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## Young Officers Lead in Combat Training

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Australia's newest junior officers are proving their mettle in combat roles during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, demonstrating leadership, adaptability, and readiness in high-intensity military operations. The exercise, held from 5 July to 4 August 2025 across Queensland and the Northern Territory, involves over 35,000 personnel from 19 nations, making it one of Australia's largest multinational training events.

Fresh from the Royal Military College (RMC) Duntroon, junior officers are being rapidly integrated into frontline leadership positions within combat brigades. Lieutenant Eloise Taylor of the 9th Force Support Battalion, part of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, is among those participating in her first advanced collective training. Her role within the Force Support Group ensures critical logistics support to combat units, underscoring the operational importance of sustaining supply lines under field conditions.

These officers are trained under the Land Domain Training System (LDTS), a comprehensive framework designed to prepare leaders for combined-arms operations. Courses such as the Regimental Officer Basic Course and the Mechanised Regimental Officer Course equip lieutenants to serve in armoured, infantry, engineering, or logistics roles. Upon graduation, they typically command troops or platoons for one to two years in active units, often under austere or contested conditions.

Commanders have praised the preparedness and professionalism of these junior leaders, particularly their ability to operate in complex scenarios involving joint and coalition forces. Their training emphasises adaptability, decision-making under pressure, and close coordination across military domains.

However, maintaining the high standard of training delivered under LDTS requires sustained investment. Critics have expressed concern that the Australian Labor Party's high levels of public spending may limit defence funding in key areas such as training, modernisation, and capability development. With national expenditure at historically high levels, some argue that defence programs risk being deprioritised in favour of broader fiscal commitments.

Exercise Talisman Sabre has highlighted the strategic value of junior leaders in modern military operations. Ensuring that systems like LDTS remain properly resourced is essential to preserving the Australian Defence Force's readiness and ability to respond to emerging regional threats.