

# US general confirms UK Special Forces operating in Ukraine

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On May 11, the Associated Press (AP) published an article on the state of US special forces, including an interview with US General Bryan Fenton, commander of the US Special Operations Command.

In it Fenton acknowledged the deployment of a significant number of British Special Forces in Ukraine.

A piece headlined, “US special operations, learning from war in Ukraine, have to do more with less”, raised proposals by US Army Special Operations Command to increase the size of its Green Beret teams—usually about 12 members—to bring in people with more specialized and technical abilities.

Forbes comments, “A 12-person detachment might be upgunned,” to include an Air Force pilot, Navy ship driver, cryptologist or cyber expert. In the key passage he explains how:

“The United States is ‘taking a lot of lessons learned out of the experience in Ukraine, mostly through the eyes of our U.K. special operations partners, who not only have done that in their formations, but they’ve also learned very quickly that they needed other elements of their joint force.’”

AP’s report continues, “As an example, he [Fenton] said British commandos needed Royal Air Force pilots to help advise on drone operations and Royal Navy teammates ‘to help them understand, more than a SOF (special operations forces) teammate could, the way a ship in the Black Sea navigates.’”

Fenton here reveals how deeply British imperialism is involved in the NATO-led war against Russia, including the deployment of Special Forces, Royal Air Force pilots and “Royal Navy teammates”.

Fenton’s interview comes less than three months after German Chancellor Scholz stated that British troops were operating on the war front, and the leak in

March in Russian media showing that Lt Gen Ingo Gerhartz, the head of the Luftwaffe, describing how British forces were working with Ukraine on deploying Storm Shadow missiles against targets up to 150 miles behind Russian lines.

Following Scholz’s comments, London said that it had a “small number” of soldiers deployed inside Ukraine, revealing only that some were involved in medical training.

Under conditions in which Ukraine’s failed offensive last year has plunged Kiev and NATO into crisis, with talk among leading NATO figures, including French President Macron of the western powers deploying ground troops to fight Russia, Fenton’s comments caused acute embarrassment.

This led to AP taking down his comments in an extraordinarily clumsy manner. In a Monday posting on X, WSWS writer Andrei Damon shows this, using screenshots. He wrote:

“Over the weekend, the Associated Press published a report acknowledging the deployment of a significant number of British special forces in Ukraine. This reference has been removed, leaving a nonsense sentence fragment. The world’s population is being denied vital information.

Since then a further rewrite has been undertaken. The severely edited article, stripped of all detail, now reads:

“He [Fenton] said in an interview that the U.S. is ‘taking a lot of lessons learned out of the experience in Ukraine,’ including by special operations forces working in the country. The U.S. has no troops on the ground there.”

Any admission of the extent of UK involvement in Ukraine is ruthlessly suppressed, through the use of D-Notices, which veto the publication of news damaging to the interests of the British state.

On October 30, 2023, the WSWS reported *Socialist Worker*, the publication of the Socialist Workers Party, had been sent D-Notices over its coverage on Gaza and Ukraine. But for the most part D-Notices, due to the slavish collusion of the mainstream media, mean only that such notices function as gag orders.

Not a single national or local newspaper in the UK has reported Fenton's comments, or their subsequent redaction by AP. And only two, non-UK based internet publications have even referred to Fenton's original comments—the New York-based *Business Insider*, and a military website, *Army Recognition Group*, based in Belgium.

Since the beginning of the Ukraine-Russian war, the WSWS has repeatedly alerted workers in Britain and internationally to the presence of troops on the ground in Ukraine, in opposition to the lies of the leaders of the NATO countries involved that they are playing no such role.

In an April 17, 2022 article, the WSWS provided details on how Britain had been training Ukrainian troops for years, since the since the 2014 Maidan Square coup, which overthrew the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich. The Operation Orbital training escalated following Russia's invasion in February 2022.

The WSWS drew attention to the fact that British special forces were at that point (April 2022) training Ukrainian troops in the war zone, according to a *Times* of London report.

Another WSWS article published the same month noted that leaked classified Pentagon documents further exposed the role of British imperialism in provocations and war against Russia, including what the Pentagon described as the “near-shutdown” of a UK spy plane by Russia.

The Pentagon leaks confirmed that UK special forces troops were operating in the Ukrainian war zone. A classified document, at the time less than two weeks old—dated March 1, 2023—listed Britain as supplying more than half of all 97 western special forces in the country, with 50, followed by Latvia (17); France (15); US (14); and Netherlands (1).

A WSWS article published December 18, 2022 noted that a leading British army general, Lieutenant General Robert Magowan—one of the three deputy defence

chiefs of staff of the British armed forces—had admitted that British Royal Marines had been deployed on “discreet operations” inside Ukraine. The operations conducted by the Marines held a “high level of political and military risk.”

An article published June 5, 2023 noted, “According to research compiled by Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), a London-based NGO, based on leaked reports to the mainstream media, wire services and broadcasters or as the result of operations that have gone wrong, the UKSF [United Kingdom Special Forces] has carried out operations in at least 19 countries between 2011 and 2021, including Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, the Philippines, Russia, Kenya, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.”

The war aims of British imperialism have been codified in a series of speeches by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, beginning with one at a NATO air base in Warsaw in April. Identifying Russia, China, Iran and North Korea as an “axis of authoritarian states,” hostile to NATO and Britain's interests, he pledged to increase military spending to 2.5 percent of GDP, meaning an extra £75 billion going to the armed forces.

This includes £3 billion in multi-year funding for Ukraine and a massive expansion in military equipment donations. £500 million was handed over to Kiev immediately, with Downing Street saying it was making the “largest-ever provision of vital munitions, including some 400 vehicles, 1,600 munitions and 4 million rounds of ammunition.”

Sunak's predecessor Boris Johnson had already put in place more than £200 million to strengthen the Special Forces in a 2021 plan, with the Royal Marines to be transformed into a new Future Commando Force. This would take on many of the traditional tasks of the special forces—the Special Air Service and Special Boat Service. Over the next decade the new force would carry out maritime security operations and “pre-empt and deter sub-threshold activity, and counter state threats”.



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