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## **Combined Amphibious Force Lands Troops Ashore in Talisman Saber 2007**

*By U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Class (SW) Adam R. Cole, Task Force 76 Public Affairs*

ABOARD ESSEX, at sea – With similar amphibious ships and landing craft working in tandem, the Talisman Saber 2007 Amphibious Task Force successfully put nearly 2,500 ground forces from task force ships to the Shoalwater Bay Training Area in June.

The troop movement reflects the combined U.S.-Australian strike-from-the-sea capabilities between naval and ground forces. The goal: to defeat a fictitious enemy and restore stability in the area.

Talisman Saber is the largest joint military exercise in the Pacific this year. Every two years, forces from Australia and the United States use TS07 to prepare both nations in crisis action planning and in executing contingency operations, which improves interoperability and combat readiness.

“We executed — to near perfection — our core competency, which is amphibious operations,” said Capt. Anthony J. Pachuta, Commodore of PHIBRON 11 and the exercise’s commander of the combined amphibious task force.

“The combined effort here was phenomenal, displayed in the integration of command and control watch teams and the landing craft, which cross-assisted in achieving the ship-to-shore movement,” Pachuta said. “Throughout the sea echelon, ships and assets have put in long hours and still have found ways to successfully complete all amphibious taskings.”

Initially, the landing occurred at night, with landing crafts deploying off the amphibious platforms into darkness. The momentum of that first push continued for several days, as

load after load of U.S. Marines and Royal Australian Army troops and cargo were routed ashore.

Though conducting evolutions in separate parts of the sea echelon, amphibious ships of the combined task force were going through the same motions, which included launching and recovering craft and getting troops off the ship and into the ground fight.

“It felt like I was contributing to a team effort, not just on this ship but with the U.S. ships,” said Seaman Boatswain’s Mate Liam B. Ball of HMAS Kanimbla (LPA 51), whose deck department was working six on, six off to complete the off load. “The satisfaction is in getting troops where they need to be.”

Australian amphibious ships, part of Commander, Australian Amphibious Task Group (COMAUSATG) include HMAS Kanimbla (LPA 51), HMAS Manoora (LPA 52), HMAS Tobruk (LSH 50); U.S. ships involved, from the Expeditionary Strike Group 7, are flagship USS Essex (LHD 2), USS Juneau (LPD 10) and USS Tortuga (LSD 46).

U.S. landing craft used were Landing Craft Utilities (LCUs) from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 1 and Landing Craft Air Cushions (LCACs) from ACU 5. The Australians used two types of landing craft, a smaller version of the LCU, the Australian army’s LCM8 and a bigger, more independent version, the Heavy Landing Craft (LCH).

The U.S. landing craft units (LCU) and Australian ships conducted ship-to-shore movements. The LCUs conducted stern gate marriages with the Australian vessels, marrying the back of their ramp with the back of the ship’s ramp so cargo could be loaded off the ship.

“It doesn’t matter if it is an Australian ship or a U.S. ship, we know we have to meet the primary objective: getting troops and cargo ashore,” said Senior Chief Boatswain’s Mate (SW) Terrence C. Asyn.

Asyn said they had to adjust to the different sizes of the U.S. craft bow ramp and the Australian ship’s stern gate, but the team overcame the challenge. The craftmaster credits their success to the previous exercises and training scenarios.

“We’ve done hundreds of these types of evolutions. The more you do the better you get, so you are confident and adjust to new conditions safely,” said Asyn. “We’re just glad we were able to help out.”

*Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7/Task Force (CTF) 76, the Navy’s only forward-deployed amphibious force. Task Force 76 is headquartered at White Beach Naval Facility, Okinawa, Japan, with an operating detachment in Sasebo, Japan. The 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade is headquartered in Okinawa, Japan.*

**PHOTO CUTLINES:**

070620-N-6936D-076 - SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Queensland – Marines of the 3d Expeditionary Brigade’s 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit enter the beach from naval landing craft to begin the field training phase of Talisman Saber 2007. Talisman Saber is a biennial U.S. and Australian led Joint Task Force exercise designed to prepare both nations for crisis action planning and execution of contingency operations. TS07 maintains a high level of interoperability between both forces, demonstrating commitment to regional security and the U.S. and Australian military alliance. The exercise also supports increased flexibility and readiness, which are force multipliers in winning the Global War on Terror. *(Official Talisman Saber 2007 photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class David Didier) (Released)*

070620-N-6936D-085/91 SHOALWATER BAY TRAINING AREA, Queensland – A member of Beach Master Unit (BMU) One watches as a Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) makes its way to the beach in to drop off Marine cargo at the start of the field training phase of Talisman Saber 2007. Talisman Saber is a biennial U.S. and Australian led Joint Task Force exercise designed to prepare both nations for crisis action planning and execution of contingency operations. TS07 maintains a high level of interoperability between both forces, demonstrating commitment to regional security and the U.S. and Australian military alliance. The exercise also supports increased flexibility and readiness, which are force multipliers in winning the Global War on Terror. *(Official Talisman Saber 2007 photo by U.S. Navy Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class David Didier) (Released)*