



above image: copyright Dept. of Defence, Australia

North of Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast is a section of Queensland that forms the Shoalwater Bay Military Training Area. The SWBMTA encompasses 454,000 hectares, a large space for the Australian Army to train using live ammunition, and drive armoured vehicles around without endangering the public.

One of the cornerstones of modern combat doctrine is that of offshore invasion, where a military force makes an amphibious assault. The beaches along the coastline in the Shoalwater Bay area are ideal for training military forces in landing from naval units.

Every two years, US military forces engage with Australian forces in a joint military exercise known as Talisman Saber, in the Shoalwater Bay area. Up to 20,000 personnel, dozens of ships, and hundreds of aircraft take part in the training exercise. The exercise is an outgrowth of a series of exercises called Tandem Thrust, and gets two different military command structures used to working together, down to details like Australian Naval supply vessels refueling US warships at sea, and Australian armour (Leopard tanks and Bushmaster APC's (Armoured Personnel Carriers) landing on the beach in US Marine LCAC's (Landing Craft Air Cushion, or Hovercraft).

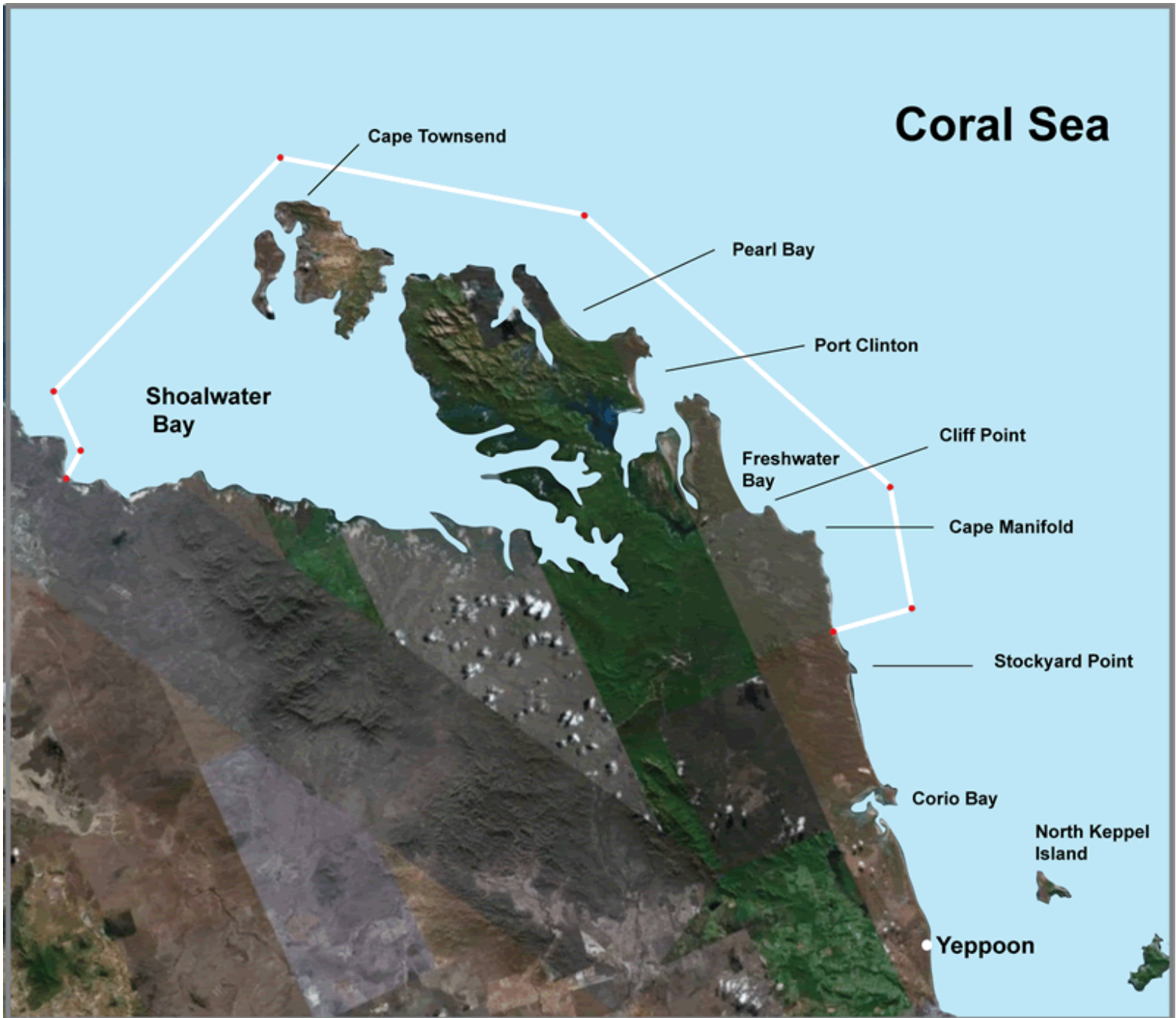


Image above, copyright: A. & C. Thompson

What this means for sea kayakers is that there are areas on the coast where they should not go above the high water line on the beach, at any time. During military exercises, such as Talisman Saber, the area of exclusion is usually expanded to include seas offshore from the SWBMTA.

The public is excluded from the land approach to the training area at all times, so such maritime exclusions are of interest only to the seafarer.

The Department of Defence would like to highlight that movement above the highest astronomical tide mark on any beach inside the Training Area is trespass and reference to the "beaches" should include this qualification, and also emphasise that when the Defence Practice Area exclusions are in effect, the beaches are also out of bounds.



exclusion zone 2007 Exercise Talisman Saber



The previous page shows the exclusion zone during the 2007 Talisman Saber Exercise. The white lined "fence" is the latitude/longitude positions (per the Notice, below) joined. Note that the zone's distance offshore, near Stockyard Point, is about 8 kilometres. Beach landings usually take place at Freshwater Bay.

**A Notice to Mariners (NOTMAR) has been raised by the Queensland Transport (Marine Division) declaring a Marine Danger Area for the central Queensland coast, and notifying its closure during the period 9th June - 8th July inclusive.**

A major defence exercise - Exercise Talisman Saber 07 - will be undertaken including periods of 'live-firing' and marine craft operations at all hours within these restricted waters.

The Marine Danger Area extends to all waters within a line defined by the following points as follows:

22° 46 28.1(S) 150° 48 28.2(E) to 22° 47 2.1(S) 150° 53 12.4(E) to 22° 40 28.4(S) 150° 55 1.4(E) to  
22° 19 59.8(S) 150° 45 1.6(E) to 22° 10 1.2(S) 150° 30 3.6(E) to 22° 15 0.9(S) 150° 19 51.9(E) to  
22° 16 46.4(S) 150° 12 3.3(E) to 22° 20 16.1(S) 150° 11 59.8(E) to 22° 21 18.7(S) 150° 10 31.3(E)

Date and Time of Closure

The Marine Danger Area will be closed from 0001hr Saturday 9th June 2007 to 2359 hr Sunday 8th July 2007. All waters, creeks, beaches and other areas within the declared marine danger area are not available for access.

Incursion

Pursuant to the Defence Act of 1901, any person or vessel found within the Marine Danger Area of the Gazetted Defence Practice Area will be removed by Australian Defence Force personnel or by the Queensland Police. Any costs associated with such removal may be borne by the owner, hirer, charterer or agent of the watercraft.

Vessels in Distress

Defence will continue to honour its commitment to providing sanctuary within the defined area to vessels in genuine distress - Normal Distress Calling Procedures APPLY!

Points of Contact

Range Control: (07) 4935 5000 during normal business hours Monday to Friday.

After Hours - Range Control Duty Officer: 0408 023 376



US Marine (31st MEU) AAV lands at Freshwater Bay (Image copyright Dept. of Defence, Australia)

Readers wishing to see more photographs of naval units and land based forces can find a selection of Public Affairs photographs on its internet website of military activities in SWBTA. See <http://www.defence.gov.au/exercises/ts07/gallery.htm>

A search on the Google search engine, using the search terms such as *Talisman Saber 07*, or *Talisman Saber 05*, and *Tandem Thrust* for earlier exercises, will give links to several of the United States of America armed forces webpage sites, depending on the different units involved in the exercises, and the different branches, such as the US Navy, and various Marine (United States Marine Corp or USMC) units. Traditionally, Marines are the American forces chosen for beach landings. The Marines have their own aviation, and armour assets.

The *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. GN 8, 28 February 2007 page 813* provides the declaration of the Defence Practice Area, including the map co-ordinates. This is available at :

[http://www.ag.gov.au/portal/govgazonline.nsf/37688860AC03C85DCA25729000099D06/\\$file/GN%208.pdf](http://www.ag.gov.au/portal/govgazonline.nsf/37688860AC03C85DCA25729000099D06/$file/GN%208.pdf)

The coordinates given in the Government Gazette require topographic maps to plot the grid references, as the boundaries are described for the mainland training area, as well as the maritime regions. The Gazette pdf document is a 5.5Mb download, and the pages relevant to Shoalwater Bay are pages 19 to 21 inclusive.

As a gazetted Defence Practice Area for the purposes of Part XI of the Defence Force Regulations 1952, the terrestrial, air and maritime parts of SWBTA can be permanently closed, or particular segments temporarily closed, to protect the public when Defence determines that closure is essential to ensure safety.

Maritime closures are promulgated by Defence through a Notice to Mariners (NOTMAR), which is a closure of, or a restriction of access to, identified maritime areas within SWBTA.

All NOTMAR's for SWBTA are formally promulgated through the Queensland Transport Department, for formal promulgation pursuant to regulation 205 of the Transport Operations (Marine Safety) Regulation 2004.

More information on Notices to Mariners is available at:  
[http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Home/Notices\\_to\\_mariners/](http://www.msq.qld.gov.au/Home/Notices_to_mariners/)



Australian APCs on the beach.  
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