# SAS-style helicopter training sparks surprise over Manchester Tesco



Tesco shoppers were taken aback on Monday in Baguley, Manchester, as they witnessed the surprising sight of black-clad figures abseiling rapidly from helicopters in what appeared to be a military exercise. This event unfolded near the supermarket when two helicopters, identified as dark blue and white Eurocopter Dauphin IIs, hovered above the area.

Footage captured by passers-by depicted the helicopters lowering ropes, from which six individuals dressed in attire resembling military fatigues descended. After landing on a nearby rooftop, the figures reportedly retracted the ropes, allowing the helicopters to depart swiftly from the scene.

While the Ministry of Defence has yet to provide comment on the incident, experts speculate that this could be part of a training exercise typically associated with the SAS (Special Air Service). Observers noted that similar activities have previously been reported in other locations across the UK, including Wrexham and Salford.

Just a day prior to the Baguley incident, military helicopters were spotted circling over Media City in Salford, where the BBC conducts much of its filming. Eyewitness accounts describe at least one helicopter landing on the roof of a car park around 11.30 PM, prompting amazement among those present. A witness recounted to the Manchester Evening News: “We had three or four Blue Thunder helicopters circling around Media City and landing on the car park next to the Premier Inn. Quite unexpected in the middle of the night. There was also a lot of crew with gear on and ropes.”

The nickname "Blue Thunder" refers to the Eurocopter Dauphin II, the same type of aircraft observed in Baguley. Reports from that evening indicate that these helicopters flew low, with all lights turned off, and notably, no public or private aircraft were indicated on aerial flight trackers during this time.

Further insights into the Eurocopter AS365N3 Dauphin reveal that it is a fast twin-engine helicopter known for its modifications that facilitate the rapid insertion and extraction of special forces personnel.

In recent months, various branches of the UK military have been engaged in high-profile training exercises, reflecting the rising global tensions exemplified by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. For instance, on April 2, the Royal Navy's HMS Dauntless showcased its capabilities during a live-fire drill off the Welsh coast, where it engaged simulated drone attacks using an array of weapon systems.

This display of military power comes as the destroyer prepares for a significant deployment to Asia, where it will serve in the protection of one of Britain’s aircraft carriers. Notably, this mission may take the HMS Prince of Wales through strategically sensitive areas, including the Red Sea, where threats from Houthi rebels have been reported.

As the situation develops, further statements from the Ministry of Defence may provide additional context to the military-focused activities observed in urban areas of the UK.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/low-flying-military-helicopters-over-7087565> - This article discusses low-flying military helicopter exercises in Sussex, similar to the Baguley incident, highlighting the UK's military training activities in urban areas.
* <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/24244004.sas-helicopters-spotted-swindon-military-exercise/> - Reports on SAS helicopters spotted over Swindon, corroborating the presence of military exercises involving Eurocopter Dauphin IIs in the UK.
* <https://www.armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2025/wildcat-helicopters-from-british-navys-commando-helicopter-force-train-in-norway-for-arctic-warfare> - Details on the UK's military training exercises, including helicopter operations, reflecting the rising global tensions exemplified by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.
* <https://www.raf.mod.uk/news/articles/raf-helicopters-join-british-army-and-nato-allies-in-finland-and-estonia/> - Describes RAF helicopters participating in NATO exercises in Finland and Estonia, similar to the UK's military training activities observed in urban areas.
* <https://www.airbus.com/en/newsroom/stories/2023-06-flexing-british-muscles> - Highlights the role of Airbus Helicopters in the UK's military training, including the use of H135 and H145 helicopters, relevant to the training exercises mentioned.
* <https://www.airbus.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2024-04-uk-ministry-of-defence-orders-more-h145-helicopters> - Reports on the UK's Ministry of Defence ordering additional H145 helicopters, indicating ongoing enhancements in military training capabilities.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14667027/SAS-troops-abseiling-helicopters-Tesco-shoppers.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data