

TALISMAN SABRE '11

United States Army Pacific Command



Talisman Sabre '11 is a biennial training exercise, incorporating roughly 23,000 United States and Australian military personnel from all branches of service in Australia, July 11 – 29, 2011.

Talisman Sabre is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Pacific Command and Australian Defence Force Joint Operations Command for the purpose of bringing the two forces together to train and enhance their combined and

joint war fighting skills and capabilities to respond to crises and provide humanitarian assistance.

The massive training exercises incorporated combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

Exercises were held at six defense training areas in central and northern Queensland and the northern territory, with maritime forces exercising in the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas, culminating in U.S. 7th Fleet Joint Task Force (JTF) certification.

This publication is a compilation of news articles published by New York Army National Guard Public Affairs personnel augmented to U.S. Army Pacific Command for Talisman Sabre '11. Articles highlight only a small portion of U.S. Army and Army National Guard support to Talisman Sabre '11.

USARPAC applauds the combined efforts of the United States Air Force, Navy, Marines, Reserve Components and Australian Defence Force personnel for their outstanding performance in making Talisman Sabre '11 a success.



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American/Australian Planners Spent Two Years Preparing for Talisman Sabre Exercise

Story by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard

KOKODA BARRACKS, Cunungra, Australia – Two years before 23,000 Australians and Americans kicked off Exercise Talisman Sabre on July 11; 500 Americans and Australians thrown together as Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) started planning for that day.

From concept development—a scenario in which Australians and Americans intervene to enforce a United Nations order—to identifying forces, to ironing out staff arrangements, the CFLCC (pronounced cee-flick) worked out the details.

“The coordination allowed a practical exchange of information and an opportunity to identify doctrinal differences and similarities, said 1st Sgt. Oskar Ramirez, operations Sgt. Major assigned to U.S. Army Pacific.

“We were able to mesh our processes and establish a level of fidelity long before arriving in Australia,” Ramirez added.

The Talisman Sabre CFLCC combined 120 members of the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division with U.S. Army Pacific Soldiers and the Australian 1st Division.

The massive biennial exercises incorporated roughly 23,000 U.S. and Australian military personnel from all branches of service in Australia, July 11 – 29, to train together and enhance their combined and joint war fighting skills.

The scenario outlined a situation in which two countries have been occupied by an enemy force and a third nation, with United States and Australian support is prepared to eject the enemy.

Staff sections conducted subject matter expert exchanges to work with their counterparts to iron out details and determine how responsibilities differ, as well as focus on strategic, operational and tactical elements of the exercise.



Private Brendan Venables, an Infantry soldier assigned to Northwest Mobile Force, Northern Australia and Spec. Ryan Gutshall, a Rigger assigned to Charlie Co. 1st Battalion, 158th Long Range Surveillance Company, Hagerstown, Md, conduct a road march while rehearsing tactical procedures in preparation of field engagements during Talisman Sabre, July 17. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, NY Army National Guard.

The final phase was the implementation of the training exercises incorporating combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

As the scenario played out, the CFLCC kept track of numerous fictitious battles which encompassed combined ground force campaigns and training maneuvers with over 10,000 military forces from roughly a dozen units.

Although the ground maneuvers took place within a one-week window, the exercise scenarios incorporated numerous engagements to test the combined operations staffs in crisis action planning to enhance their ability to conduct contingency response operations and humanitarian missions.

“The forces will experience an unrealistic amount of activity. What would be expected to take up to six months to accomplish on the battlefield, take place in a week,” explained Australian Major Roger Pointon,



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Proper Planning Ensures Talisman Sabre Success

Executive Officer assigned to the Headquarters 1st Division, Australian Defence Force and Talisman Sabre planner.

"It provides a fast paced – high energy environment to test military skills, both for the commanders and the soldiers on the battlefield," Pointon added.

All exercise plans and operations are designed to enable thousands of ground forces from the U.S. and Australian military to exchange combat skills and techniques.

While 10,000 troops participated in the ground maneuvers, computer systems simulated an additional 45,000 troops that commanders were responsible for and played key roles in the fight.

"Although the battles take place in a condensed time frame all aspects of battle are tested and realistic rules apply. The commanders must utilize all their assets as if they were actually there," Pointon stressed.

"If a unit fails to requisition the proper amount of fuel, then their tanks won't move. If a unit has experienced casualties, they must notify their headquarters they need to be reinforced," Pointon added.

In addition to tracking the movement of all ground forces and activities within the scenario,

the CFLCC also had the responsibility of taking care of ground force personnel spread out at six Defence training areas in central and northern Queensland and the northern territory of Australia.

Taking care of these troops meant ensuring people are fed, housed, have medical support if needed, have the equipment and fuel they need and are in the right place at the right time to perform duties.

"The entire collaboration has been a model of what you can do in a combined headquarters. The planning and the exercise is going as good as it can possibly go, if the exercise was longer it could only get better," said Major Christopher Walter, project officer assigned to the 40th Inf. Div. and exercise planner for U.S. ground forces.

Whether assigned at the combined forces headquarters level or out in the bush, the same level of cooperation and integration is taking place. A common sight throughout Talisman Sabre is the multitude of U.S. and Australian uniforms working side by side.

"Our armies have similar language, values and cultures. The strong personal relationships we have built and the partnerships we have established only strengthen further integration and alliance with our Australian counterparts," Walter said.

Lt. Col. Gilbert Roldan of Fontana, Calif., a 40th Inf. Div. plans and operations officer, briefs Australian Army Maj. Gen. Rick Burr, Commander of the 1st Division and Combined Forces Land Component Command (CFLCC) commander, and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Scott Johnson, 40th ID Commander and CFLCC deputy commander, July 16, 2011 at Kokoda Barracks outside of Canungra in Queensland, Australia.

During the briefing, which utilized a room-sized map, representatives from each headquarters section, as well as participating units, described their capabilities and planned courses of action to successfully complete the large-scale mission.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Emily Suhr, 40th Inf. Div.





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U.S., Australian Soldiers work together to judge Talisman Sabre battles

Story and photos by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard



Australian Defence Force Lt. Col. Eric Stevenson, Joint and Combined Umpire Liaison Officer to Forces Command, (center) orients U.S. Soldiers to a local training area using a map. Lt. Brandon Thomann, a Scout Cavalry Officer assigned to the U.S. Army 25th Inf. Div, Scottsdale, Ariz. and Capt. Kathryn Walker, an engineer assigned to U.S. Army Pacific Command, Hi., among several others, were taught techniques for adjudicating battlefield engagements and determining personnel and equipment casualties as umpires for Talisman Sabre, July 16.

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia, -- They're called umpires and just like on a baseball diamond they're expected to make decisions based on their knowledge and experience - but this is no game.

These umpires determined the outcome of land force, maritime and air operations maneuvers for over 23,000 U.S. and Australian military personnel participating in Talisman Sabre exercises in Australia, July 11-29, 2011.

Instead of a few dozen players running bases to determine a winner, thousands of U.S. and Australian forces landed on beaches and took to the bush in simulated combat field training during Talisman Sabre '11. Moving together throughout central and northern Queensland, the Northern Territory, and the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas, with one goal in mind - defeat a common enemy.

Ground and mounted personnel from both friendly and fictitious enemy forces crossed steep elevations and varied terrains, as they denied their opponent the capability to conduct counter attacks. Each side concealing their movements and setting up hasty defense positions in order to attack and defeat their enemy.

But what happens when both sides are convinced they have achieved success? The umpire steps in.

Because this is simulated battle and live ammunition isn't used during exercise engagements, umpires use a specific calculation to determine personnel and equipment casualties.

"It's a complex calculation based on the weapon type, its capabilities and effective range, the position of the target and visibility and weather conditions," said Capt. Kathryn Walker, an engineer with U. S. Army Pacific Command, who is umpiring for the first time. "It's a lot to take in, there's a lot of moving pieces to keep track of on the battlefield."

"These umpires use techniques to apportion both equipment and personnel losses to provide training that is as realistic as possible to gain maximum training for both sides," said Lt. Col. Eric Stevenson, Joint and Combined Umpire Liaison Officer to Forces Command, Australian Defence Force.

The team of roughly 200 umpires and observers made up of U.S. and Australian Defence Force professionals provide observations and evidence to support the evaluation of war fighting skills and mentor commanders in the field. Umpires adjudicate



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tactical events to enhance exercise realism.

"A score card is kept that records every aspect of the battle, however, it is imperative that the umpires use their professional military judgment to adjudicate each exercise scenario," Stevenson said.

The biennial training exercises use fictional scenarios incorporated in combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

Talisman Sabre is sponsored jointly by the U.S. Pacific Command and Australian Defence Force Joint Operations Command, aimed at improving and validating combat readiness and interoperability.

The exercises also test combined operations staffs in crisis action planning to conduct contingency response operations and humanitarian missions, culminating in U.S. 7th Fleet Joint Task Force certification.

The umpires also ensure compliance with stringent exercise environmental protection and safety instructions.

"They have the authority to halt any training activity that threatens the environment or personnel safety," said Lt. Col. Merv Uren, Joint and Combined Umpire liaison officer to Forces Command, Australian Defence Force.

The week-long exercise brings together the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military to exchange combat skills and techniques, as well as train and enhance their combined and joint war fighting skills.

For many of the participants it was their first opportunity to train with military personnel from a different culture with different weapons systems.

"It has been great getting to know my Australian counterparts and sharing military tactics and techniques. I look forward to learning a lot from them," said Pvt. 1st Class Walter Beatty, an Infantry Soldier with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 158th Cavalry Squadron (Long Range Surveillance)



Umpire 2nd Lt. John Biggs, a combat engineer assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan (right) discusses his observations of a field engagement undertaken by a joint U.S. and Australian combat team during Talisman Sabre, July 19, with Corporal Nathan Napier and Private Brendan Venables, Infantry soldiers assigned to Northwest Mobile Force, Northern Australia.



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Maryland Guard Soldiers and Australians Share Laughs and Techniques

Story by Spec. JP Lawrence, New York Army National Guard



*U.S. Army Staff Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Muzo and Australian Defence Force Pvt. Neal Cullinan peak out from behind the mesh net of their hide site during a training exercise conducted by Charlie Troop, 1st Battalion, 158th Cavalry Squadron during Exercise Talisman Sabre activities at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area, July 17. While training under Exercise Talisman Sabre, Muzo, a Clifton, Va., resident and C Troop detachment sergeant, and Cullinan, a Pilbarra Regiment patrolman, are given an opportunity to compare and contrast methods of scouting and surveillance.
Photo by Spec. JP Lawrence, New York Army National Guard*

CAMP GROWL, Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia -- Maryland Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Eric Zubkus and Australian Defence Force Private James Adams can't be seen as they burrow under a framework of earth, grass and branches and scan the bush.

But they can sure be heard.

The Australian and the American are sharing a laugh with other Soldiers from the 1st Battalion 158th Cavalry Squadron (Long Range Surveillance) as they get ready to play their part in Exercise Talisman Sabre '11, a joint Australian/ American exercise that ran from July 11 to July 29 here.

The exercise brought together 23,000 troops from different branches of the U.S. and Australian military in a combined training environment, and brought Zubkus and his Soldiers to the Shoalwater Bay Training Area near the northeast coast of Australia. It also brought Adams, and Australian Pvt. Neal Cullinan, both scouts in the Australian Defence Force's Pilbarra Regiment, into Zubkus' squad.

Both the ADF scouts and the LRS team are reconnaissance troops, trained in the art of infiltrating hostile territory in small groups with a backload of gear, staying hidden behind enemy lines for as long as the mission demands, and then bringing back what they saw to their higher headquarters.

For both parties, then, it was no surprise when the Australians were able to step seamlessly into training administered by the Americans.

Even more impressive, Zubkus said, was the ease

in which the brash, enthusiastic Adams and the soft-spoken Cullinan meshed with his unit.

"It's great for camaraderie, for esprit de corps, have a couple of guys from completely the other side of the world, two very different guys, come in," Zubkus, a Poolesville, Md., resident, says. "Within five minutes of being attached to my team, they fit right in as if they were part of my unit their whole careers."

That everyone speaks English 'or a least some form of it' certainly goes a long way in bridging the cultural gap. To Zubkus's Soldiers, the two Aussies are living, breathing Rosetta Stones: dictionaries to consult whenever they want to know how to say some word or another in an Australian accent, mate.

Additionally, both Aussie soldiers said they soon found themselves as the authorities on anything Aussie: Paul Hogan, Vegemite and Australia's poisonous snakes, poisonous spiders, and poisonous platypuses.



An Infantry Soldier from C Co. 1st Bn, 158th LRSC, camouflages himself while rehearsing tactical procedures in preparation of field engagements during Talisman Sabre, July 17. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo



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"It's all in good fun," Adams said, admitting at times he exaggerates the dangers of Australian wildlife. "It's too bad they've caught on."

What unites the two groups more than anything, however, may simply be the culture of being a modern warrior. "It's pretty easy for us to intermingle," Adams says, "because we're taught the same way, and we're basically looking for the same things: covering your buddy and staying alive."

For instance, during one training exercise, ten small military items were hidden in a patch of forest to test the soldiers' surveillance skills. With the aid of their scopes and binoculars, soldiers were supposed to locate all ten and make a rough map of their location.

It's a familiar drill for the Aussies, and Adams found almost all the hidden items. "I think that's the good thing about doing these exercises; it confirms that if we go to war together, our armies can work pretty seamlessly," Adams says.

There is one small difference, however.

Since Adams' Pilberra Regiment, a non-deployable defense-oriented reserve team, spends more time dealing with smugglers than Zubkus's more infantry-oriented team, Adams was able to share at the end of the event how his unit places items higher up in the treetops, to encourage them to survey all heights and angles.

"That's where smugglers hide their caches," Adams explained.

Not every lesson is applicable between units, Zubkus said.

But discussing these differences often leads both groups to examine why they follow their practices in the first place.

Paradoxically, the differences in how they are taught bring the two groups together as they talk shop and swap tactics.

"A certain team leader who works with the Aussies might find something great about something they do and implement it in their team," Zubkus said, "and then guys, when they switch back and forth between teams, they can bring that cross training to another team."

In turn, Adams and Cullinan said they enjoy being able to work with the well-traveled LRS Soldiers.

"It's always better to get information from experienced people who have tried and tested these techniques," Cullinan said.

"It gives you that confidence and competence that comes from real life situational awareness, rather than being trained and not having the feel of being in that situation, that mindset that 'yes, you can do this.'"

While Zubkus and Adams checked out their hide site, similar exercises were being held at six training areas in central and northern Queensland, the Northern Territory, and in the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas.

But in this one small hole in the ground, interoperability had another name: kinship.

"It's comfortable in here," says Zubkus, glancing around the hide-site.

"Yeah," Adams responds, "it's a real love nest."

Outside their brothers-in-arms erupted in raucous laughter.



Captain Wade Cleland, the incoming Commander for Charlie Co. 1st Battalion, 158th Cavalry Squadron (Long Range Surveillance), Hagerstown, Md., rehearses Special Purpose Insertion and Extraction procedures in preparation of training with Australia Defence Force personnel during Talisman Sabre, July 17. Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard



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Bringing U.S. and Australian Forces Together



*An Australian light armored vehicle transits through Shoalwater Range in Shoalwater Bay Training Area.
Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Thomas Coffman*



An MH-60 Sea Hawk departs from the flight deck of the forward-deployed amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net



*U.S. Army Soldier conducts field training during Talisman Sabre 2011
Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net*

*U.S. Marines conducts a live fire range during Talisman Sabre 2011
Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net*



*Marines with Company G, Battalion Landing Team 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, climb into the back of an amphibious assault vehicle after providing security for a scenario-based exercise during Talisman Sabre 2011.
Photo by: Lance Cpl. Garry J. Welch*



*A 330J Puma helicopter assigned to the dry cargo/ammunition ship USNS Richard E. Byrd transports pallets of supplies to the forward-deployed amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown.
U.S. Navy photo by Seaman William Locken)*



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Bringing U.S. and Australian Forces Together



An F/A-18F Super Hornet from Strike Fighter Squadron 102 taxis down the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS George Washington. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam K. Thomas



Marines from the 7th Marines, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, conduct an amphibious assault during Talisman Sabre. Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net



Using U.S. Air Force C-17s (above) U.S. Army paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 501 Inf. (Airborne) conducted a strategic airborne assault into the Kapyong drop zone, Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia (Right) Photos courtesy of dvidshub.net



A Charlie Company, 2nd Inf. Bn, 23rd Inf. Reg, 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Inf. Div., defends against Australian soldiers from 7th Brigade at the Urban Operations Training Facility during Talisman Sabre 2011. Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net



Sailors assigned to the forward-deployed amphibious dock landing ship USS Germantown and Marines of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit participated in Talisman Sabre '11. Photo courtesy of dvidshub.net



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United States Army Pacific Command Talisman Sabre Soars Above the Battlefield

Story by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard

JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, Canberra, Australia – For nearly two weeks roughly 10,000 land forces physically on the ground and 45,000 hypothetical troops waged a fictitious war to bring peace to two peaceful nations unlawfully taken over by an enemy force.

As U.S. and Australian military forces fought to uphold a United Nations resolution authorizing military force to remove enemy forces and return these countries to their legitimate government, they were constantly assisted by their brethren in the skies.

Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial exercise, incorporated roughly 23,000 U.S. and Australian military personnel from all branches of service in Australia, July 11 – 29, to train together and enhance their combined and joint war fighting skills.

The massive training exercises incorporated combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

Personnel working for the Combined Forces Air Combat Command took to the skies to watch over ground forces at six Defence training areas in central and northern Queensland and the northern territory, as well as Sailors on the seas surrounding Australia.

Of the three dozen flying units representing the U.S. and Royal Australian Air Force; the U.S. and Australian Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps, over 6,500 sorties were flown.

Talisman Sabre exercised the procedures for over 3,000 missions. Many of these included aerial refueling, airlift support for personnel and equipment, air combat and air to ground bombing missions.

In addition to providing close air support to troops on the ground, the Air Command coordinated air defense missions, defeated enemy targets, fought for air supremacy and supported amphibious landings.

The exercise was highly successful and an exceptional opportunity to work with Americans from all services and our Australian partners," said Lt. Commander Doug Lito, a naval amphibious liaison officer attached to Tactical Control Squadron 12, aboard the USS Essex.

The exercise scenarios incorporated numerous engagements to test the combined operations staffs in crisis action planning which will enhance their ability to conduct contingency response operations and humanitarian missions.

"The air operations we experienced during Talisman Sabre replicate what we would experience in a real world environment," said Major Joshua Severs, 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment Airspace Management Officer, Hickam, AFB, Hi.

"We go through the same exact procedures, whether it's sending out an aircraft for real or virtual for the exercise."

"The whole intent is to test military plans, operations and skills, for the U.S. and Australian commanders, as well as the airspace and tactical mission coordinators," Severs added.

Severs main priority is to ensure airspace is clear of other aircraft when a mission is launched. Whether a request comes for airlift support or a bombing mission, he is the Army voice working with Air Force personnel to verify information and ensure the ground commander's intent is clear.

In a room filled with Air Force uniforms, a handful of Army Soldiers stand out. Their primary mission is to coordinate air and combat operations. They serve as the go between, in many instances translating Army jargon into Air Force language to ensure the ground commanders' needs are understood and met.

But they are not alone in this endeavor; they are joined by their Australian counterparts from the 1st Ground Liaison Detachment stationed in Sydney.

"Regardless of the uniform, the mission is the same. Our role is to process and prioritize air operations to ensure our ground commanders receive the support they need to succeed," said Colonel Stephen Myers, 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment Commander.

"Talisman Sabre was a tremendous opportunity to test our skills and work with our Australian Defence partners. The trust and confidence in our team displayed by the Combined Air Command is a testament to what our unit can accomplish," Myers told his Soldiers at the conclusion of the exercise.

"The U.S. Army Pacific Command and Australian Defence Force Joint Operations Command goal for this exercise was to improve and validate our combat readiness and interoperability - we have achieved that goal," Myers added.

Backdrop image photo by: Petty Officer 3rd Class Marcus D. Mince. Courtesy of dvidshub.net.

The sun rises over the flight deck before a full-bore, full metal jacket drill onboard the nuclear aircraft carrier USS George Washington. USS George Washington while participating in Exercise Talisman Sabre 2011.



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Space systems give Australians, U.S. Soldiers edge in Talisman Sabre

Story by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard

AUSTRALIAN JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, Canberra, Australia -- For American and Australian Soldiers taking part in Talisman Sabre, satellites can make the difference between winning or losing.

"Space Operations help commanders visualize movement on the battlefield using commercial topographical imagery, but it isn't just about terrain features and maps," said Maj. Courtney Henderson, U.S. Army Pacific Command, Space Support Element, Fort Shafter, Hawaii.

"Space capabilities enhance the military's ability to communicate, navigate terrain, engage the enemy with better accuracy and protect its forces," Henderson stressed.

Space Operations Soldiers retrieve and interpret data and develop products that help commanders navigate on the battlefield. Whether they're tracking convoys, establishing landing zones and distribution networks or mapping critical infrastructure to locate obstacles, bridges and crossings, to name a few, Henderson said.

Talisman Sabre '11 is a biennial training exercise designed to bring the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military together in a combined environment to train and enhance their combined and joint war-fighting skills.

As a combined joint task force, roughly 14,000 U.S. and 9,000 Australian military personnel conducted maritime, land, and air operations exercises, July 11 - 29, 2011.

Satellite and space technologies have a wide range of application, not only as an asset to commanders on the ground in a combat environment and pilots in the air, but also for emergency and humanitarian assistance.

Before a commander can decide which contingent of troops will descend to the east or if they will fan out on a western ridge or which tank formation is chosen to mount a direct assault, he needs to ensure the terrain will support the movement.

Satellite imagery allows him to know in advance if a riverbed is flooding or an area is experiencing extreme drought conditions, both of which have a huge

impact on a commanders' decisions.

A significant asset is the ability to use current imagery to visualize and assess battle damage using computer images rather than sending personnel and aircraft to determine how effective weapons systems' were.

"These systems enhance timing, effectiveness and efficiency for commanders in the air as well as on the ground," said Squadron Leader Steven Henry from the Australian Defence Forces Air and Space Operations Center, Headquarters, Joint Operations Command.

"Whether it's the navigation system in a cockpit or a locator beacon during a search and rescue mission, they are critical to our success," Henry said.

Understanding these capabilities and interpreting the data that's collected is no easy task.

Army Space Support Teams or ARSST's continually monitor satellite conditions, locations, atmospheric weather conditions and environmental factors, such as solar flares, that may impact their systems' ability to collect or send information.

Teams provide a tailored support package of personnel and equipment including six members; two officers and four enlisted Soldiers, each specializing in their own fields; from communications, intelligence and computer technology to topographic analysis.

Soldiers undergo months of additional training that focuses on space-related knowledge and skills.

"What makes us unique is that every one of our Soldiers can step in and perform any function on the team," said Army National Guard 1st Sgt. Chuck Meens, 1158th SPACE Company, Colorado Springs, Colo.

These highly trained teams use their skills and various systems to advise a commander on precision engagements, geospatial intelligence, and environmental effects on satellite communications and imaging capabilities, said Maj. Joseph Paladino, commander, Colorado Army National Guard's 217th Space Company, Colorado Springs, Colo.

This is the first time Space Operations



Satellite image courtesy GoogleEarth

have been fully integrated in a Talisman Sabre exercise, with components from the U.S. Army and Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Force.

"The ARSST has been a huge benefit in demonstrating space operations capabilities," Henderson said.

"The exchange of this technology with our Australian counterparts through Talisman Sabre '11 has helped demonstrate the need for this asset in a combined ground force campaign," Henderson added.

"Theater security cooperation is a major initiative for U.S. Army Pacific Command, the relationships we are building and the exchange of information we receive is essential to providing Space Operations professional training and development, which we foresee going beyond this exercise," Henderson said.

"Space Operations is relatively new to the Australian Defence Force, we have a limited number of personnel at this point, so the training and experience we gain from U.S. Army Pacific Command is critical to our development," Henry said.



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U.S., Aussie Docs Hold Mass Casualty Exercise, Test Medical Interoperability

Story and photo by Spec. JP Lawrence, New York Army National Guard

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia -- Like a surgeon in reverse, Cpl. Jayden Pyper, a medic with the Australian Defence Force, dipped into his supply of fake blood to give Lt. Michael Woehrman's foot a garish, festering wound.

Pyper, assigned to the 2nd Health Support Battalion, worked fast, with quick, painterly strokes, for Woehrman's foot, attached to the USS Benfold's surface warfare officer, was just one of many simulated injuries during a mass casualty scenario held at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area's field hospital, July 16.

The event, which tested the hospital's ability to handle large influxes of patients, consisted of members of the Australian and U.S. armed forces brought together for Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial, bilateral exercise meant to build interoperability between the two allied countries.

The mass casualty exercise was one of a number of fictional scenarios incorporated into Talisman Sabre, which also includes combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

"You learn good interoperability – how everybody works, and we develop that sense of camaraderie as we go," said Capt. John Skipp, training officer of the 2nd HSB. "I've found

it to be a very good experience, very enjoyable, trying to understand how to work well together."

For the troops of the 2nd HSB, the exercise was a chance to work under pressure, with injuries they normally don't encounter and patients from another part of the world.

Skipp's medics equipped the approximately 25 volunteers with wounds and a back story before sending them to the field hospital, where triage specialists sorted the patients according to injury and condition.

The injuries piled up during the course of the day, but Navy Capt. John Raff, one of the American assessors overseeing the exercise, said he was impressed with how seamless the two forces worked together.

"It was a free and collegial exchange of information between the nurses and doctors," said Raff, orthopedic surgeon with the 4th Medical Battalion. "I thought they did a very professional job on this mass casualty exercise. They covered all the bases."

As a combined joint task force, roughly 14,000 U.S. and 9,000 Australian military personnel are participating in maritime, land, and air operations exercises during Talisman Sabre, and the exercises are designed to bring the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military together in a combined environment to train together and enhance their combined and joint war fighting skills.

Working together, for instance, helped both Australian and U.S. forces recognize some of the differences in how medicine is practiced in their respective countries.

"They're mainly minor things, but you do get some confusion," said 2nd HSB commanding officer Lt. Col. Andy Williams, who cited semantic issues such as differing names for certain drugs or organizational differences such as the ADF's choice to not have physician assistants.

Despite these differences, Williams said both sides were able to work through their issues by keeping communication flowing. "When we work together in teams, generally speaking there's no problem," said Williams. "As long as people speak before hand what they can and can't do, it always works really well."

The exercise ended with Williams congratulating his medics and thanking the volunteers, whose acting skills he lauded.

Raff and his peers in the 4th Medical Battalion gave their formal assessment of the exercise before leaving to participate in other Talisman Sabre exercises being held at one of the six training areas in central and northern Queens Land, the Northern Territory, and in the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas.

"I always appreciate meeting colleagues from other countries to learn from them and get tips," said Raff, adding he was invited to return to Australia to attend an orthopedic seminar in August. "I walked away having picked up quite a bit, and I think the feeling is mutual."



Australian Defence Force Cpl. Jayden Pyper places a wound on the foot of U.S. Navy Lt. Michael Woehrman before a mass casualty exercise, July 16 at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area's field hospital.



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Quartermasters Keep Australian/American Exercise Supplied

Story and Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard



Australian Private Ben Pawelski, Australian Defence Force, (left) and Staff Sgt. Bryan Strother, 40th Infantry Division, (right) work together unloading fire water buckets for issue to soldiers participating in Talisman Sabre.

CAMP GROWL, Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia --The uniforms are different and there are subtle differences in terminology used, but the results are the same for both Australian and American quartermasters: ensuring Soldiers get what they need.

Quartermasters here focused on making sure both U.S. and Australian military personnel got the gear they needed to train with during Talisman Sabre'11 exercises in Australia, July 11 - 29, 2011.

Talisman Sabre brings together roughly 23,000 personnel from the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military to exchange combat skills and techniques through joint land force, maritime and air operations maneuvers.

The Australians call it a stretcher; the U.S. Soldier calls it a cot. A torch is a flashlight, a skivie - a T-shirt, a swag becomes an individual sleeping tent when translated and jenny is a generator.

Regardless of what it's called, if it's needed, the quartermaster team is prepared to provide it.

"Our job is to take care of soldiers, regardless of the uniform - a soldier's a soldier," said Sgt. Ernest Kruger, Quartermaster Sergeant assigned to the 9th Combat Services Support Battalion, Australian Defence Force, stationed at Warradale Barracks, Adelaide, South Australia.

"I really enjoy my job because I care about soldiers and like looking after people. It's quite important because soldiers run on their stomachs, if they don't eat, they can't perform their mission," Kruger added.

Thousands of U.S. and Australian forces landed on beaches or took to the bush in simulated combat field training during Talisman Sabre '11. Moving together throughout central and northern Queensland, the Northern Territory, and the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas, with one goal in mind - defeat a common enemy.

Ground and mounted personnel from both friendly and fictitious enemy forces crossed steep elevations and varied terrains, denying their opponent the capability to conduct counter attacks. Concealing their movements and setting up hasty defense positions.

The biennial training exercises use fictional scenarios incorporated in combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

The multitude of items required to feed, house and keep soldiers on the move can be staggering. The quartermaster provides just about anything needed, from tents and sleeping bags to ration packs and some replacement clothing. They also provide the always needed toilet paper.

For many of the participants it was their first opportunity to train with military personnel from a different culture with different weapons systems.

"It has been great getting to know our Australian counterparts and sharing experiences," said Staff Sgt. Bryan Strother, a radio operator with the California Army National Guard's 40th Infantry Division, Sacramento. Strother volunteered to help the supply section for Talisman Sabre and jokingly says he's learning a new language while he's here.

Whether its necessities or comfort items, the quartermaster team has gone out of their way to ensure military personnel have what they need to make Talisman Sabre a success.

Here at Camp Growl the quartermaster or the 'Q-Store' as it's called, has become a center hub of activity, open virtually 24-hours a day, ready to assist in soldier care.

They have gone so far as to set up a make-shift shop they call a goffars, where you can purchase the comforts of home, such as a coke and a candy bar.

"It's a place soldiers can relax for a few minutes and often identify shortages out in the field," Kruger said. "It works well since we can quickly either provide them what they need or pass the information onto the leadership who can fix it," Kruger added.



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United States Army Pacific Command

Liaison Soldiers Bridge Gaps Between American and Australian Air and Ground Forces

Story and Photo by Spec. Jay P. Lawrence, New York Army National Guard



U.S. Army Col. Stephen Myers and Australian Defence Force Lt. Col. Andrew Garrad visited the Eternal Flame, a tribute to Australia's fallen heroes at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, July 25. Myers, commander of the 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment, and Garrad, commander of the 1st Ground Liaison Group, worked together during Exercise Talisman Sabre '11.

CANBERRA, Australia -- Australians and Americans may both speak English, but there are definitely times they're speaking totally different languages, Army Col. Stephen Myers and Australian Lt. Col. Andrew Garrad both agreed.

"I don't know that your English is the same as mine, mate," teased Myers, a native of Winchester, Mass.

"Which one is the Queen's English?" Garrad responded, his reply framed in an Australian clip.

"I don't know. I don't know," Myers said.

Fortunately, Myers' mission as commander of the 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment (BCD), is all about helping warriors from different military cultures, who use different military jargon and acronyms talk to each other. Meshing two different strains of English isn't that hard then.

"Each service talks a little differently and does things a little differently, and because of that, that's why we're here," said Lt. Col. Robert Buscher, an intelligence officer and one of the forty members of the 5th BCD.

Operating out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, the 5th BCD is responsible for an area extending from Alaska to Australia, from California to China, and from under the sea to the upper atmosphere.

When Soldiers need something from the Air Force, they go through the 5th BCD for the request: whether that is for fire support or transportation or intelligence. In turn, the 5th BCD provides the Air Force with a real time perspective of what's happening on the ground, as well as support in planning and air defense.

"We make sure that the air side knows everything they need to know about the land side," said Buscher, a resident of Honolulu, Hi. "And we make sure that the land side can trust they have air assets to help them."

"We take it for granted in the Army, but the space above us needs to be carved out," said Lt. Col. Curby Scarborough, 5th BCD planning officer. "It's a very detailed process, because who would want to put a million dollar aircraft up there and not have it fulfill its capacity?"

Much like the difference between Australian English and American English, translating between each services' process means recognizing the nuances in each other's language, Scarborough said.

As part of Exercise Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial training activity sponsored jointly by the U.S. Pacific Command and Australian Defence Force Joint Operations Command, the 5th BCD worked side by side with members of Garrad's 1st Ground Liaison Group to ensure the 14,000 U.S. and 9,000 Australian military personnel participating in maritime, land, and air operations exercises had the integration they needed.

To understand how the Air Force operates, 5th BCD Soldiers attend Air Force schools, learn Air Force terms, and work at the 613th Air and Space Operations Center.

In an AOC, they represent the Army's voice at the nerve center of the Air Force's Pacific operations, said Air Force Maj. Linda Vadnais, chief of offense at the 613th AOC.

The 5th BCD helps her clarify what options exist. If the Air Force is watching an enemy mechanized infantry unit, they can reach out to the BCD for an Army perspective on its capabilities, Vadnais explained.

"Having someone who can interpret Army speak to Air Force speak is key," Vadnais, a Huntsville, Ala., native, said. "I give them my solution, and they can say, 'well, that's not quite right. They're really looking for this.'"

Vadnais and the 613th AOC came with the BCD to



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Australia to participate in Talisman Sabre '11. The combined U.S. and Australian AOC helped ensure that major training operations, such as the airdrop at the beginning of the exercise, had air and ground on the same page.

BCD Soldiers said interacting with the Australians, who normally do not operate around the concept of an AOC, showed them that learning also extends both ways in operations with other countries.

"Just by interacting, we've learned a lot about the similarities and differences between our sides," said Scarborough, a resident of Wahiawa, Hi. "Our similarities allowed us to easily understand our role. Our differences also helped in that the different ways we learned how to do things may help us down the line."

The many long days put in by his Soldiers during the exercise, Myers said, makes him confident that if called to war, his unit would be able to adapt and thrive.

"I'm new to this unit, so this was huge to watch the Australian team work," Myers said.

"I got to see my unit in action, and I'm impressed by our level of knowledge and training. My guys were on their game. We learned a lot on this exercise, and we're going to take this back to Hawaii with us," he added.

"We're speaking the same language," concurred Garrad, "And I'm not just talking about English, I mean the doctrinal language."

"We're the pinnacle of joint integration," Garrad said. "The oil in the wheels, if you like, is the BCD, that actually makes that integration between the two: Army and Air Force."

Australian, U.S. Troops Visit Memorial, Reflect on those before

By Spec. JP Lawrence, 42nd Infantry Division Public Affairs

CANBERRA, Australia -- There burns a flame, surrounded by a pool of water, in the central courtyard of the Australian War Memorial here.

Soldiers of the U.S. Army's 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment and the Australian Defence Force's 1st Ground Liaison Group visited this flame and recognized their shared military history, July 25.

Its name is the Eternal Flame, and it symbolizes those who have given their lives for Australia. The flame burns for the soldiers who gave their lives in conflicts from the turn of the century to the present day, and for the need to remember their sacrifice.

It continues to burn for soldiers like Sgt. Todd Langley, an Australian commando killed July 4, clearing an area in southern Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

His remains were laid to rest July 15, in a ceremony honored by units across Australia, including the 5th BCD and the 1st GLG.

For many of the U.S. Soldiers in Australia as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial training activity meant to improve combat readiness and interoperability, the ceremony brought home the closeness of the alliance between the U.S. and Australia.

"It was very humbling," Col. Stephen Myers, 5th BCD Commander, said, "to work with our allies, knowing they fought and died with us overseas."

At the close of the exercise, the commanders of the 5th BCD and 1st GLG brought their troops to the Australian War Memorial, where the troops walked through a hundred years of Australian military history, from World War I to the current War on Terrorism, with each exhibit showing the extent of the alliance between Australia and the United States.

"It was a great place to come together," Myers said, "after an exercise where we bilaterally came together and did a mission, and then at the end, we can get an understanding of our history, and how we will build history like this."

"Australia and America have been together since World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and now today in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Myers. "We saw that here, and in Talisman Sabre, we again came together to join our two armies for a common cause."

Myers said Talisman Sabre showed him his unit is more than capable of fighting alongside their Australian allies, and 1st GLG commander Lt. Col. Andrew Garrad added that for him, visiting a memorial such as this shows their alliance in its purest form, for in the past, and in the present.

"It builds on the spirit of shared cooperation in the past, and we can carry it forward into the future," said Garrad. "I think that's a great foundation for any two armies that we can come together, and then sit and reflect on that history together."

"I think it adds more meaning to what we're doing now," Garrad said, as the Eternal Flame, surrounded by water, burned unceasingly behind him.

U.S. Army Col. Stephen Myers and Australian Defence Force Lt. Col. Andrew Garrad visited the Roll of Honour, a tribute to Australia's fallen heroes at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Australia, July 25.





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Alaska Army National Guard Opens a Gateway to Australia

Story and Photo by Master Sgt. Corine Lombardo, New York Army National Guard

KOKODA BARRACKS, Cunungra, Australia -- Thousands of U.S. military forces arriving along the eastern Australian coast are greeted by a handful of Soldiers representing the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Theater Gateway.

As U.S. military personnel flood into Australia for Exercise Talisman Sabre, July 11–29, they are met by members of the Combined Joint Reception Center or CJRC and welcomed with a warm smile in a familiar uniform.

Talisman Sabre '11 is a major bilateral exercise designed to bring the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military together to enhance their combined and joint war fighting skills. Roughly 14,000 U.S. and 9,000 Australian military personnel are participating in maritime, land, and air operations exercises.

Talisman Sabre exercises use fictional scenarios incorporated in combined land force maneuvers, amphibious landings, urban and air operations, Special Forces operations, and coordinated firing of live ammunition from a range of in-service weapons systems used by exercise participants.

As the land forces arrive, the CJRC takes responsibility for getting them where they need to be, ensuring they have what they need to perform their duties and tracks thousands of ground force personnel, spread out at six Defence training areas in central and northern Queensland and the northern territory.

"As the Reception Stationing and Onward Integration or RSOI team, our main priority is to track and keep a 100% accounting of U.S. forces as they come into and out of Australia," stressed Staff Sgt. Joseph Thibault, an operations NCO assigned to the Alaska Army National Guard.

Thibault volunteered to assist the 49th Theater Gateway and was eager to incorporate the RSOI

process into this year's exercise.

"The U.S. does this at deployment locations around the world and it works. It just makes sense to use the system to keep track of military personnel participating in Talisman Sabre," Thibault said.

The RSOI also provides area specific information to uniformed personnel traveling through the area. As in all aspects of Talisman Sabre, American service members are working side by side their Australian counterparts.

"We have worked out an arrangement; where we pick up American forces and the Australians conduct the reception briefings," Thibault said.

"It works well and makes sense, since this is their country they have a better understanding of site specific information our troops need to know. Right down to which snakes and spiders to watch out for or what field environment has a specific hazard they need to be aware of," Thibault added.

As part of the CJRC, the Alaska National Guard took their responsibility one step further. With more than a half dozen points of entry into Australia for personnel participating in maritime, land and air operations, the two-dozen members of the RSOI team began picking up personnel from airports along the eastern Australian coast.

"Rather than wait for personnel to travel to us, we learned to drive and began shuttling personnel from the airports to their respective duty locations," Thibault said.

Staff Sgt. Nora Housey, assigned to the 673rd Force

Support Squadron, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson joined her Alaskan counterparts and is learning about how the Army works as well as the Australian Forces.

"It's been a learning process to see how the Army tracks their personnel, we do it a little different in the Air Force," said Housey.

The bigger learning curve for Housey has been driving in Australia, as she has had to relearn how to drive doing everything opposite to what is normal for her.

With only a few hours of driving instruction, an on-line course on the rules of the road and road signs under her belt, Housey expects to drive over 7,000 km while here.

"It's been an experience, the first couple of days were tough, I just kept thinking left, left, left and I finally caught on," Housey said, adding with a grin, "I did use my windshield wipers to signal several times."

"We have picked up people of all ranks from all branches of the U.S. military, you can tell they are relieved to see a familiar uniform and know there is someone there to look out for them," said Housey.



Staff Sgt. Joseph Thibault, an operations NCO assigned to the Alaska Army National Guard assists Spec. Jay Lawrence, New York Army National Guard Soldier with his baggage as he arrives at the Cunungra airport in Australia.

Thibault and roughly a dozen Soldiers representing the Alaska Army National Guard's 49th Theater Gateway received Soldiers participating in Talisman Sabre in July 2011.



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United States Army Pacific Command

Support Staff Keeps Talisman Sabre Moving

California Nat'l Guard Soldier finds the road to Talisman Sabre an enjoyable one
By Spec. JP Lawrence, New York National Guard

CAMP ROCKY, Rockhampton, Australia--In Australia, people drive on the left, and life is all right for Sgt. John Cantor.

Cantor, a driver with Bravo Company, 40th Infantry Division, is one of roughly 23,000 U.S. and Australian military personnel participating in combined training at six sites across Australia, as well as in the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas.

As part of his California National Guard annual training, the gruff-looking but soft-spoken Cantor traveled halfway across the world to ensure Soldiers participating in Exercise Talisman Sabre '11 would be able to get to where they need to go.

This is Cantor's first time in Australia, and he said as he drives Soldiers from base to base, he, while keeping his eye on the road, enjoys the sight of kangaroos and the Australian bush in winter.

For Cantor, driving in Australia constitutes quite the U-turn. Once, Cantor was a quiet young boy, growing up in a low-income, single-parent household held only together by the sheer insistence of his strict, hardworking mother. Despite their circumstances, the young Cantor would dream of traveling beyond San Gabriel, Ca., where gangs and drugs littered the streets.

At 17, with no car and seeing little chance of achieving these dreams, he joined the Marines as a field artillery specialist.

In the military, his travel plans hit top gear. By the time Cantor hit the exit ramp of his military career, he had already gone to Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Somalia, and the Persian Gulf. He enjoyed the ride so much that even after getting out and getting a job in California, and then in Las Vegas, he merged back into the armed services, this time with the Army National Guard.

"Once you get the itch, you kind of miss it," Cantor explained. "Even if it's a different branch, you still want to serve your country."

Cantor became a transportation Soldier in the Nevada Army National Guard, only to be hit with bad news: his mother, who always kept food on the table, was sick. After finding an armory close to her home, he transferred to the California Army National Guard to be closer to her.

"When I go to drill," Cantor said, "I have a chance to be with her as well."

Today, Cantor, a resident of North Las Vegas, Nev., said he makes sure to travel, and to bring his family with him when he does. "I never really traveled until I got in the military," Cantor said, "and now, that's what I do with my family."

"I have a 13-year old son, and I try to take him places whenever possible," Cantor said. "We go to Vera Cruz, northern California, San Diego – give him memories."

And while the road that has brought him to the left side of the world has been winding, Cantor said that when he's given a chance to participate in exercises like Talisman Sabre, the little quiet boy inside of him jumps at the chance. "It's awesome," Cantor said of Talisman Sabre. "It's a chance to see the other side of the world."



Sgt. John Cantor. Cantor, a driver with Bravo Company, 40th Infantry Division, is one of roughly 22,000 U.S. and Australian military personnel participating in combined training at six sites across Australia, as well as in the Coral, Timor and Arafura Seas.



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Talisman Sabre Tests Water Purification Prototype

Story and Photos by Spec. JP Lawrence, New York Army National Guard

SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Australia -- Science and technology troops from the U.S. and Australian militaries are currently testing a portable water-filtration device at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial, bilateral training activity sponsored by the U.S. Pacific Command and Australian Defence Force Joint Operations Command.

Capt. Ashton Carter, an Air Force biologist from the research labs at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, brought a prototype of the Seldon Waterbox across the Pacific to test the device with the aid of his counterparts in the Australian military.

Seldon Technologies claims the suitcase-sized device, developed by Seldon Technologies under the auspices of the U.S. Air Force, can effectively turn any river, lake or stream into a potable water source by removing 99.9999% of bacteria and 99.99% of viruses through its carbon nanotube filtration system.

To test these claims, Carter plans to set up the waterbox at the dirtiest lake he can find. Preliminary testing, July 19 at a runoff pond next to a water treatment plant at Camp Growl, showed the device, powered by a single car battery, capable of turning green, putrid water into a clear, seemingly drinkable state.

"You plug in your filters, plug in your hose which goes in your source water, and then you can either drink straight from the tap or you can pour it into whatever tank you're storing it," explained Carter, adding the device uses no heat, UV light or chemicals.

Carter conducted testing throughout Talisman Sabre with members of the Australian military, whose government sees great potential in the waterbox's capabilities.

"The Australian Defence Science and Technology Organization was very interested in this technology," said Maj. Ian Culloden, Australian Science and Technology lead at the exercise's joint operations center.

"Talisman Sabre is an ideal opportunity for the science and technology program to build a little collaboration between the U.S. and Australians."

Culloden said he can see applications of the device for both countries, adding the small size and low energy usage would be useful for both military and humanitarian missions.

"It's one of those things that a small unit can take with them, because as you probably know, water is one of the biggest drains on the logistics system," Culloden said. "If you can just pull up to a water source, plug in and get whatever amount of water you need, as you need it, it's a beautiful way of doing things."

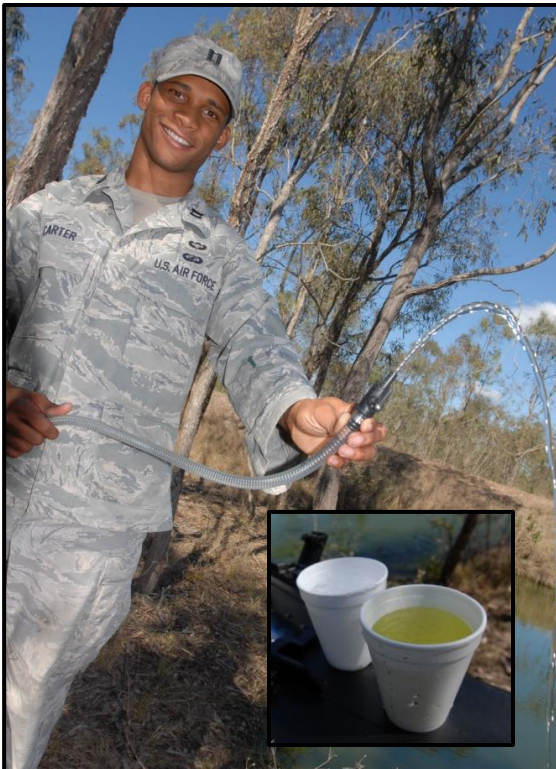


Photo Left: Capt. Ashton Carter, an Air Force biologist from the research labs at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, brought a prototype of the Seldonwaterbox, a portable water filtration device, to the Shoalwater Bay Testing Area for tests with the Australian military during Exercise Talisman Sabre.

Photo Left inset: The makers of the SeldonWaterbox, a portable water-filtration device claim their carbon nanotube filters can remove 99.9999% of bacteria and 99.99% of viruses from any freshwater source, as shown in the before and after shot.

Photo above: The SeldonWaterbox, a portable water-filtration device was tested at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area in Australia.



TALISMAN SABRE '11

United States Army Pacific Command

Aussies, Americans Honor Fallen

Story and photo by Spec. JP Lawrence, New York Army National Guard

CAMP GROWL, Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Australia -- In accord, the Australian and American flags at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area dropped to half-mast July 15, in honor of fallen Australian commando Sgt. Todd Langley, who died July 4, clearing an area in southern Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Master Sgt. Robert Allinder and Australian Defence Force Sgt. Daniel Smith, brought together by Talisman Sabre '11, a biennial, bilateral exercise, honored their fellow warrior by the traditional lowering of the flag, which signifies space for the invisible flag of death.

Talisman Sabre, the fourth iteration of the biennial event, provides a chance for forces from both nations to conduct various types of training at sea, ashore and in the air off the Australian coast.

The complexity and scale of the exercise demands shoulder-to-shoulder cooperation, providing an environment for close partnerships and friendships to grow.

"Australia's an ally of ours," said Allinder, battle captain for exercise's Combined Exercise Control Group and a member of 1st Battalion, 144th Field Artillery. "We're showing our friends that we respect their sacrifice; we'd expect the same in turn."

Allinder and Smith were part of approximately 23,000 Australian and U.S. personnel participating in the exercise, which includes personnel and assets from the Australian and U.S. Navy, Army and Air Force as well as the U.S. Marines.

The exercise is the continuation of an American-Australian alliance that began during World War II and continues to today's War on Terror.

"It just shows the common bond between two nations striving for the same goal," said Australian Maj. Gareth Bowering, who read out Langley's awards, among which is a United States Meritorious Service Medal for heroism against an armed enemy.

The exercises are designed to bring the different branches of the U.S. and Australian military together in a combined environment and in honor of Langley, the flags followed suit.

"The American and Australian flags are side by side," Allinder, a Los Angeles, Ca., native, said. "If one's down, they both should be down."

The two flags resumed flying high the next day, but for a while, at least, the flags of both countries displayed their reverence for the departed Langley.

"It's just a sign of respect," Bowering said, "for a fallen warrior."



U.S. Army Master Sgt. Robert Allinder and Australian Defence Force Sgt. Daniel Smith, drop the U.S. and Australian flags to half-mast, July 15 at the Shoalwater Bay Training Area.

The flags flew at half-mast in honor of fallen Australian commando Sgt. Todd Langley, who died July 4 clearing an area in southern Afghanistan.