

Exercise Talisman Sabre 2017

As the principle bilateral Australian and United States exercise conducted in Australia, Exercise Talisman Sabre 2017 provided an excellent opportunity to practice and test Combined Task Force (CTF) implementation of a gender perspective in a complex mid-intensity high-end war-fighting environment.

The inclusion of the WPS agenda in training scenarios was established in 2015 with the US Pacific Command Concept Development Conference. In 2016, the treatment of the WPS agenda was strengthened through Exercise Scenario Development Workshops, where WPS agenda storylines and injects were designed around the training themes. Talisman Sabre 2017 built on previous experience integrating WPS agenda considerations into its own training scenarios.

There were several gender-related training objectives for TS17, which targeted Commander, Staff and Gender Advisor capability in the key areas of: gender analysis; incorporating a gender perspective into all phases of an operation; coordination across agencies and actors; and the implementation of measures to prevent and report on conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

The Exercise required the presence of a large and comprehensive network of Australian and United States Gender Advisors in key Command advisory roles on both sides of the simulated conflict. The delivery of inaugural ADF Operational Gender Advisor Course was timed to provide 'just-in-time' training to US, ADF and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) personnel fulfilling Gender Advisor roles on TS17; who, in turn, provided expertise to Commanders and key staff across all operational functions.

The involvement of trained Gender Advisors on TS17 combined with the inclusion of WPS-specific interventions proved enormously successful in developing improved participant understanding of how military operations impact the local population and how the local population impacts the conduct of military operations; and the criticality of applying a gender perspective to all stages of an operation. Lessons learned from TS17 will be a valuable source of reference in developing Australia's next National Action Plan, Defence Implementation Plan and when developing new Operational Doctrine addressing WPS for Defence



Gender Advisors SQNLDR Karen Brown, WGCDR Kelley Stewart and Deputy Commander CFACC AVM Steven Roberton apply a gender perspective while considering the effects air targeting may have on civilian communities.