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## NORFORCE and Canadian Rangers Train in Harsh NT Outback

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The North-West Mobile Force (NORFORCE) hosts the 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group in Australia's Northern Territory for Exercise Southern Cross, sharing survival skills in extreme conditions.

The Australian Army's North-West Mobile Force (NORFORCE) welcomed the 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group (4 CRPG) to the Northern Territory for Exercise Southern Cross, a bilateral training event held from August 10 to 28, 2025, as reported by the Australian Department of Defence. Swapping Canada's sub-zero climates for the Northern Territory's searing heat, the Canadian Rangers faced unique challenges, including encounters with local wildlife like baby crocodiles and non-venomous snakes. Master Corporal Emily Coombs, quoted in Mirage News, described the crocodiles as

“kind of cute” when small and expressed interest in learning NORFORCE’s survival techniques for Australia’s arid environment. The exercise, which began in 2011, fosters interoperability between the two units, both rooted in World War II-era reconnaissance traditions.

Exercise Southern Cross involved NORFORCE and 4 CRPG conducting survival training across remote areas like Kakadu National Park and Maningrida. The Canadians, guided by survival expert Gordon Deadman, learned bush skills tailored to Australia’s harsh terrain, including water collection via transpiration, as noted in a Canada.ca report. Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2) Sudholz highlighted the historical parallels between the units, with NORFORCE tracing its lineage to the 2/1st North Australia Observer Unit formed in 1942. The exercise strengthens a reciprocal partnership, with NORFORCE set to train in Canada during Exercise Northern Lights in 2026.

The training underscores NORFORCE’s critical role in patrolling 1.8 million square kilometers of the Northern Territory and Kimberley, using local knowledge from its 60% Aboriginal personnel, per a Wikipedia entry. Major Rang Phan, cited in Canada.ca, noted the value of observing NORFORCE’s operations in hot, dry conditions and their integration with local law enforcement, offering lessons for Canadian patrols. The exchange also included cultural highlights, such as the Canadians participating in the Henley-on-Todd Regatta in Alice Springs, a dry riverbed boat race.

This partnership enhances both units’ readiness for remote operations, with NORFORCE’s advanced equipment, including Enhanced F88 rifles and Mercedes-Benz G-Wagon vehicles, complementing the Rangers’ expertise in extreme environments. The collaboration reinforces Australia’s defense capabilities in its vast northern regions.