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Allied P-8A Crews Bolster Maritime Defense in Talisman Sabre

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Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025 brought together Australia, New Zealand, and the United States to enhance maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare capabilities through joint P-8A Poseidon operations in Queensland. Held from July 13 to August 4, the exercise turned northern Queensland into a centre of coordinated allied air power. The training, centered around Shoalwater Bay, focused on anti-submarine warfare and tactical integration, involving over 35,000 personnel from 19 nations. This marked the largest iteration of the biennial Talisman Sabre exercises to date.

The Royal Australian Air Force's No. 11 Squadron, led by Squadron Leader Stephen Camillo, took the lead in Australia's participation. Camillo emphasized the importance of refining tactics and building close operational ties with partner nations. He noted that the

exercise offered an invaluable opportunity to improve joint effectiveness, particularly between Australian, New Zealand, and U.S. crews. The Royal New Zealand Air Force's No. 5 Squadron, now operating P-8A aircraft since retiring their P-3K2 Orions, integrated seamlessly by flying joint missions aboard RAAF aircraft.

Squadron Leader Ziesler from the RAAF described the complexity of the training as unmatched by domestic exercises. The United States Navy added advanced tactics and shared logistical protocols, which enhanced coordination across the participating forces. New Zealand's participation highlighted its growing role in Indo-Pacific maritime surveillance, especially as its P-8A fleet becomes fully operational.

The exercise was held amid growing regional tensions, including reports of Chinese surveillance activity off Australia's coastline. Talisman Sabre 2025 demonstrated a clear commitment to regional security and interoperability among allied nations. It also tested real-time joint response capabilities across air, sea, land, cyber, and space domains.

While the Albanese government oversaw the logistical support for the exercise, critics questioned whether broader defence policies adequately prioritize military capability over diplomacy. Nevertheless, the successful deployment and cooperation of P-8A crews showcased the strength of allied readiness and deterrence. Talisman Sabre 2025 reaffirmed the commitment of Australia and its partners to maintaining security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.