

NOTE TO EDITORIAL STAFF
MINISTRY OF THE ARMED FORCES
AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Paris, April 1, 2026

**EXERCISE ORION 26 - PHASE O4
April 7–30, 2026**

A major milestone in France's preparation for high-intensity warfare, Exercise ORION 26 is designed to prepare the armed forces for complex scenarios across multiple, diverse, and contested environments. It demonstrates France's determination to conduct sustained operations to protect its territory, population, and strategic interests by anticipating the most demanding operational challenges.

This joint and multinational exercise is based on a fictional yet credible scenario aligned with NATO standards. ORION 26 reproduces the full spectrum of modern conflict, from hybrid threats to high-intensity combat.

The final phase, O4 – "Operations within NATO", involves the deployment of the 1st Army Corps (1st AC), headquartered in Lille, as a Warfighting Corps. This phase combines a command post exercise (CAX¹) with a large-scale live exercise (LIVEX), primarily focused on land operations. All operational environments are integrated, including cyber, information, and space domains, alongside special forces and critical intelligence and logistics capabilities. The objective is to test the 1st AC's ability to plan and conduct multi-domain operations within a NATO framework, ensuring full interoperability and coherence in command and control (C2). The O41 sequence focuses on scaling up and validating command posts, while O42 involves the deployment of forces in open terrain and the achievement of divisional-level objectives.

You will find below accreditation opportunities for :

- Media Day on April 7, 2026 in MAILLY (10) ;
- Media Day on April 11, 2026 in Poitiers (86) ;
- Media Day on April 23, 2026 in CHAUMONT (52).

There will also be a range of media opportunities² scheduled throughout Phase O4 of Exercise ORION 26.

¹ Computer Assisted Exercise / LIVEX : Live exercise

² The media sequences listed below are indicative only and may be rescheduled in the event of adverse weather conditions or operational constraints.

For further information, please visit the dedicated web pages, where you will find press materials, an image library, and detailed coverage of the exercise:

Link to ORION 26 webpage:

<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/orion-2026-armees-francaises-face-au-combat-haute-intensite>

Link to the press kit:

<https://www.defense.gouv.fr/orion-2026-armees-francaises-face-au-combat-haute-intensite>

Media Accreditation – Practical Information

Media representatives wishing to attend:

- The Media Day on April 7 in Mailly

Accreditation deadline : **Saturday, April 4, 2026**

Media representatives wishing to attend :

- The Media Day on April 11 in Poitiers ;
- The Media Day on April 23 in Chaumont ;

Or any other sequence, accreditation deadline : **Tuesday, April 7, 2026**

Please include :

- The Media Day(s) or sequences requested ;
- Number of participants (maximum of 2 per media outlet) ;
- Name of the media organisation ;
- Full name of each participant and contact details (email and phone number) ;
- A scan copy of a valid ID (passport or national ID, front and back) as well as a copy of valid press credentials for each participant.

Media contacts :

Interarmy Command Expert Center Media Relations Office (CECIA)
cecia-orion26-presse.communication.fct@def.gouv.fr
06 82 86 85 63 - 06 82 82 70 72

Army Information and Public Relations Service (SIRPAT)
Media Department
sirpat.medias@gmail.com
06 23 14 44 94

Air and Space Force Information and Public Relations Service (SIRPAAE)
Media Department
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09 88 68 16 50 / 49 / 48 / 47 / 46 / 59

Delegation for Information and Communication of Defense DICO

Centre médias du ministère des Armées et des Anciens combattants
60, boulevard du général Martial Valin
CS 21623 - 75009 Paris Cedex 15

Annex 1

Command posts

Command Posts of the 1st Army Corps (1st AC) and the 1st Division (1st DIV)

During Phase O4 of Exercise ORION 26, the 1st Army Corps (1st AC) and the 1st Division (1st DIV) are deployed as part of a multinational corps-level formation. This formation operates under the national authority of Land Command Europe (CTE) and under NATO operational control. All components and support functions are engaged in support of a force of over 10,000 personnel.

Through their deployment, rotations, and sustained activity, the 1st AC and 1st DIV demonstrate their ability to plan, synchronise, and coordinate operations in a high-intensity environment—from the operational to the tactical level—ensuring coherence across all domains of the battlefield.

MEDIA DAY – Presentation of the 1st CA, April 11, 2026 from 09:00 to 15:30 in Poitiers (86)

An innovative command structure for high-intensity operations

Within a collective defence scenario, the 1st AC is entrusted with the command of three multinational divisions, highlighting France's role as a framework nation within the Alliance.

The Army Corps: a strategic instrument for power projection and escalation management

As a rapidly deployable command structure, the Army Corps is a strategic tool combining combat power, flexibility, and reversibility.

Its deployment sends a credible deterrent signal, compelling an adversary to choose between de-escalation or crossing a critical threshold. It also enables a wide range of diplomatic options by structuring military action across the competition–contestation–confrontation continuum.

In the most demanding scenarios, it operates within a joint, multi-domain framework (MDO), where land forces play a decisive role in gaining access to the theatre and regaining the initiative.

A new command architecture based on three pillars: deployability - survivability - connectivity

Phase O4 enables the 1st AC to implement an innovative command structure built around multiple complementary command posts (CPs), ensuring responsiveness, continuity, and decision-making superiority.

1. Proposed sequences

- **Presentation of PC1 – As close to the action as possible.**

An ultra-mobile tactical command post operating as close to the front line as possible. It evolves in real time alongside engaged forces, enabling immediate decision-making while contributing to strategic signalling toward the adversary.

- **Presentation of PC 2 – Operational Interface.**

Located within the support area of the theatre, CP2 acts as the interface between tactical and strategic levels. It ensures information flow, maintains coordination with civilian authorities, and retains autonomous command capability.

- **Presentation of PC 3 (Lille) – Strategic Command Hub, implanted in mainland France.**

Based in mainland France, CP3 serves as the core command centre. Operating in strategic depth, it progressively integrates national and allied capabilities within a multi-domain framework.

2. Timeline

- 9 :20 – 9 :45 AM : Pick-up at Poitiers train station
- 10 :30 AM : Welcome by Lieutenant General Benoît DESMEULLES, Commanding General of the 1st CA, and visit of PC 1 in Montmorillon
- 12 :00 AM: Lunch on site
- 1 :00 – 2 :15 PM : Transfer to Avon, welcome by Major General Georg KLEIN, Deputy Commander of the 1st CA, and visit of PC2
- 3 :30 PM : Return to Poitiers train station

Command Post of the 1st Division (1st DIV)

Under the authority of the 1st Army Corps, the 1st Division and its command posts form the command echelon responsible for translating operational intent into coordinated tactical action across all subordinate units. It ensures overall operational coherence, synchronization of support functions, coordination of deep effects, and integration across all operational functions.

1. Proposed sequences

- **April 7th to 14th** – Deployment of command posts.
- **April 13th to 28th** – Coverage opportunities with the Air and Space Force focusing on the ASOC (Air Support Operations Centre) at the Citadel of Lille and within the 1st DIV.
- **April 20th to 30th** – Execution and coordination of operations in the field.

2. Highlighted Capabilities

- The role of the 1st AC as a NATO-integrated operational command level ;
- The ability of the French command chain to operate in a joint, allied, multi-domain, high-intensity environment ;
- Deployment, scaling, and manoeuvre of command posts without disruption of command continuity ;
- Complementarity between corps-level and divisional command ;
- The 1st DIV's ability to plan, coordinate, and execute operations of subordinate units in real conditions
- Continuity between simulated planning and real-world execution
- The central role of command posts in planning, synchronising, and conducting operations

Annex 2

Innovation / Information and Communication Systems (ICS) / Intelligence

MEDIA DAY – Presentation of the BANC, April 7, 2026 from 10 :00 AM to 1:00 PM in Châlons-en-Champagne (51)

As part of Exercice ORION 26 exercise, the Digital and Cyber Support Brigade (BANC) plays a critical role in the conduct of high-intensity, multidomain operations. Its mission focuses on the digital and cyber domains, addressing emerging areas of conflict such as cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum.

The BANC enables seamless interconnection of deployed forces by driving the digitization of combat platforms. Its units implement the French Army's data-centric combat network model and leverage artificial intelligence tools to support faster and more effective decision-making. They enhance the agility and resilience of command structures while ensuring full control and exploitation of operational data.

Timeline

- 9 :15 AM : Reception at Châlons-en-Champagne train station (if needed) and transfer to Mailly-le-Camp
- From 10 :00 AM to 1:00 PM :
 - Presentation of BANC missions in support of : serving operational manoeuvre
 - Demonstration of operational advantages provided by ICS systems and visit to the signal group operations centre
 - Presentation of innovations deployed during the exercise: hybrid warfare and drone technologies
 - Media interviews with key personnel involved in ICS-enabled operations.

Annex 3

3D Combat, Artillery, Air Combat and Innovation

The integration of 3D combat - combining drones, artillery, intelligence, and air combat, demonstrates the ability of land forces to coordinate sensors and effectors deep within enemy territory. This enables the detection, identification and neutralisation of high-value targets in a high-intensity operational environment.

MEDIA DAY – April 23, 2026 from 08:30 AM to 12:00 AM in CHAUMONT (52)

During Phase O42 of ORION, joint operations with the French Air and Space Force highlight the synergy between deep operations, intelligence and the capabilities of the 68th African Artillery Regiment (68th RAA) and the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade (4th BAC).

Simultaneously engaged in helicopter support, fire support and deep strike missions within a multi-domain operation framework (MDO), the 4th BAC demonstrates its full-spectrum operational capabilities across the battlefield.

1. Timeline

- 8 :30 AM : Welcome in Chaumont (exact location to be provided upon accreditation)
- 9 :00 AM : Mission briefing
- 9 :30 AM : Start of the tactical phase (opportunity to embark on a manoeuvre or assault helicopter, subject to availability)
- 10 :30 AM : Drone-based air combat demonstration
- 11 :00 AM : Presentation of 4th BAC capabilities and equipment
- 11 :30 AM : Meeting with General Olivier HAUTREUX, Commander of the 4th BAC, followed by interviews with specialists: drone operators, aircraft technicians, air traffic controllers, firefighters, meteorologists, aircrew
- 12 :00 AM : End of the sequence

2. Proposed sequences

- **April 24th to 25th** - 3D combat operations, deep intelligence gathering and high-value target engagement.

3. Key Capabilities Highlighted

- Drone and helicopter cooperation in intelligence gathering ;
- Target acquisition and engagement by artillery units ;
- Coordination of ground and air fire support ;
- Integration of 3D combat into joint manoeuvre operations.

Annex 4

Crossing Operations and Logistical Support

As part of Exercice ORION 26, crossing operations and logistical support are critical enablers of high-intensity warfare. Units from the Divisional Support Brigade (BDS) support the 1st DIV and its brigades, demonstrating their ability to ensure mobility and sustain operational continuity in a multi-domain environment.

Proposed sequences

- **April 18th to 30th** - Control of the operational environment and crossing operations conducted by the Engineer Brigade (BGEN).
- **April 22nd to 23rd** - Logistical and river crossing operations on Lake Orient and the Aube River. Combat engineers from the 3rd Engineer Regiment (3e RG) enable the crossing of the 7th Armoured Brigade (7th BB) using amphibious bridging systems (EFA) and ground mobility enhancement assets (MATS).

These operations include fuel resupply and logistical support to manoeuvre units.

In parallel, counter-drone operations and drone strikes are conducted by the 68th African Artillery Regiment (68e RAA) to secure crossing areas.

Reconnaissance of crossing sites is carried out by combat engineer divers infiltrated via waterways. A dedicated command post is then established to manage the operation at both tactical and technical levels.

Engineers prepare access routes, mark and secure crossing points, and deploy bridging systems such as the forward crossing vehicle (EFA) and the rapid beam laying system (SPRAT).

This setup enables the crossing of nearly 1000 vehicles, ensuring operational continuity and force projection.

- **April 26** - Support to force deployment for the 1st Chasseur Regiment (1er RCH) in the Verdun and mobility support operations (combat engineering) in the Vanlay region.

This phase includes combined crossing operations and logistical requisition exercises in order to test support resilience. The integration of 4th BAC ensures helicopter support and highlights joint air-ground coordination.

Chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) component

The 2nd Dragon Regiment (2nd RD), a specialized CBRN unit capable of operating in contaminated environments, contributes to ORION 26 through the following missions:

- **April 21** - Site security following the discovery of a chemical IED production facility in Saint-Florentin (86).
- **April 22** - Joint EOD/ERE operation on an unexploded radiological device in Chaource or Bouilly.
- **April 23** – Post-strike assessment at an industrial site (Dislaub fertilizer plant, Buchères).
- **April 26** - Securing and neutralizing a chemical and radiological IED facility in Mailly-le-Camp or Brienne-le-Château.

- **April 27** – Deployment of decontamination stations following simulated chemical contamination (joint tactical sub-group (SGTIA) of the 7th BB) in Mailly-le-Camp.

Mobility support

- **April 20-24** – Route clearance and trafficability maintenance by the 19th Engineer Regiment (19e RG) ; reconnaissance and protection of the 1st DIV forward command post on the Jaulges camp.
- **April 23-24** – Engineering works to support operational deployment and riverbank preparation.
- **April 25** – Riverbank reconnaissance and demining by combat divers.
- **April 25-28** - River crossing over the Yonne, using EFA, floating bridges (PFM) and engineering boats (EFG) with joint air-ground coordination.

In support of the 7e BB, canine units from the 132nd Cynotechnical Infantry Regiment (132nd RIC) conduct detection and security missions with personnel detection (ADNH) and explosive detection (ARDE).

The 28th Geographic Group (28th GG) provides geospatial intelligence and data collection in the deployment area (Jaulges) in support of operations.

Annex 5

Dismounted Combat

Dismounted combat is a core component of high-intensity land operations. This sequence involves all units engaged in the 7th Armoured Brigade (7th BB) exercise, along with their supporting elements, conducting both offensive and defensive operations within a joint and multinational framework.

The actions carried out demonstrate the ability of land forces to seize, control, and defend key terrain while operating against complex threats in a multi-domain environment.

In dismounted combat, troops operate outside the protection of their armoured vehicles while maintaining close coordination with them. This approach enables infantry and cavalry units to advance discreetly, particularly in urban environments, allowing them to surprise the enemy following prolonged infiltration or rapid manoeuvre.

Observation drones are deployed over key enemy positions ahead of engagement, followed by strike drones delivering precision effects and inflicting both material and personnel losses. These drone strike units enable forces to retain the initiative in a constrained and rapidly evolving tactical environment.

Upgraded Leclerc main battle tanks, multi-role Griffon armoured vehicles, and CAESAR self-propelled artillery systems are deployed during this phase, providing both mobility and firepower in offensive and defensive operations

Proposed sequences

Offensive Phase

- **April 24 to 25** - Offensive operations and area seizure conducted by the 7th Armored Brigade, supported by air combat assets.
 - High-intensity mounted / dismounted combat phases
 - Management of mass casualty situations (MASCAL)
 - Seizure of key objectives in Mailly-le-Camp, Vitry-le-François and Bar-le-Duc.
 - Neutralization of the opposing force (FORAD), specifically the 25th Mechanized Brigade (25th BM)
 - Presentation of the Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) role and in airspace mastery (AAE)
 - Integration of an Air Force parachute commando unit (CPA) within the maneuver
- **April 26 to 28** – Conduct and command of air operations from the command post in Mailly-le-Camp.

Visit to the air planning and control centre in Mailly-le-Camp, where Air and Space Force personnel coordinate air assets, reconnaissance, intelligence collection and airspace surveillance.

Defensive Phase

- **April 28-29** - Defensive organization and resumption of operations.

This phase focuses on establishing a defensive posture to sustain the manoeuvre. Combat engineers conduct counter-mobility operations and counter-IED actions to delay and channel enemy advances, while units consolidate and secure previously seized terrain.

The defence of key positions relies on unit mobility and lethality. A major live-fire sequence concludes this large-scale manoeuvre, showcasing the full range of firepower available to the 7th Armoured Brigade – from upgraded Leclerc tanks to CAESAR artillery systems.

The land manoeuvre is further secured by the deployment of medium- and long-range air defence systems (SAMP/T) across the operational area.

2. Highlighted Capabilities

For the French Army:

- Joint and combined manoeuvre in complex combat environment;
- Engineering and mobility support operations, including obstacle crossing;
- Management of CBRN incidents and MASCAL (Mass Casualty) situations;
- Use of drones for reconnaissance and precision targeting;
- Coordination of combat support in both offensive and defensive operations.

For the French Air and Space Force:

- Air escort missions to secure and monitor designated airspace in support of ground forces;
- Close air support mission delivering responsive firepower on request;
- Real-time coordination between combat aircraft, air command centres and ground forces through JTACs;
- Reliance on a resilient network of air bases providing continuous operational capability;
- High level of interoperability with allied air forces and strategic partners;
- Ability to deliver coordinated effects across all domains: land, air, maritime, space, and cyber;
- Use of Space Command assets to provide accurate, real-time satellite intelligence adapted to evolving tactical situations.