AUSTRALIA HANDS OVER COMMAND

Australia’s Department of Defence announced that the Australian command of coalition maritime operations in support of counter-terrorism operations in the Gulf region of the Middle East has passed to the French Navy, it was reported from Canberra on 6th April.

Commodore Greg Sammut of the Royal Australian Navy handed over command of Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150) to Rear-Admiral Jean-Louis Kerignard of the French Navy on 4th April at a ceremony in Bahrain.

Commodore Sammut said it was a personal privilege to have been entrusted with Australia’s second command of CTF 150. He commented, “The close co-operation, professionalism and dedication of the many participating nations remain the foundations of the success of CTF 150. I am very grateful for the support of our Combined Maritime Force partners and regional friends in promoting security and stability throughout the area of operations. The Australian Defence Force takes pride in contributing to coalition efforts to maintain maritime security in such a vital region for the stability and economic prosperity of the world at large.”

Over the past six months, the Royal Australian Navy team has planned and executed operations conducted by a range of ships and aircraft from CTF 150 contributing nations. There has also been valuable interaction and co-operation with regional nations which has strengthened relationships between navies and further enhanced security in the maritime environment.

The principle mission of CTF 150 is to deter, disrupt and defeat attempts by international terrorist organisations to use the maritime environment as a venue for an attack or as a means to transport personnel, weapons and other materials associated with terrorism. CTF 150 vessels also assist mariners in distress and undertake humanitarian work as required.

CTF 150 is a multinational task force. Participating nations have included: Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.