs and live military formations in a truly Joint environment. It remains the principal exercise for training individual Maritime units to operate in a Task Group in joint operations.

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*Special thanks to the UK MOD*

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