



IRON MOON

NEW FOCUS
ON NW
DEFENCE

Australian Defence Force personnel completed a two-week maritime counter terrorism training exercise in the waters off Exmouth and Dampier in north-west Australia in September – the first time in years the exercise was conducted in the region.

The annual exercise – Exercise Iron Moon, from 15 to 29 September – involved around 700 personnel from across Defence and Australian federal and State agencies.

Exercise Iron Moon was designed to enhance and validate at least part of that ADF maritime counter-terrorism response capability in the most realistic environment possible.

Senior Defence Officer Western Australia Commodore Peter Lockwood said the Special Operations Command-led exercise was one of a number of ADF exercises and operations in Australia's north-west region this year as part of the Australian government's maritime security framework.

"The ADF, and in particular our special forces, has a long history of exercising on and around Australia's offshore energy installations since the early 1980s, but the multi-agency aspect of more recent exercises is important in sharpening our joint security response skills," Commodore Lockwood said.

"This year's exercise, held in the maritime zone around the north west, rehearsed a range of scenarios focused on maritime disruption and recovery operations in the event of a significant threat against offshore resource interests."

Colonel M from Special Operations Command, speaking to the Pilbara Echo newspaper, said that while Exercise Iron Moon was effectively testing the ADF's abilities to respond to an offshore maritime terrorism incident, it was the first time the annual counterterrorism exercises had been held in the north west since 1999.