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By Thomas Scripps

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Royal Marines from anti-Russia exercise daubed swastikas on chest

A video leaked to the *Mail on Sunday* shows a disorientated British Royal Navy marine sitting on a toilet with a swastika scrawled on his chest. According to the *Mail*, the remainder of the video, thought to have been filmed aboard HMS Albion, features a series of “disgusting acts” in the ship’s corridors and sleeping quarters.

The marines were part of the Future Commando Force (FCF) taking part in Exercise Baltic Protector, described in the UK media as designed “to strike fear into [Russian Federation] President Putin.” The exercise saw the Royal Marines lead a force of 12,000 troops, 17 ships and aircraft simulating an assault on the Baltic and Scandinavian coastline.

A senior officer wrote to sailors, “The Commandant General Royal Marines has directed that anyone with the recent video from Ex BP [Exercise Baltic Protector] is to delete it immediately. Anyone found forwarding it, particularly to public forums, will face disciplinary action. It includes booze, s*** and swastikas.

“If it reaches social media we can kiss goodbye to any additional responsibilities as well as runs ashore [Navy slang for social privileges]. Talk of it may kill FCF dead.”

These events confirm Winston Churchill’s doubtless well-informed description of the Navy’s traditions as “Rum, sodomy and the lash.” The Royal Marines are tasked with killing in the interests of British imperialism anywhere in the world, with unquestioning obedience and ruthless efficiency. They are suitably brutalised for that purpose.

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More fundamentally, the leaked video reveals the fascist sentiment and culture which is increasingly finding a home in the world's armed forces. Regardless of the perverse circumstances in which these facts have come to light, their serious implications cannot be ignored.

In Germany, current and former members of the army's elite regiments were found to have established a far-right terror network preparing assassinations of left-wing figures and a fascist revolt for "Day X." The plot had close connections with the Military Intelligence Services. It has also been discovered that elite police officers were secretly storing vast amounts of weapons and ammunition with the same intentions.

The same forces are at work in the UK military. The last time a video was leaked from the British armed forces, this April, it showed four soldiers from the UK's elite Paratroop regiment using a picture of Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn for target practice. The video was captioned "happy with that," as it zoomed in to show Corbyn's head peppered with bullet holes and with the soldiers laughing in the background. Like the Royal Marines, the soldiers' unit, 3 PARA, specialises in counterinsurgency operations. It has a history of terrorising the working-class Catholic population of Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

In 2017, Serj Forster was accepted into the British Army having previously declared his support for a fascist terror group on social media. In a Facebook post from 2015, he wrote that he was "kicked out of college for spreading extremist ideas and recruiting for an extremist organisation and raising racial tensions." He posted a photo of himself dressed in black with the caption, "The Blackshirts are back 88!", referring to Oswald Mosely's British Union of Fascists. The number 88 is a known far-right code for the Nazi salute, "Heil Hitler."

In March 2018, Corporal Mikko Vehvilainen, described as an "outstanding" soldier during his deployment to Afghanistan, was jailed for eight years after being found guilty of recruiting for the banned far-right terror group National Action. Vehvilainen was tried alongside 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian soldier Pte Mark Barrett, who was acquitted of National Action membership but removed from the army. He had a cardboard swastika openly displayed on his windowsill at Alexander Barracks in Cyprus. Two other unnamed soldiers linked to Vehvilainen also faced charges but were internally disciplined and remained in the army.

Last October, the fascist founder of the English Defence League, Tommy Robinson, posted a video of himself with a group of young British recruits cheering his name. When

one of the soldiers was dismissed in connection with this event, an “I am Soldier X” defence campaign was launched among current and former members of the armed forces. Robinson held interviews with anonymised serving soldiers and delivered a petition to Downing Street on behalf of this far-right campaign.

As in Germany, the growth of the far-right within the armed forces is a direct result of imperialist war plans and of the need to suppress the class conflicts they threaten to unleash. The British Future Commando Force and Baltic Protector exercise are key elements of a much wider anti-Russian military front, built-up behind the backs of the UK population on the spurious grounds of combatting “Russian aggression.”

British armed forces play a leading role in NATO’s “Enhanced Forward Presence” deployment, designed to threaten Russia’s western border with battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. Britain leads the battlegroup in Estonia, where it has 1,000 soldiers deployed alongside Challenger 2 main battle tanks. Their forces were bolstered in March by the addition of four Typhoon fighter jets, now stationed at Estonia’s Amari air base. Five Apache attack helicopters were added the following month.

The Royal Marines have launched a ten-year joint programme with the Norwegian armed forces which will see over one thousand British troops stationed and trained in the Arctic each year. Britain will eventually have a brigade-strength deployment in the region. A fleet of submarine-hunting aircraft will be deployed to the Arctic next year. One of their roles will be to protect the UK’s “nuclear deterrent submarines.”

In Poland, more than 150 British troops are deployed in a 1,100-strong battlegroup led by the United States. Further South, 150 British military personnel and four more Typhoon jets are stationed in Romania as part of NATO’s “Enhanced Air Policing” mission, targeted at seizing control of the Black Sea region.

Just over a week ago, British paratroopers took part in the largest airborne exercise since the end of the Cold War—in Croatia, Germany, Romania and Bulgaria. The operation involved more than 7,000 British, US and French soldiers, 300 vehicles and 40 aircraft and was designed to demonstrate to Russia how quickly NATO can move significant extra forces into Eastern Europe and beyond. These followed the 18,000-strong Sabre Strike exercise in Poland, Latvia and Lithuania last year.

One commando told the *Mail on Sunday*, “No wonder senior officers were desperate to destroy all the evidence that this Nazi ritual took place. Exercise Baltic Protector was

supposed to send President Putin a message... This wasn't a time to get drunk, daub swastikas on each other and do other unthinkable acts.”

In fact, the Navy's crackdown on the circulation of the video flows from the recognition that fascist swastikas are wholly appropriate to military operations threatening an assault on Russia.

In January last year the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) held a meeting addressed by General Sir Nick Carter, the Chief of the General Staff of the British Armed Forces, insisting that the UK must actively prepare for war with Russia.

The British Army needed a “Strike concept” to “project land capability over distances of up to some 2,000 km.” Carter stressed. We “are copying what the Germans did very well in 1940”—a reference to the Nazi's Operation Barbarossa, the 1941 war of annihilation against the Soviet Union which left 26 million Soviet soldiers and civilians dead.

A contemporary war against nuclear-armed Russia could not be waged in any way other than the genocidal fashion of the Nazis. And such a campaign would require the wholesale establishment of military dictatorship on the home front, with fascist gangs deployed to smash left-wing, anti-war protests. Events like those aboard the HMS Albion provide a partial glimpse of what is underway.

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