SITREP

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION NSW - NEWS AND VIEWS

89 Year-Old DC-2 Arrives at HARS

From Ian Badham BSc OAM Co-ordinator, HARS Media & Marketing Team

The fuselage of an 89-year-old historic Douglas DC-2 airliner has arrived at HARS Aviation Museum to challenge its volunteers with another long-term restoration project. HARS President and Chief Pilot, Bob De La Hunty, said the DC-2 was built at the Douglas plant in Santa Monica California in May 1935 and has a fascinating history which fits perfectly with the ongoing effort of HARS volunteers to preserve Australia's aviation heritage.

HARS President Bob De La Hunty with the classic DC-2 now on show at HARS Aviation Museum where volunteers are starting a long-term project to restore the 89-year aircraft.

Although overshadowed by the later DC-3 and its military versions (C-47/Dakota) of which more than 16,000 were built, the pioneering DC-2 changed passenger aviation history with 156 constructed. In addition to the fuselage, HARS also has wings and other parts in storage ready for what will be another significant restoration, building on the reputation HARS has established with efforts including bringing back to life and flying the Lockheed Super Constellation 'Connie', Smithy's 'Old Bus' Southern Cross replica and former RAN Grumman S2 Tracker.

Originally operated by Dutch airlines in the East Indies, the DC-2 was evacuated to Australia from the then Batavia ahead of enemy invasion in 1942, where it was taken over by the US Army Air Force under orders by General MacArthur, before it was badly damaged in Port Moresby by an enemy bombing raid in 1942.

After the Second World War it was reconfigured to seat 17 passengers for ANA in Melbourne, then was sold to Sid Marshall at Bankstown Airport to operate weekend joy flights over Sydney under the registration of VH-CDZ. It was damaged in 1957 and struck off the register, then

owned by a number of parties under successive aims for restoration or dismantling for parts. The DC-2 was gifted to the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) by Steve Ferris of IAP Group Australia.
HARS flies three DC-3/Dakota aircraft including 'Hawdon' which flew the first passenger flight for the then Trans-Australian Airlines from Melbourne to Sydney in 1946. Visitors to HARS Aviation Museum are able to see restoration underway on a former RAN Dakota which was part of the Queens Flight back in 1954.

While restoration of the DC-2 will eventually put this 89-year-old historic airliner on show it is not intended, at this stage, for it to fly again.

Recollections of 9SQN Deployment to Operation Pattimura

From Lloyd Cutler

The following is my recollection of my involvement with 9SQN's deployment for the third (1981) part of Operation Pattimura. The following points are in no particular order, just a memory dump from the ageing grey matter of a then very naive 20-year-old.

During April 1981 I was attending the Iroquois Flight Fitter Course at 5SQN Canberra, when I received a call from Barry Stephenson (my ELEC SGT) asking how everything was going, and did it look like I would pass the course. I said yes, and he then asked if I was interested in the trip to Indonesia. I again said yes, so he locked my name in as the ELECFITTER. As I was single at the time, I was slated for the full duration of the trip, other trades were cycled for shorter durations as they were married.

The pre-deployment phase included checking for required inoculations, starting malaria medication, being given a tropical clothing allowance to purchase underwear and such like suitable for the tropics and having to attend a combined Indonesian familiarisation and security briefing.

Three Iroquois were actually deployed; one with skids and two with floats. These partially dismantled and transported to Darwin via C-130 Hercules before being re-assembled. I recall there being an electrical issue, and as all our equipment was still packed and wanting to avoid having to rummage through it, I decided to ask the Darwin Flightline staff if I could borrow one of their multi-meters. They agreed and gave me an old style AVO, thinking they were playing a joke on me, but Wagga Wagga training was still lagging and I knew how to use it, so the joke was on them.

Prior to departure, the aircraft were stripped of non-essential equipment, fuelled to the limit and then headed off towards Saumlaki. Once the aircraft had passed the halfway point, those of us remaining in Darwin boarded a Caribou and headed off, arriving ahead of the Iroquois and prepared for their arrival.

As the airfield was an active, local, commercial airfield, we were required to station the aircraft well to the side of the actual strip area. Essentially, it was an Army operation, and we were there to assist them. They had arrived earlier and constructed the camp at Saumlaki. Upon arrival, it looked like a war camp, surrounded by barbed wire fences and hired Indonesian guards. We were being resupplied by the RAAF Caribous every three days from Darwin, but we had a reserve of ration packs just in case the Caribou could not make it.
One thing I recall at the time was the cigarette ration; one carton per person, I can't recall the frequency (weekly I think), whether you smoked or not. As a non-smoker, I took mine and used it for bartering with the locals and fellow Defence members. We settled into camp life with our

every need catered for; I recall the food was great and ample. The only inconvenience was that by 6pm each day we all had to be in clothing that fully covered our legs and arms to minimise mosquito bites.

9SQN Iroquois fitted with floats

As a rather young and inexperienced person, it did take me a while to get used to the communal toilets and showers. The toilet was a long shack with a bench with multiple holes cut in it; you sat just a foot or so from the next person. The accommodation tents were the usual 11'x11' tents connected three or four end to end, sleeping six or eight. We slept on stretchers with corner posts to support insect nets – it took some getting used to waking up to seeing all sorts of spiders and insects on the net each morning.

The mess tent was also used for evening movies. I recall on one night, I was passed a can of nuts - it was dark and I was absorbed in the movie, but upon grabbing a handful of nuts and putting them in my mouth, I felt a lot of movement…ants! Of course, everyone in the know broke out laughing! These same ants had an appetite for the elastic in our underpants. Many of us needed to place orders with the Caribou crew to purchase replacements in Darwin; we eventually devised ways to keep them from getting to our undies. I also recall someone had the great idea that we needed to do some physical exercise, so a hash house harrier run was organized. So, off we went running through the Indonesian jungle, but after running into some rather scary local spiders, we declared it a failure and cancelled any further attempts.

At some point during the operation, we received a request from the locals looking after the airstrip to start parking the aircraft further off the strip. So, a survey was required of the surrounding ground which was still essentially raw coral, and very uneven. Three spots were found in between the small coral 'bollards' and the plan was to fly the aircraft to their new locations. Given it would be a very short flight, three pilots were selected with ground crew in the left seats; I scored one spot. After the briefing of what I was to do in an emergency, we started and took off, did a circuit and landed further to the side of the main runway. Albeit a short flight, I did manage a few minutes of stick time.

These small coral bollards came back to bite us a short time later. One morning we were in the process of launching the three Iroquois; two had departed without any issues, but as the second float bird came into the hover, a gust of wind blew it sideways just enough for one of the coral bollards to catch the right-side float and tear the outside stitching. As it was now only hanging from the inside stitching, Peter Spurgin (CO) had to decide whether to continue with the rotation, or abort and land. He chose the latter, and as the aircraft settled back to the ground, the damaged float folded in underneath and the Iroquois came to settle on the ends of the cross tubes, with Peter pushing the cyclic all the way to the left to stop the blades from striking the ground. At some point the crewie exited to the left and ran for the hills. Upon Peter and the co-pilot exiting the Iroquois, all Peter wanted was a cigarette; I think he went through a pack in a short time. The co-pilot mentioned also that he did not get to do any of his emergency steps as it was all done by Peter, a remarkable pilot.

A quick call back to Darwin soon had the spare float loaded and on its way to us. Whilst we waited, we prepped the Iroquois, this involved digging holes under the air valves and releasing them to deflate the float. Once that was done, we cut the inner stitching and pulled the float assembly out. The next step was to jack the right side up, but I cannot recall if we already had the jacks, or they came with the spare float assembly. Either way, it was jacked, the damaged float board assembly was removed from the cross tubes, the replacement fitted and inflated - good to go!

The Army had constructed a radio shack for comms back to the mainland. This same equipment was allowed to be used for a few hours each evening to make a call to whomever you wished, but due to waiting times, our RADTECH came up with the idea of using one of the Iroquois HF. So that evening after dinner, we went out, used the taxi wheels to orientate one Iroquois HF antenna towards Darwin, cranked up the small ground generator placed as far away as cable allowed, climbed in and closed the doors. Worked a treat, no more relying on the Army!

In all, life at the Saumlaki was quite comfortable. But eventually the time came for us to move to Moa. Once again, the Iroquois were stripped and loaded with fuel and sent off. Once we received the nod that they had passed the halfway mark, we all loaded onto a Caribou and set off in chase. I do recall that the local strip started near the island's edge and then progressed into a hill which had been cut out. Due to wind conditions, we had to take off towards the hill, so the Caribou started with its tail just about hanging over the edge for maximum length, but as we climbed out there was a thump on the left side; we weren't sure if it was a bird strike or the undercarriage striking a palm tree. Anyway, after much inspection from the windows, nothing obvious could be found and the pilots were not getting any warnings, so we proceeded to Moa.

Moa was a much smaller island; at the time I recall it only had a few small villages. The camp site at Moa was a lot simpler, all structures were 11'x11' tents, except the mess which was the larger style tent. This camp was located on the southern side of the island near one of the villages (Patti) and the locals would wander up to observe our daily doings. Given the regular visits by the locals and their fascination with what we did, I think we all changed our sit-down toilet schedule to nighttime. The toilet was just the basic seat over a hole in the ground and waist height hessian - the locals loved standing there and watching! Our security at this site was provided by a small group of Indonesian military personnel; at times we thought they might have been the greater threat. They were always keen to show us their weapons and fired them out to sea.

As all our fuel came from 44-gallon drums, we needed to be careful of water contamination, so quite a bit of each drum was not used, but the locals soon cottoned onto this and would show up with various containers, so we would share it around. The drum fuel has a bit of a story behind it: the RAN was tasked with the supply of our fuel which they delivered using one of their flat-bottomed beaching craft. These were designed to drive up onto the beach and then use anchors dropped some distance offshore to pull themselves back into the water. But in this case, apparently the delivery ship had just come out of dry dock with a new paint job and the captain did not want it scratched. So, they not only arrived at the wrong location on the island, but the captain also decided to get as close as possible to shore and then just started rolling the drums into the water, expecting the tide to take them ashore. All did not go to plan and two drums were lost and had it not been for the quick action of the locals watching, many more would have been lost. The locals rounded up the floating drums and got them ashore, and noting they each had a different coloured top, lined them up in their various colours.

Due to this mistake, every few days we had to strip the skid bird down to absolute minimum, removing doors, seats, and winch, and fly several trips to transport the fuel back to camp. On the flight over a ground crew member would go over and stay at the fuel site so an addition drum

could be carried; on the last one, one less drum was loaded, and the tech would get back onboard. I recall that by the time the Iroquois was loaded, the skids had settled into the sand and the pilot had to 'wiggle' the aircraft free before hovering. When the Iroquois was flying from the camp site, it went over the mountains, but the return trip was coastal due to load. On the day I assisted, the pilot was 'Spider' Rider; on the way over we flew not much higher than the waves and at some point, he handed the aircraft over to the co-pilot; immediately you could sense the aircraft climb in altitude, but Spider was having none of that and took control back and back down we went. I also recall befriending one of the locals and he gave me a handmade bracelet made from tortoise shell; I still have it.

Where our camp was located, there was a shallow coral shelf that stretched out from the island about 100m, then just dropped off. We devised a plan to build a small raft from the empty 44gallon drums (nine in total), so we could sit just near the drop off and fish. That meant we needed some lengthy bamboo, so during one of the fuel runs, someone struck a deal and the locals supplied us with the required bamboo. Now the length of this bamboo presented a transport issue, but it got done; it was loaded into the skid bird with it hanging out each side. Back at camp the raft was constructed and served us well.

Tough place for a deployment

Another funny interaction with the locals was that they soon realised we loved beer, and it came in cans, something they could use for constructing things (roof tiles as one example). We would joke about that at night whilst drinking - when finished you would throw the empty can over your shoulder, but never hear it hit the ground. I recall it being XXXX Draught and came in steel cans, 20c each.

With regards to the water supply, there was small cave located behind the mess tent, and we used a small portable pump to get the water from the cave to our ground level tank. The entrance of the cave was only about four metres in diameter and extended about 10 metres down to a small patch of sand and the top of the water. This water was about as pure as you could get, but the Army still insisted on chlorinating it. I recall on one occasion, as the ground level tank was nearly full, one of the Army mess chaps asked if I could climb down and shut off the pump: no problem! Upon climbing down and shutting down the pump, someone then shouted down that the pump was due for a service and could I bring it up. Ok, can do, but at roughly the halfway point I started to lose my balance and fall backwards. Whilst overcompensating, I leaned too far forward and my right shin came into contact with the pump's muffler, burning the flesh to the bone. That scored me multiple daily trips to the doctor where he would scrape the wound clean with a concoction of antiseptics. Plus, I was required to go and stand in the sea water a few times each day; that certainly stung!

Another notable event was when, several hours after launching the three aircraft for the day, we received radio notification that the skid bird was grounded due to main generator failure. I can't recall the exact island, but we were advised that one of the float aircraft was inbound to pick me up and transport me to the unserviceable aircraft. I grabbed the spare generator and required tools. Off we went and when we arrived, I was kicked off with my gear and was left there; my ride home was the skid bird, so the pressure was on. The main genny was replaced, ground run and regulators set up, all good. We loaded everything onboard, but the calculations and the hover test proved we were right on the limit, maybe a bit over for the weather conditions. As soon as we rose above ground effect, no amount of tail rotor would stop the slow torque effect. The Iroquois was sitting on the school grounds, which was surrounded by a low white picket fence. The plan was that the pilot hovered over to the fence, jumped it and hovered out onto the beach and settled onto the sand. Everyone was briefed, so off we went, the pilot lifted into a low hover, pushed over and started accelerating up the beach. Speed grew and the next thing I knew we reached the end of the island and slowly climbed out over the water heading for what we believed was Moa; both the crewie and I checking our floatation vests. All was going fine until a discussion started between the pilot and co-pilot; crewie and I listening in, about our destination. The pilot had us on a heading that the co-pilot believed would take us to Timor, not good at the time, after much map swapping, the pilot gave control of the aircraft to the co-pilot and he veered left, the pilot making the statement that it was on him. The crewie and I looked at each other in distress, and checked our floatation vests again. The end result was that the co-pilot was correct and we came over the mountains of Moa and saw our camp.

I can't recall if it was the Army Pilatus Porter or the RAAF Caribou, but one of them did what they thought was a low beat up of the camp. 'Spider' disagreed; he advised us on one particular day to ensure everyone was clear of the tents. Upon lifting into the hover, he nosed over to the point I thought the leading points of the skids would dig into the ground, but he recovered and flew the Iroquois between the rows of tents: awesome!

Australian War Memorial **VN/66/0081/26**

Towards the end of our trip, it was decided that we had too much remaining fluids to bring back and I was tasked with disposing of them. This meant digging a small trench some distance from the camp, loading it up with all the excess containers of oil and other flammable fluids. These were fluids that were unsuitable to give to the locals. Once all the excess was prepared, I created a long line of fuse and lit it. Bloody hell, what a fire! The heat was insane, as each can exploded it created quite the fire ball and spray of flame. At some point a local came along and was gesturing that he wanted to have a look, I tried to gesture to him to stay away, but ultimately it was the heat that forced him away.

And that was it, we packed up, saw the Iroquois off back to Darwin and then loaded ourselves onto a Caribou and headed for Darwin. From Darwin, the Iroquois flew back to Amberley, using road maps I believe. All in all, a great trip.

Air Force Helps Make Aviation Dream Come True

From www.defence.gov.au/news-events/news/2024-08-01

The Royal Australian Air Force has teamed up with international partners and the Starlight Children's Foundation to provide an amazing experience for a 12-year-old boy. Angus, from Humpty Doo in the Northern Territory, is receiving ongoing treatment for burns to 60 per cent of his body.

Angus and his family stand with US Air Force F-22 pilots at the Pitch Black open day at RAAF Base Darwin.

With a passion for planes and aviation, Angus, his family, and his best friend Sam, were treated to a morning of activities at the Exercise Pitch Black RAAF Base Darwin open day. First stop was the flight simulator tent, where Angus was able to try his hand at flying both the Navy Seahawk and EC-135 helicopters. Angus was then taken to see the US Air Force (USAF) F-22 Raptor, where he chatted to crew and had some photos taken with the aircraft. USAF F-22 pilot 'Holster' said he enjoyed putting a smile on Angus' face. 'It was great to chat to Angus and his family. We always appreciate the opportunity to share our passion for aviation and it was especially meaningful to us that he wanted to see the F-22,' Holster said.

Next stop was the RAAF 3 Squadron F-35A and the US Marine Corps MV-22B Osprey, which left Angus equally thrilled. Angus was then given a special guided tour of an RAAF 37 Squadron C-17A Globemaster III, where he was even given the opportunity to sit in the cockpit of the aircraft and have the controls explained. Angus' dad, Nick, said it was a day his son will never forget. 'Angus loves everything about aviation, and for him to be immersed in it like this is a real treat,' he said.

Angus, from the Starlight Children's Foundation, tries on an F-35A helmet with the help of Corporal Daniel Lake, a 3 Squadron life support fitter, at the Pitch Black open day at RAAF Base Darwin.
Photos: Sergeant David Gibbs

I asked my wife why she married me. She replied 'Because you're funny.'
I said, 'I thought it was because I was good in bed.'
She said, 'See? You're hilarious!'

The Heritage of the C-130 Hercules

From Col Coyne, President 37SQN (RAAF) Association

On the 23 August 2024 Lockheed Martin celebrated the 70th Anniversary since the inaugural test flight of the Hercules prototype, the YC-130, from the Lockheed Air Terminal in Burbank, California.

70 years apart ~ The first and the latest model C-130 Hercules depart the Lockheed Air Terminal in Burbank, CA.

The Lockheed Model 82 was developed as a result of a USAF Request for Proposal (RFP) to Boeing, Fairchild, Douglas and Lockheed Aircraft Corporations. Within two months Lockheed aeronautical design team led by Willis Hawkins took the largest vehicle to be carried, a tank, drew a circle around it, elongated the circle to the size of a railway boxcar, 41ft, put wings, a nose and a tail on it, there was the basic design.

Hawkins boss, Kelly Johnson, looked at the specification and the aircraft model and said to their boss, Hall Hibbard 'If you send this proposal in, you'll destroy the Lockheed Company.' Hawkins said 'Kelly didn't like it because it didn't go Mach 3 or shoot or drop bombs, but we finally convinced Hibbard: the thing is due, we have to get it mailed today. So, we did. And lo and behold, we won.' And the rest, as we know, is history; the longest production medium airlift platform still in production.

The now designated C-130 'Hercules' went into production at the Lockheed facility in Marietta, Georgia with the first production C-130A taking to the skies from a runway shared by Lockheed and Dobbins Air Force Base (now Air Reserve Base) on 7 April 1955. The Lockheed Martin Corporation was formed by the merger of Lockheed Corporation with Martin Marietta in March 1995. To this day, the Lockheed Martin facility has produced over 2,700 variants of the Hercules, with the latest version, the C-130J, accumulating in excess of three million flight hours since 1995.

37SQN and Lockheed Martin Anniversaries

On 24 August the No 37 Squadron (RAAF) Association hosted a function at the Royal Hotel in Richmond NSW to celebrate both Lockheed Martin's 70th Anniversary since the YC-130 test flight, and 37SQN's 25 years of C-130J-30 operations.

The gathering included current and former RAAF C-130A, E, H and J-30 aircrew, maintenance personnel and support staff who have contributed to the Air Force's Hercules operations since the arrival of the first C-130As in December 1958. The function attendees included the 37SQN

Association Patron, AVM Roxley McLennan AO [Retd]; WGCDR Robyn Clay-Williams [Retd] the RAAF C-130J-30 Test Pilot embedded in Marietta 1995-99; GPCAPT James Blagg [Retd] the C-130J-30 Test Flight Engineer; WGCDR Ken McLeod [Retd] the C-130J-30 Resident Engineering Officer; GPCAPT Matt Cooper, current OC 84WG who was also the then flight lieutenant delivery pilot of A97-465 and 468 in 2000; GPCAPT Andy Doyle [Retd] former OC ALSPO and currently LMCO Business Development Manager, Aust & NZ; and Ms Nicole Davidson, Senior Program Manager C-130J TLS Office, RAAF Base Richmond NSW.

The 37SQN fleet of 12 C-130J-30 Hercules will begin being retired, with the first of 20 new C-130J-30 Hercules scheduled to arrive at RAAF Base Richmond NSW in early 2028. With an airframe service life of 30 years, these Hercules will see the centenary of type in 2054. 37SQN (RAAF) Association was pleased to host WGCDR Brad Scott, CO 40SQN RNZAF and SQNLDR Max Longdill, 40SQN C-130J Training Officer, with our Kiwi compatriots preparing to receive the first of five C-130J-30 Hercules later this month (September 2024). The RNZAF aircraft are fitted with electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) cameras and a Ka-band wide bandwidth, high-speed satellite communications (satcom) system. The new Australian C-130J-30 will have the same systems upgraded to latest technology when they begin to arrive in 2028.

Hercs Reach 25-Year Milestone

Reprinted with permission from CONTACT magazine

Bigger, faster, stronger … that was the hope 25 years ago for Air Mobility Group's addition of 12 C-130Js at RAAF Base Richmond, and they have worked tirelessly to deliver. Ultimately replacing the E model, the C-130J offered increased capability with its added length allowing an increase in capacity, fitting 30 per cent more cargo and 128 troops or 92 paratroopers, compared to 90 troops or 64 paratroopers in the C-130E. The upgrades also enabled a smaller crew. The E model required five, while the modernised J model needs only three – two pilots and a loadmaster.

With more than 65 years of collective C-130J experience between them, Officer Commanding 84 Wing, Group Captain Matthew Cooper, and 37 Squadron Loadmasters Warrant Officers Paul Ross and Steven Pugsley, remember the introduction of the C-130J over the two-year period from September 7, 1999. 'On graduation from pilot's course in June 1998, I was posted to 36 Squadron to fly the C-130H and was subsequently cross-qualified on the C-130E as a co-pilot,' Group Captain Cooper said. 'In August 1999, I was offered the opportunity to transition to the C-130J, and I commenced training at the Lockheed Martin C-130 facility in Marietta, Georgia, United States, as one of the second cadre of flight crews.' Warrant Officer Pugsley was part of the same cadre, conducted over seven weeks during August to September 1999. 'It involved theory components on C-130J – in particular the differences between the C-130E/H short aircraft and the new C-130J stretched aircraft, combined with 20 hours flying time for loadmasters,' Warrant Officer Pugsley said.

Air Force's C-130J Hercules aircraft number A97-464 flies over the Hawkesbury area in NSW. This was the first of 12 delivered to RAAF Base Richmond.

Story by Tastri Murdoch

Prior to arrival at RAAF Base Richmond, the new fleet was put through its paces, with numerous test flights and evaluation sorties. 'My first flight as crew on a C-130J occurred a few months before the first one was delivered to RAAF Richmond. I was lucky enough to be selected for a C-130J aircrew workload assessment to assess the workload changes due to the reduced aircrew on the C-130J,' Warrant Officer Pugsley said. While still under training, Group Captain Cooper's first flight was on September 7, 1999, while in the US. 'It was about four hours long and was primarily an aircraft system familiarisation flight,' he said. 'I was also fortunate to be a part of the delivery crew for the A97-465 in January 2000 and A97-468 in May 2000, from Marietta to RAAF Richmond.'

Warrant Officer Ross, initially an all-trades aircraft mechanic (re-mustering to loadmaster in 2008), also spent time in the US to complete the C-130J aircraft mechanic conversion course. Warrant Officer Ross recalls: 'They were initially busy times at 37 Squadron as we were still operating C-130Es as the Js arrived, but the squadron was very excited about the new model'.

Celebrating this significant milestone, the 37 Squadron C-130J fleet still plays a crucial role in transporting and air dropping troops and cargo, often using short, unsurfaced runways in protection of national interests, and in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR). For example, Operation Falconer, Catalyst, Slipper, Accordion, Highroad and Okra (Middle East Operations from 2001 – 2021), Operation Tamar (Rwanda), the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) Operations, and Operation Beech. The Hercules also worked with international partners to deliver humanitarian assistance such as Pakistan Assist, Yasi Assist, Philippines Assist, Padang Assist, Bali Assist, Fiji Assist, Bush Fire Assist 20 and Flood Assists 20/21/22/23, and more recently Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia, Cyclone Megan, Borroloola and Tonga in 2024.

The three members have crossed over operations throughout the years, but some key experiences have remained with them. 'The deployments to the Middle East stand out the most as they were lengthy deployments. The flying was often varied and had an increased risk due to the dynamic environment we were flying into, but it was equally both challenging and fulfilling,' Warrant Officer Pugsley said. Warrant Officer Ross said: 'The stand out for me was in 2014 when

we air-dropped supplies to thousands of displaced persons onto Mt Sinjar in Northern Iraq, as part of an HADR'.

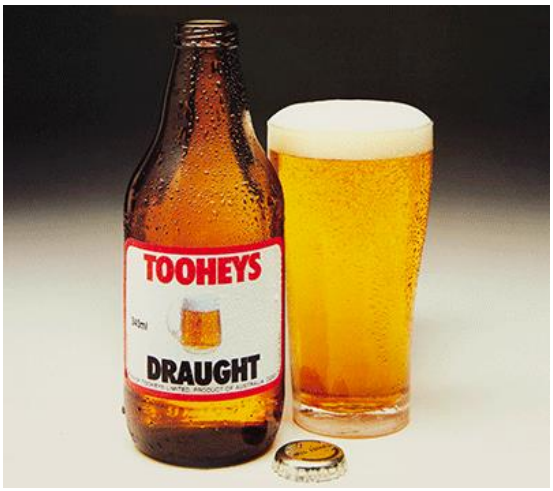
During Operation Yasi Assist 2011, when the scale and trajectory of Cyclone Yasi became clearer, Group Captain Cooper said they were dispatched late in the afternoon to Cairns Hospital. 'We sat on the ground for a lengthy period of time as ambulatory, wheelchair bound and litter patients slowly arrived and were loaded on board for transport to Brisbane,' he said. 'I remember the strong sense of achievement having landed in Brisbane and watching the sun rise after a very long night. I feel incredibly privileged and proud to have been a part of the C-130J story since its introduction to service and will watch with interest as it transitions from one generation of aircraft to the next in the coming years.'

Warrant Officer Paul Ross, Group Captain Matthew Cooper and Warrant Officer Steven Pugsley mark the 25th anniversary of 37 Squadron's C-130J Hercules operations at RAAF Base Richmond, NSW

9SQN Pie and Stubby Nights – Vung Tau, 1971

From John Clarkson

Although the Australian catering staff performed admirably in preparing palatable food from the U.S. Army rations, there were two types of food and/or drink which we Australians missed: one was the ordinary meat pie, and the other was the privilege of drinking beer from a glass container. As all beer in Vietnam was from a steel can, the fellows thought it sheer luxury to drink from a glass stubby.



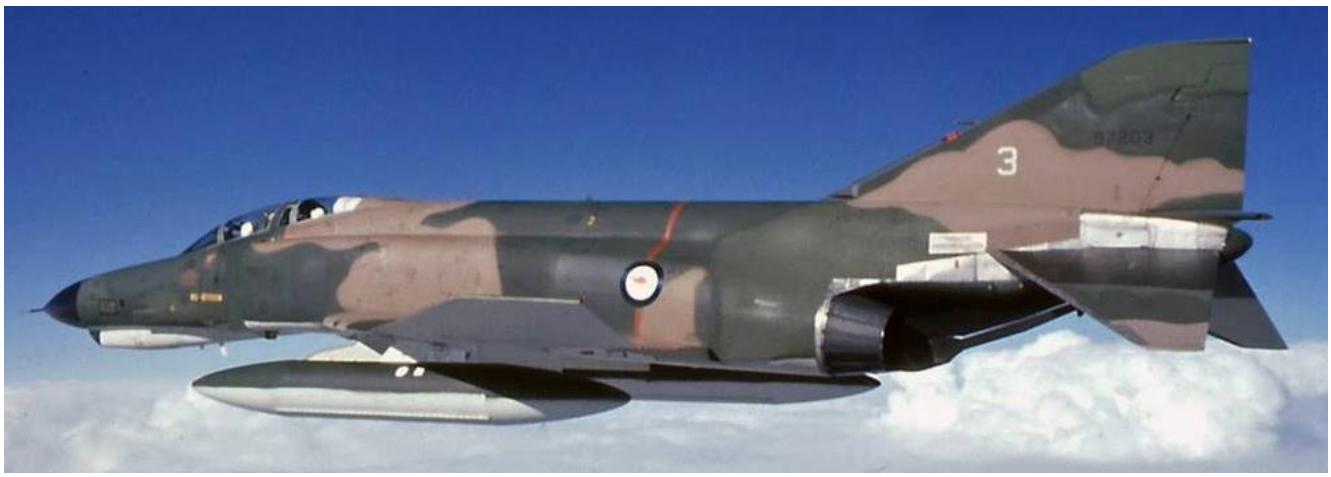
So, on about four occasions throughout the year, a special function was organised, called the 'Pie and Stubby' night. This function took an immense amount of logistical organization to complete. The first step was to conduct a search for a reliable fellow who was about to take his R & R in the Sydney area. Then some funds from the squadron social club were given to him along with some very precise instructions. On arrival in Sydney, (after he had completed his urgent marital duties of course), he was to contact Sergeants Pies or

Four n Twenty Pies, and order about five trays of assorted meat pies. These trays were to be delivered to Sydney International airport for dispatch on the same PAN-AM flight on which he was to return to Vietnam. In addition, he was to order from a local bottle shop, a large number of cartons of Tooheys Draught glass stubbies.

As for the pies, the beer cartons were to be delivered to Sydney International airport for dispatch on the same PAN-AM flight on which he was to return to Vietnam. PAN-AM Airlines was then advised of the extra cargo for the return flight from Sydney to Saigon. On arrival at Saigon, the 'courier' was to supervise the transfer of his precious cargo from the PAN-AM aircraft to the waiting Caribou for the flight to Vung Tau. On arrival at Vung Tau, the precious cargo of pies and beers was loaded into the hangar fridges and the entertainment was set for the evening. These 'Pie & Stubby' nights were really something to behold.

14 September 1970 - F-4 Phantoms Arrived as Stopgap

This material is compiled from various sources including the History and Heritage Branch–Air Force, the RAAF Museum, the Australian War Memorial, ADF Serials and www.ozatwar.com. The History and Heritage Branch–Air Force is not responsible for pre-1921 items. Whilst every effort is made to confirm the accuracy of the entries, any discrepancies are solely the responsibility of the originator. As I am not a member of History and Heritage Branch-Air Force, all Air Force history or heritage queries should be directed, in the first instance, to airforce.history@defence.gov.au



Delays in the delivery of F-111s to Australia prompted the Government to seek an interim aircraft to fulfil the RAAF's strike needs. Twenty-four F-4E Phantom aircraft were obtained under a lease arrangement with the US, and RAAF personnel attended intensive training on the aircraft with the USAF. The first five aircraft arrived at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland, on this day, with the remaining aircraft arriving over the next few weeks. Although not as advanced as the F-111, the supersonic F-4E provided a substantial leap in technology and capability compared to the superseded Canberra, and provided the RAAF with experience on the systems and maintenance of a modern strike aircraft. In June 1973 the first F-111Cs arrived at Amberley and the last of the Phantoms were returned to the US soon after – less one aircraft lost with its crew off Evans Head, NSW, in 1971.

SACTU 25th Birthday Celebration

From WGCDR Michelle McDermott, CO SACTU and WOFF Cassandra Grace, WOFF TRNG/USTANEVELA

Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU) celebrated its 25th Anniversary on Friday 9th August 2024. The unit marked the occasion with multiple activities, commencing with a breakfast at the unit with 41WG Historian Mr Andrew 'Jimbo' Stewart. Jimbo enthusiastically shared some thoughts, facts and personal stories, summarising the unit's proud history. He shared his knowledge of the early days, tracing its origins back to July 1941 when No. 1 Radio School (later Radar School) was established, and then the formation of No. 2 Fighter Sector in February 1942.

Former and current COs of SACTU: L-R GPCAPT Mark Barry, WGCDR Clarrie Briese, AIRCDRE Lou DesJardins, WGCDR Michelle McDermott

In the evening, the unit celebrated the anniversary with a cocktail event at the Newcastle Town Hall, with musical accompaniment by the Australian Army Band. This was a fantastic evening of great music, food and shared memories which provided an opportunity for past and present staff to come together and celebrate the unit's achievements over the past 25 years.

Mr Drew Harrison and his artwork

To commemorate the anniversary, the unit commissioned artist Mr Drew Harrison to create a unique artwork to mark this special occasion. The hand painted artwork took eight weeks to complete, and was inspired by the many aspects of SACTU training. The artwork was unveiled during the cocktail event to an enthusiastic crowd; guests impressed at the intricate details and the message it conveys. The artwork now hangs in the Unit Foyer for all to admire on entry to SACTU.

Canberra Bomber Soars in Queensland Skies

Reprinted with permission from CONTACT magazine

100 Squadron English Electric Canberra bomber TT heritage aircraft flies over the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre in Queensland.

Story by Flight Lieutenant Kristi Adam. Photo by Aaron Turvey

Crew of the 100 Squadron Canberra bomber put on a display above the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre on Vietnam Veterans' Day on August 18 while in Queensland for the Gold Coast Pacific Airshow. The Canberra pilot visited the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre after the flight, with many recognising the familiar face of former Chief of Defence Force Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Mark Binskin. 'It was an honour to fly the Canberra into RAAF Amberley, an iconic aircraft that has such a deep connection with so many current and previous serving members,' Air Chief Marshal Binskin said. 'The Aviation Heritage Centre has done a fantastic job of highlighting all of the Air Force's achievements, but especially how critical our Canberras were in supporting the ground forces in Vietnam.'

The heritage aircraft is painted as a 2 Squadron Canberra bomber, as used in Vietnam. It is based in Temora where the engineers at the Temora Aviation Museum maintain it, and is the only one in the world of its kind still flying. Officer in charge of the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre Wing Commander Kevin Kovic was also excited to see the Canberra flying above Amberley. 'Sunday August 18 as Vietnam Veterans' Day holds significance for a number of the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre volunteers as veterans themselves,' he said. 'To once again have a Canberra bomber in the skies over RAAF Amberley on this day provided them a degree of both memories and nostalgia, especially our members who either flew in them, maintained them or guarded them during the conflict.'

The English Electric Canberra primarily served as a light bomber and reconnaissance aircraft but it was able to be adapted for various missions, including tactical bombing, photo reconnaissance, electronic warfare, and more. Despite being an early jet aircraft, the Canberra remained in service for several decades, operating from 1951 to 1982. The Canberra proved especially valuable to Air Force in Vietnam, where operators flew the Canberra lower than the altitude prescribed in US doctrine, increasing bombing precision to support troops on the ground.

Three static Canberra aircraft are on display at RAAF Amberley and one came to the rescue of Temora Aviation Museum maintenance staff when the 100 Squadron Canberra suffered a fault in the fuel actuator the day prior to the display. The maintenance crew were able to use the fuel actuator from the display Canberra to investigate the fault, allowing them to fix the issue without having to pull parts off the aircraft.

Air Chief Marshal (retd) Mark Binskin with the Temora Aviation Museum engineering team in front of the 100 Squadron English Electric Canberra bomber TT heritage aircraft at RAAF Base Amberley in Queensland.
Photo by Flight Lieutenant Kristi Adam.

From the annals of Maritime Aviation

From John Clarkson

For the benefit of those unfamiliar with maritime aviation, the crew of a P3-B Orion aircraft would normally consist of two pilots, (one as Captain the other as Co-Pilot, both commissioned officers), several Air Electronics Officers (to man the array of electronic surveillance devices on board) and one Flight Engineer (a SNCO). (for extra-long sectors an extra Flight Engineer would be part of the crew).

RAAF P3-B

On this occasion, the crew had landed at a US Navy base in the early evening and after securing the aircraft were taken by the US Navy duty driver to their respective messes for the evening. Each of the crew was wearing their flying suits, as well as their flying jackets, each having their rank on their jackets, as well as their brevet (wing or half wing) on the breast pocket of their jacket. In each case, the crew member's name was printed on the breast pocket of their jacket. In

the case of the Flight Engineer, his first name was Colin, therefore, on his pocket was printed 'Col *surname* – Flight Engineer'.

When the US Navy duty driver collected all the crew in his mini-van, he looked at each of the crew members to ascertain which mess to go to. He looked at the Flight Engineer and said, 'If you don't mind sir, I shall take these gentlemen to the Officers' Mess, then I can take you around to the Senior Officers' Mess'. Almost immediately, the aircraft captain tried to correct the driver, but the Flight Engineer motioned to the captain saying 'Don't say anything!' So, the driver stopped at the Officers' Mess and all the officers went into their mess. Then the driver went around to the Senior Officers' Mess and introduced Col to the staff. Apparently, the driver saw the pocket of the Flight Engineer, which read, 'Col *surname* – Flight Engineer', and thought he was a full Colonel.

The following morning, the duty driver picked up most of the crew from the Officers' Mess then went to the Senior Officers' Mess and picked up Col, the Flight Engineer. When they arrived at the aircraft, poor Col received a fearful teasing from the rest of the crew. Col simply answered by saying he was treated very well and his room service was excellent!

Wallaby Airlines Remembered

Reprinted with permission from CONTACT magazine

Retired Caribou aviators and 35 Squadron Association members with a restored de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou at the RAAF Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.

Story by Flight Lieutenant Rob Hodgson. Photos by Sergeant Peter Borys

On a cold, wet morning at RAAF Base Amberley, 35 Squadron Association members gathered to commemorate a significant event for the unit and Australia – the 60th anniversary of the deployment of RAAF Caribou aircraft to Vietnam. The Caribou was a twin-engine short take-off and landing (STOL) tactical transport. Its STOL performance, rugged construction and ability to lift useful payloads out of short, rough airstrips made it ideal for its primary role of supporting troops in the field.

First introduced into service in 1964, six aircraft in the initial batch flew directly from the manufacturer in Canada into active service in Vietnam. These were designated the RAAF Transport Support Flight Vietnam and renamed 35 Squadron two years later. Based out of Vung Tau and known as 'Wallaby Airlines', it was the first RAAF unit to serve in Vietnam and the last to withdraw in 1972.

During their Vietnam service, these Caribous carried more than 700,000 passengers and 41,300 tonnes of freight while logging 79,739 sorties and 47,000 flying hours. This outstanding effort was a testament to the dedication of ground crews and their willingness to work very long hours to keep the aircraft operating, as well as the endurance of the aircrew – sometimes flying up to 10 sorties per day.

Retired Caribou aviators sit inside a restored de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou

On August 15, 35 Squadron Association members got the chance to get up close and personal with one of their old Caribous at the Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre. For the association's members who flew and maintained the aircraft in Vietnam, it was an emotional reunion. Former pilot William Baggett reflected on flying the Caribou in Vietnam. 'We were really the only aircraft that flew the whole country – we were everywhere,' Mr Baggett said. 'The tempo of flying was very high, and when we got back in the late afternoon our ground crews would have to work late into the night to keep the aircraft flying – it didn't let up.'

The nature of the daily tasking involved a gamut of unusual loads being carried. 'If we were loading cattle and cabbages, we quickly learnt to keep them separated or there would be no cabbages left when we landed,' former loadmaster Aussie Pratt joked.

The Caribou soldiered on with the RAAF until 2009 – largely due to the aircraft being almost irreplaceable due to its terrific STOL qualities. It could be argued that the Caribou was Air Force's most successful aircraft type based on the requirements.

The tour would not have been complete without visiting the current headquarters of the squadron, where the unit now flies the C-27J Spartan aircraft. The Spartan's role essentially mirrors that of the Caribou, providing the ADF with a modernised light tactical transport capability. A recent example of the crucial role the C-27J plays for Australia and the region was delivery of humanitarian aid to the remote area of Wapenamanda in the Papua New Guinea highlands, which had been devastated by an enormous mudslide. Its ability to provide this aid, using rough and ready airstrips in hard to reach locations, greatly assisted the response to the disaster.

Wing Commander Mark Seery welcomed the 35 Squadron Association members. 'No 35 Squadron is the home of Wallaby Airlines and it is truly our honour to welcome these former members back as we continue to follow the proud traditions of the aviators who came before.' Wing Commander Seery said.

11SQN Orion P3-B, RAAF Base Pearce, 1979

From John Clarkson

A small example of just how close the ground crew became, is an incident which occurred at RAAF Base Pearce in Western Australia. The Flight Line 'hut' was a tent alongside the taxiway near the end of the runway. One of the aircraft departed on a night submarine hunting flight, but returned to the dispersal area within minutes of its departure. However, the pilot had not switched off the brilliant white anticollision strobe light prior to re-entering the dispersal area.

He had called for a radio technician to meet the aircraft and discuss an avionics problem. The radio technician - a junior chap - immediately walked out of the tent toward the aircraft, which still had all engines running, although they had feathered the port side engines and lowered the steps for the technician. However, the young tech was accustomed to seeing the Orion with the outboard engines, (Nos 1 and 4) closed down when taxiing in after a flight. On this occasion, all four engines were still running and worse still, the No 4 propeller, with the aircraft strobe light flashing behind it, made it appear stationary.

Our young technician came within five feet of walking into a running propeller, saved only when another more experienced ground crewman tackled him to the ground. A life was saved in the nick of time and a very serious lesson was learned by both ground and air crews.

From Renaissance to Rock!

From Ben Simon, Flight Lieutenant (AAFC), Flight Commander 344 Musicians Flight

Get ready for an unforgettable musical experience! The talented cadets and staff from 344 Musicians Flight Australian Air Force Cadets will take you on a thrilling musical journey, from the elegant sounds of the Renaissance to the electrifying beats of Rock, and everything in between!

The spectacular *Renaissance to Rock* will feature the incredible 50-piece concert band from 344 Musicians Flight, as well as some of our amazing friends from the Australian Army Cadet Band - Sydney. And for the first time, we will showcase our stunning newly formed String Group! 344 Musicians Flight is made up of dedicated cadets and staff from AAFC units within NSW and the ACT. *Renaissance to Rock!* will showcase the impressive hard work the band has made during our

October 2024 Musicians Course, held at nearby RAAF Base Richmond from September 29 to October 6.

344 Flight first started in 2015, and we've been growing significantly since. We've had lots of great support from lots of organisations including Ron and the amazing team from RAAF Association NSW, such as donating a new sword to us for our band officer to use, and arranging for our cadet band to lead the RAAF serving personnel in the Sydney Anzac parade.

Gently (with a sledge hammer!) does it

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RAAF Fairbairn-based No 34 Squadron Mystere 20 VIP aircraft had a windscreen consisting of five laminations of glass about 1.5 inches thick. The windscreens were secured by about 200 machine screws into the airframe and 'gooped' with fuel tank sealant for pressurisation sealing. Replacement was usually conducted at the next D or R5 Servicing, which occurred annually. To replace them when the de-icing/de-misting filament failed, or delamination bubbles appeared, once the screws were removed a sledge hammer had to be used to break the seal to remove the windscreen.

A windscreen replacement usually attracted a big crowd, as it was both rare and spectacular to watch a tradesman hit an aircraft with a 14lb sledge hammer at full swing about 20 times per windscreen. The tradesman was under considerable pressure, given the crowd - which usually comprised most of the unit from the Commanding Officer down - and a RAAF photographer to record it.

ANZAC Spirit in Rugby League

From WOFF Adam Swan, Wing Warrant Officer Number 41 Wing

LAC Chris Timoti from the Surveillance and Control Training Unit (SACTU) at RAAF Williamtown, had the distinct honour of representing both Australia and the ADF in the ANZAC Day clash against the valiant New Zealand Defence Force. During the training camp, the ADF and the NZDF visited Sydney's War Memorial at Hyde Park; two nations stood side by side, not as adversaries but as comrades, bound by history and respect.

The week-long training camp was a crucible of determination, where physical prowess and mental fortitude were tested to their limits. Members forged bonds from all across Australia, uniting personnel from all three services into a singular, indomitable force. The challenge was monumental, yet through unwavering solidarity, the ADF team triumphed with a hard-fought victory, 22-18.

LAC Timoti is front row, 4th from left

LAC Timoti has been selected in the Australian team, for the Pacific tour in PNG. The ADF league teams, alongside the NRL Prime Minister's XIII and the National Schools teams prepare to face the PNG Defence Force and the PNG national side. In LAC Timoti's words, it's more than a game; it's a representation of the strength and spirit of SACTU and the RAAF, a chance to showcase my resilience and unity on an international stage at the end of the year.

Sir Winston Churchill Quotes

Lady Astor to Churchill: 'If you were my husband, I'd poison your coffee!'
Churchill to Lady Astor: 'If you were my wife, I'd drink it!'

'Winston you're drunk', said Bessy Braddock, Socialist member for Liverpool.
Bessie, you're ugly, and tomorrow morning I'll be sober but you'll still be ugly' retorted Churchill.

A 'Hairy' Ride!

From Warren O'Grady

One of my secondary duties at 2OCU, Williamtown was Macchi Maintenance Test Pilot. On a night Navy fleet support mission out of NAS (Naval Air Station) Nowra, the pilot aborted the sortie and RTB (Returned to Base) to Nowra due to sever engine vibrations. I positioned to Nowra the next day to test fly the suspect aircraft and, if acceptable, return it to Williamtown for further technical investigation. Having debriefed the pilot, I got airborne and flew the same profile that was flown the previous night whilst remaining overhead Nowra airfield just in case of any problems. I could not replicate the engine issue, so decided to transit back to Williamtown.

An impending cold front with severe weather (a southerly buster) was moving northward up the coast and threatening the southern outskirts of Sydney, so I was keen to depart for Williamtown ASAP. Having climbed through pre-frontal cirrus cloud, I levelled at 15,000ft and left the throttle at 100% RPM to accelerate to max speed for transit. The aircraft stabilised at just above climb speed at 210kts, instead of accelerating to approximately 300kts. Engine parameters were all stable and normal. This was not good. I initiated a left turn to return to Nowra and slowly reduced the throttle to set 98% RPM (max continuous from memory). This was accompanied by a loud 'whump'; the aircraft bucked violently and all engine parameters decayed rapidly. The engine had flamed out. Because I was above a solid under-cast of cloud, I requested a vector from Sydney Control to Wollongong airfield, as the cold front was closing in on Nowra.

They say God looks after drunks and little children, but in this case, he was looking after me! Sydney vectored me to the over-head, where a hole opened and directly below me, was Wollongong airport (now called Shellharbour Airport). By this time, I had managed to relight the engine, but the ferocity of the flameout had me worried that the engine had been badly damaged so I set up for a steep spiral, engine-out forced landing down through this miraculously

appearing hole in the cloud. As I descended, a light twin aircraft appeared on downwind under me, so I asked Sydney to alert him to my presence. He subsequently broke off his approach and was not seen again! Once down through the magic tube in the cloud, I managed to decelerate to approach speed and successfully landed without further incident.

I had lost communications with Sydney as I descended, so I found a telephone (ahem, this was pre-mobile phones) and cancelled SAR (Search and Rescue) by landline. Sydney had alerted the Emergency Services and I was met by police, ambulance and the fire brigade. All were extremely helpful and the police offered to give me a lift back to Nowra after I had 'buttoned up' the jet for the night. By this time, the heavens had opened and it was bucketing down. I have got to say, the 'hairiest' part of that day was a ride in the patrol car in the pouring rain on a dark and stormy night!

Hidden SA Art Gallery Illustrates Australian Colonial and Wartime History

From Prue Anthony, Sunderland Association Newsletter, by Catherine Heuzenroeder, ABC Riverland

Hidden away in SA's Renmark is a gallery packed full with art depicting Australian folklore and history. Frank Harding was a self-taught artist who, like his contemporary Pro Hart, painted prolifically to preserve Australian folklore and history on canvas. The two artists were peers, friends and, it turns out, distant cousins.

The late Frank Harding was a prolific South Australian artist who died in 1990 at the age of 55. A large volume of his work hangs inside a gallery in his hometown of Renmark. Born in rural Victoria, he tried his hand at shearing before becoming a police officer and detective in South Australia for 19 years. In 1975 he decided to make painting his profession. "I think there were a lot of people saying 'good luck' when he told them he was leaving the police to paint," his widow Nan Harding said. But his paintings were enough to support his family and he worked tirelessly from his Renmark home, opening a gallery to the public and exhibiting his work across Australia and even in London. 'We had an exhibition in London in 1975 and there were 80–90 paintings and they sold out in the first 10 minutes,' Ms Harding said. 'It was more than a hobby, he relied on selling paintings to feed his family.' The similarities with Pro Hart are apparent. 'A lot of people compare his work with Pro Hart's, they are very similar but Pro Hart was more of stick figure person, Dad was more of a fuller figure person,' daughter Megan Harding said.

Supplied: Harding Family

The entrance to the Frank Harding gallery gives no indication of the treasure trove of paintings and historic memorabilia hidden inside. The Renmark gallery is easy to miss. Entry is off a long brick wall free of signage (for fear of vandalism) and there is only one small street sign to notify tourists of the gallery's existence. Step inside and every wall and the entire ceiling is covered with paintings. 'This is considered in bad taste, because there's no space,' Nan Harding gestures around at the display. In the front room alone, there are hundreds of paintings: depictions of Australian colonial bushrangers, the Victorian gold-rush, and the centenary of Renmark.

ABC Riverland: Catherine Heuzenroeder

Out the back is Harding's former studio and here hangs a series titled *We Flew for the King* which features dozens of images of Australian WWII pilots in action. Each painting depicts an actual event and has been signed and authenticated by the pilot. One is Renmark's own Tom Angove, depicted in 1944 while flying a Walrus HD-818 as he took part in the rescue of a downed P-39 pilot. Harding spent about five years working on the series. 'Most of these pilots he met, and he actually took the paintings to them to make sure they were totally correct, because a lot of the pilots put adjustments on their planes so they weren't all the same,' Megan Harding said. 'He was still working on them up until he passed away in 1990. He was going to start doing more on the Vietnam War but unfortunately didn't get to do it.' The best estimate is that Harding has left behind more than 5,000 paintings and Ms Harding is determined that they will remain available for generations to come. 'They will remain here in Renmark for future family members to be in charge of.'

About the previous Issue's 'A bit of 11SQN's History'

From Steve Keddie

John Clarkson sent in the photo of the four generations of sub-hunters featured in SITREP 29, but didn't know anything about the photo: here Steve Keddie reveals all.

The occasion was the arrival of the first Poseidon aircraft to RAAF Edinburgh in November 2016. On Monday, the 28th of Nov, the four aircraft took off to an area north of Adelaide to do the photo shoot from a PC-9 chase aircraft. Because of the speed difference between the Catalina and the other three aircraft, the Catalina did its own race-track like circuit. The other three aircraft flew in formation around the outside of the Catalina's pattern, travelling at a

greater speed. As the three aircraft formation came up to pass the Catalina, the photos were taken. This routine happened two or three times.

I was in the Neptune at the time and took the attached picture from one of its rear windows showing the Orion, Poseidon and PC9.

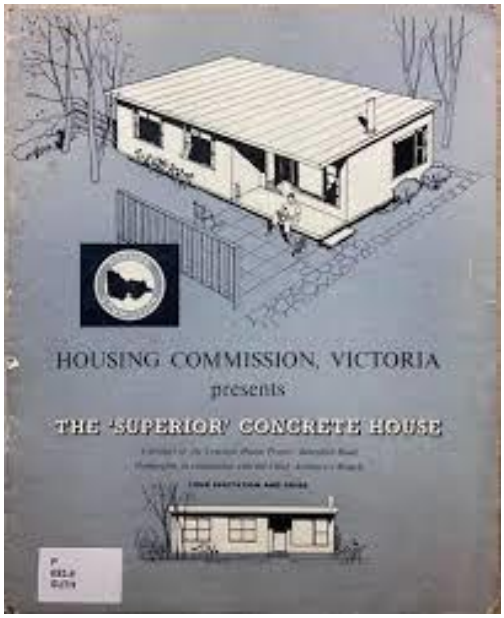
The other two pictures are of the four aircraft on the ground at Edinburgh.

Married Quarter Experience – the late 1960s

From John Clarkson

We were posted from Butterworth to the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) in October 1968. This small story tells a lot about the quality of married quarters at Laverton, which were supplied by the Victorian Housing Commission. One of the more disappointing features of being posted to Laverton was the terrible Housing Commission Married Quarters there.

We were to find that the size and quality of the married quarters for the Laverton personnel ranged from comfortable brick homes of about 12 to 14 squares (112 - 130 square metres) in size, down to very small, solid slab concrete houses of four rooms whose total size was just over six squares (55 square metres). Yes, as we were still defined as newly married and had no children, we were allocated one of the smallest married quarters in their stock. My wife and I were allocated a small (about six or seven square) concrete house. It had a small lounge, small kitchen, two small bedrooms, and a bathroom. The hot water was supplied from a 'Briquette' heater which one had to clean out and light every day. The walls were solid concrete, and during winter, being very cold outside and an electric heater inside, there was condensation running down all the inside walls.



One of our armourers, who we may call Bill, had a similar married quarter in Werribee. In their case, the little concrete house was to contain two adults and two small children. However, his wife Doris, wrote to the State Minister of Health complaining that the condensation and cracks in the concrete rendered the house a health risk for the children, but she didn't tell Bill that she had written the letter. (consider that in those days, members of the Defence Forces were not permitted to write to Members of Parliament)

About three weeks after writing the letter, on a dismal drizzly day, Doris received a visitor, none other than the State Minister of Health, accompanied by several of his ministerial team. The day could not have been better. Stagnant water in the back yard, mosquitoes breeding in the back yard, condensation running down the inside walls, light visible between the kitchen wall and the floor and both kids with running noses. The Minister simply announced the house as 'Condemned'! Doris asked if she could have this in writing and the Minister wrote the letter there and then.

When Bill arrived home from work, he was given this letter by Doris in complete surprise. He photocopied it many times and ensured both the Base Housing Section and the Commissioner of Housing in Victoria received copies. The final response was simply a statement that the Housing Commission now had 49 condemned houses instead of 48.

Aeronautical Engineering Training 'Endorsement'

From Chris Beazley

A group of aeronautical engineering professors was invited to fly for free on a new aircraft that was just being introduced. As the door was closing and the plane was about to take off, a

voice over the intercom said: 'Thank you for your confidence in taking the inaugural flight on this new aircraft. It was designed and built by all of your students over this past year.'

All the professors began to unbuckle their seatbelts and make their way to the exit door of the plane, with the exception of one, who remained calmly seated with a smile on his face. One of the professors who was standing in line to exit the plane asked him why he wasn't getting off of the plane, knowing that it was built by some of his recent students. The Professor replied, 'Because they are our students.' Another professor who was standing close by asked, 'So you are sure that you taught your students well enough to build this?' The sitting professor smiled and said, 'No, I'm not sure, but I AM sure that it won't fly.'

You know you are getting old when "friends with benefits" means having someone who can drive at night.

Workplace Nicknames

From Chris Beazley

I have worked with all these guys during my career...

'4n20' – 4 days work and 20 years experience.

'CRAFT' - Can't remember a f***ing thing.

'Fractions' – Does 2/5ths of f**k all.

'Cyclone' – Slow moving depression.

'Treacle' – Slow moving and thick.

'Scarecrow' – Just stands around all day and watches.

'Minerals' - Silver in his hair, gold in his teeth and lead in his arse.

'Limo' – Carries about eight blokes.

'Chainsaw' – Hard to start and stops for no reason.

'Noodles' – Thinks all jobs take two minutes.

'Cordless' – Charges all night but only works for two hours.

'Drill bit' – A small boring tool.

'Perth' – Two hours behind everyone else.

'007' – 0 motivation, 0 skills and 7 toilet breaks.

'The Judge' - always sitting on a case.

Bang 'n Bang

By Brendan Roberts, Reprinted with permission from 'Lizards that Flew'

On 30 October 1968, around mid-day, I was having trouble undoing my flying boots. The knots weren't stuck, but my hands wouldn't stop shaking, and my fingers no longer worked. I was in the ward of RAAF Williamtown sick quarters, trying to get out of my gear, and a sympathetic nursing sister lent a hand. I wasn't used to this.

This was not the enjoyable scenario of an hour beforehand. Way back then, I'd been the proud leader of a 3 Squadron four-ship of pointy-nosed Mirages on Saltash Range doing what we did best - dropping bombs and firing our twin 30mm Defa cannons. Just like the movies. Better, actually. But not now. Now, my back was aching something fierce, nothing much elsewhere was working properly, and I was feeling pretty second-hand, frankly. Much worse, the RAAF was now another Mirage short: I knew that for an absolute fact, and it didn't make me feel good at all.

I started thinking back. We'd arrived on the range in good order - all neatly stacked in echelon right for a pitch-out to the left on to 'downwind' for the normal bombing and gunnery lefthand oval racetrack 'follow-the-leader' pattern. 'Prison Cobra' was here for six passes of lay-down skip-bombing, followed by 120 rounds of 10deg dive 30mm strafe, and we weren't going to miss too often were we (because we were absolute aces). The bombing was uneventful, except everyone had the normal difficulty of getting down to the requisite 50ft 123 'altitude' above ground. At 420 knots, or roughly 800kph, 50 feet appeared to be about the height of your average car seat. The target was set in the middle of the main centre 'road' of the range, and the only effective way I found of achieving the correct height was to imagine I was driving a Mack truck at high speed down that road. If I did that, then Frank Fry, the Range Safety Officer of the day, might duly report success from his theodolite.

Now to the strafing. Really good fun, strafing. 10-15deg dive, about 420-450kts speed, open fire 600m, cease fire no less than 400m then pull-up with about 4g to about 30-40deg of climb to avoid any ricochets by the steel 30mm shells just fired or lying on the ground. Thence left on to downwind to 2000 ft for another go. Trick always was to see the fall of shot, so that you could adjust for the next pass if necessary. This required some pretty exquisite timing of the pull-up – too early and the rounds hadn't arrived at the target yet. But too late, and you've probably blown your minimum range requirement and fouled - not good. Anyway, all good until about my fourth pass. Had quite a few rounds on-target, from what I could see, and still a fair number of rounds to go. By this time, everybody in the team had a good rhythm going, and the exercise was in full swing. I'm full-dry power into the pull-up, see the fall-of-shot, keep the pull going to about 4-4.5g, about to turn on to downwind at around 35deg nose-up when: 'BANG' and the rug was cut out from under me.

Everybody has heard of aerodynamic drag, but not everyone appreciates its power. The only reason an aeroplane isn't going faster, at its current thrust setting, is the resistance of the aerodynamic drag force acting in the opposite direction. Mirage A3-70 and me got a good idea of its size at that moment, because it felt exactly like we were now in free-flight with the brakes fully-on and no engine at all. Instantaneously occurring and immediately slowing. Rapidly. And the engine instruments tell me there's absolutely nothing wrong: full RPM and full exhaust gas temperature. Balls! We're at about 400 feet and climbing at 30plus degrees. We'd had about 430kts, but that's already below 400 and heading south at a rate of knots. First and only question: 'WTF's occurring?!!'. Surely we're too high for a ricochet? Maybe the engine's just having a moment? Let's just ease back on the throttle and see if it helps. 'SCREECH': very, very loud and far from good, that noise. Full of tortured metal; nothing aerodynamic in that noise, like

what might come from a good old compressor stall or something. That thing sounds seriously terminal, like the back of the engine's disconnecting from the front.

'Cobra 1, you're on fire.' 'Cobra 1 thanks Range, bit busy with engine problems right now, going straight ahead range heading.' Thanks for the info Frank, as if I cared at that moment.

Funny how everything is relative: engine instruments still insist there's nothing wrong, and they're quite steady and constant about it, and there's no fire warning light. So, nothing's wrong, hey. More like: 'I'm a bit busy at the moment, I'll worry about that later - if there's a later'. Fully 10 seconds gone by to this point I'd reckon. Actually, time is standing still for the time being. My mind is preoccupied with possibilities, but the reality is expressing itself: I actually have to have a plan, and fast. I absolutely do not want to part company with Mirage A3-70, but I may not have a choice. First point: ignore the instruments, do I actually have any power? If so, is it enough to continue flying? And how do I know? A possible answer dawned on me from somewhere: Mirage 111 minimum drag speed 240kts indicated air speed. If she won't fly level at that speed, she won't fly at all, except down. So let's see; speed's now coming back through about 330, height's going up through 2000, nose now about 10 degrees up. Plan: climb until slowed to 280kts and below the cloud base; level off and wait for speed to settle; if can keep 240kts, head for base and work out plan B for landing; if 240kts not possible, sayonara A3-70 in as controlled a fashion as possible.

I guess about 40 seconds have gone by at this stage. Long story short: we got to 2800 feet, just below the cloud base, and we had 280kts. We just sat there and waited. We didn't have long to wait - the speed needle never hesitated, just went straight through 240 with determination. I thought unmentionable thoughts, decided not to get out then and there but to wait for 2000 feet and 200kts and make a military drill movement out of it. That way would be easier, I thought, just like stepping out of that Caribou a couple of years ago. We arrive at 2000 feet in pretty short order; revs have now lost a thousand, and the jet pipe temp has also finally come down a bit. No miracles though, and here comes 200kts, all trimmed out and smooth, pull down the upper handle and tuck-in the elbows. Remember: the gunnies are all totally great, but if there's no immediate chute, do it yourself. Don't even think about the seat not working!

'BANG.' The sensation of ejecting wasn't too frantic. A brief blast from the seat cartridges, then a bit of twisting and turning in the not-too-bad slipstream, then the windblast curtain came away in my hands as the parachute deployed and the seat fell away. I happened to be facing the front, so I then had an excellent view of both the countryside and A3-70 as convertible. There she was, looking good as ever: wings level and serene, like butter wouldn't melt in her mouth. I watched her for what 126 seemed a long time, but was only some seconds, until she finally dropped a wing and then her nose. Her end came not long after, but I didn't want to watch that part. I was at 2000 feet, about one minute's worth of flight distance west of the Saltash targets at an average speed of say 360kts. That put me just west of the Pacific Highway north of Raymond Terrace in an area known as Limeburners' Creek. Not that I knew that then, but I wasn't far away from home, and there was nothing but extensive scrub around me, as far as I could see.

Since I appeared sure to come down in the trees, I elected to keep my survival pack attached to my bum, rather than release it on its lanyard (like I might have if going into water). There was reason to regret this one minute and 30 seconds later, when I hit the ground in the resultant near-sitting position at a descent rate of 24 feet per second. I had drifted clear of trees in the last 100 feet and landed next to a jagged, burned-out stump in the backyard of a quite remote farmhouse. Temporary blackout for me. Definitely never felt anything like it before or since. It was totally gross, and I physically couldn't move, because the body was reacting badly. Anyway, I finally came-to a bit and saw the three other Mirages of my flight circling overhead. I could also see two ladies coming down the backstairs of the farmhouse appearing quite confused about the

commotion. They stopped at the bottom when they saw me: clearly a man from Mars, with all this clobber on including helmet. They told me later they thought there must be a military exercise or something going on and didn't want to interfere. Having finally managed to get to my feet, I went over and introduced myself with a brief resume of what actually was going on. They kindly responded with an offer of tea, which I was happy to accept.

The Mirages finally departed, having ensured I was up and moving, and within minutes the Huey chopper arrived to take me home. While I was getting aboard, the crewman ran off a short distance and picked up the jettisoned cockpit canopy! Unbelievably, it had paravaned down from 2000 feet and lay about 100m away completely undamaged. I said hi to pilot Dave Champion and crewie (Kym Manuel I think) and thanked them for the very welcome taxi service. A short trip later and we're arriving back at Willy to quite a reception. Word had clearly travelled fast, and there were lots of onlookers. AIRCDRE Glen Cooper himself was at the door being most solicitous, and this battered bograt felt quite appreciative. Thence to the sick quarters. And the damned bootlaces.

Conclusion: although no damage to compressor blades, ingestion of unidentified range debris on recovery from live fire pass, causing catastrophic engine damage My view: I agree with 3 Sqn Eng O Al Emmerson: broken turbine shaft. Full revs and temp but no power = no connection back to front. Never mind: after three months off for repair of three compressive fractures of lower back, got flying again in January 1969. Delivered A3-100 (the last single seater Mirage 111) from Avalon factory late January and flew off with the rest of the squadron to Butterworth early February. To more adventures…

The F-82 Twin Mustang

From Simple Flying

There are very rare times when a fighter aircraft is modified so heavily as in the case of the F-82 Twin Mustang. This aircraft appears as if one took two P-51 Mustangs and fused them at the wings, creating a unique double-fuselage plane that bears an uncanny resemblance to the P-38 Lightning. But while the aircraft is rather marvellous to behold, many wonder what its actual role in combat was. In fact, during its seven-year service lifetime with the US Air Force, over 270 F-82 Twin Mustangs entered service, performing missions across the globe. In this article, we will take a look at the history behind the development of the Twin Mustang and the role it played in the post-war Air Force.

According to the National Museum of the Air Force, the story of the F-82 was born when the Air Force needed a longer-range fighter escort to support extended strategic bombing missions. Specifically, the B-29 Superfortress was in need of a new escort, as it had begun to fly missions in the Pacific that were out of range for a traditional P-51 Mustang or even the more dynamic P-38 Lightning.

Thus, the Air Force turned to defense contractor North American Aviation to see what proposal the manufacturer could bring to the table. The aircraft they suggested was a heavily modified version of the P-51 Mustang that would have larger wings and fuel tank capacity, pushing the plane's range up to nearly 2,200 nautical miles.

By the time flight tests were completed, the first F-82s were delivered to the US Air Force in 1946, far too late for them to be used in the Second World War. Nonetheless, the aircraft would go on to serve as the last piston-powered fighter ever ordered by the Air Force. It is impossible to ignore the fact that the F-82's service history is limited. Built after the war's end and at the dawn of the jet age, there was no significant purpose that the piston-powered long-range escort could serve.

At this time, the Americans and Russians were both rushing to put jet-powered fighters into service, but multiple production delays in programs such as Curtiss-Wright's XF-87 Blackhawk and Northrop's P-89 Scorpion meant that long-range escorts were needed to support bomber efforts. For this purpose, the F-82, alongside the Northrop P-61 Black Widow night fighter, would enter service in the late 1940s. The first F-82s to enter service were assigned to the 27th Fighter Wing at Kearney Air Force Base in Nebraska. Later on, F-82s would find their way to Air Force bases across the country.

In an era without jet fighters that had long-range escort capacity to accompany the B-36 Peacekeeper into Soviet airspace, the F-82 found its short-lived service niche. With the outbreak of the Korean War, the F-82 would see its only major conflict where it performed long-range escort missions before being retired shortly after.

Financial planning explained by an Irishman

From John Clarkson

Paddy bought a camel from a farmer for $100. The farmer agreed to deliver the camel the next day. In the morning, he drove up and said, 'Sorry son, but I have some bad news. The camel died.'

Paddy replied, 'Well just give me my money back then.'

The farmer said, 'Can't do that. I've already spent it.'

Paddy said, 'OK then, just bring me the dead camel.'

The farmer asked, 'What are you going to do with him?'

Paddy said, 'I'm going to raffle him off.'

The farmer said, 'You can't raffle a dead camel!'

Paddy said, 'Sure I can. I just won't tell anybody he's dead.'

A month later, the farmer met up with Paddy and asked, 'What happened with that dead camel?'
Paddy said, 'I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at $2 each and made a profit of $898.

The farmer said, 'Didn't anyone complain?'

Paddy said, 'Just the guy who won. So, I gave him his $2 back.'

Paddy now works for the government as an assistant to the Treasurer.

Royal Australian Air Force Officially Unveils First MQ-4C Triton

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RAAF's first MQ-4C Triton
Northrop Grumman photo

Representatives of the Australian government, the Royal Australian Air Force and Northrop Grumman officially unveiled the RAAF's first MQ-4C Triton uncrewed aircraft during a ceremony at RAAF Base Tindal on 31 July 2024. The aircraft actually arrived at RAAF Base Tindal on 16 June following a three-segment flight from Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, USA. Northrop Grumman personnel worked closely with their RAAF counterparts to prepare for the aircraft's arrival and support-base activities.

Minister for Defence Richard Marles said Australia must continue to enhance its operations from Australia's northern bases and the MQ-4C Triton was a tangible example of a capability that would assist in achieving that task.

Christine Zeitz, Richard Marles and Air Marshal Stephen Chappell formally introduce the MQ-4C Triton aircraft into the Royal Australia Air Force fleet at RAAF Base Tindal, Northern Territory
Photo by Kym Smith

Minister for Defence Industry and Capability Delivery, Pat Conroy, said MQ-4C Triton would significantly enhance the security of Australia's maritime borders. 'The arrival of the Triton represents a significant milestone for the Royal Australian Air Force and clearly demonstrates the success of the cooperative program with the United States Navy,' Mr Conroy said. Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Stephen Chappell, said that as a complement to the RAAF's existing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, the MQ-4C Triton would significantly enhance its ability to persistently patrol Australia's north and broader maritime approaches. 'MQ-4C Triton will deliver unprecedented persistence and awareness over the maritime domain in support of the integrated, focused force,' Air Marshal Chappell said. 'Uncrewed aerial systems offer enormous potential to capitalise on the opportunities provided by modern payloads and increased endurance.'

Christine Zeitz, chief executive and general manager, Australia & New Zealand, Northrop Grumman, said that as one of the most advanced intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and targeting systems in the world, and a product of a cooperative development program between Australia and the United States, Triton was a proven multi-mission, multi-domain national security asset vital to the Australian Defence Force. Captain Josh Guerre, US Navy Triton program manager, said the delivery of Australia's first MQ-4C represented a significant step in a collaboration between the US and Australia to drive the future of multi-domain intelligence collection. 'The US Navy is thrilled to collaborate with Australia to deliver this game-changing intelligence capability into the 7th Fleet area of responsibility,' Captain Guerre said.

Australia's Triton program remains on track with three additional aircraft currently in production at Northrop Grumman's Palmdale, California, facility. Built for the US Navy and the RAAF, the multi-intelligence MQ-4C Triton can support a wide range of missions, including maritime patrol, signals intelligence and search and rescue. Key attributes of the Triton include: higher operating altitude and longer endurance than medium-altitude systems; ultra-long operational range of 7400 nautical miles (13,700km); and, simultaneous multi-intelligence sensor operations delivering an exponential increase in mission information.

The remaining three Australian Tritons currently under contract are progressing as planned through their production schedules. Once fully fielded, Triton will be operated by Number 9 Squadron from two locations to perform surveillance over the Indo-Pacific region: RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia and RAAF Base Tindal in the Northern Territory. Northrop Grumman is establishing a dynamic support environment for the progressive delivery of the Triton systems into Australia, including establishing ground stations at RAAF Base Edinburgh and facilitating aircraft integration into RAAF Base Tindal. The company is building a highly qualified Australian workforce across both locations, leveraging extensive knowledge and experience gained from supporting US Navy Triton operations.

Loss of Sunderland W6009

From Lesley Gent

Royal Air Force No 4 (Coastal) Operational Training Unit stationed at RAF Alness (northern Scotland), was home to Sunderland Flying Boats heavily involved in protecting the Atlantic convoy, they used Dornoch Firth for training. W6009 took off from RAF Alness at 12.29 pm on January 14, 1945 to carry out a low-level bombing attack exercise. The crew of 11 were all RAAF members. After completing 21 recorded attacks, W6009 crashed and burned in Dornoch Firth at 1.40 pm.

Rescue was attempted by a RAF Marine tender crew and some local vessels. Two of the Sunderland crew were killed, six were injured and three registered as missing. The crew were:

14626 Sergeant Charles Walter Laing - Killed
33805 Sergeant William James Wesley Freudenstein - Seriously Injured
405596 Flying Officer Raymond Thomas Marstella – Killed
417881 Flying Officer Francis Laurence Pepper – Missing
423487 Flight Sergeant John Jefferson Griffths – Missing
426656 Flight Sergeant Guy Neil Mcleod – Seriously Injured
429929 Flying Officer Alan Woodhouse Crompton - Seriously Injured
436397 Pilot Officer Ernest Neville Bugg - Seriously Injured
437444 Flight Sergeant Murray Clive Pryor – Seriously Injured
441309 Sergeant Robert Roger Waddell – Seriously Injured
443289 Flight Sergeant Edwin Evers – Missing

The Royal British Legion Scotland, Tain and Golspie branches held a very moving service on 10th August 2024 to dedicate the 1945 Memorial, located on the Dornoch Firth shore. Australian Frank Pepper, was the driver for the memorial after he discovered his uncle was one of the missing men. They also had support from other Australian relatives of the aviators involved. Kenny McAulay, Chairman of the Golspie Branch, wrote to us about the dedication and included a

copy of the dedication service. Three men are remembered at Runnymede Air Force Memorial to the missing; two are commemorated at Harrogate Stonefall Cemetery - where a number of Australian RAAF aviators are buried.

First RAAF Pilot Takes Control of MQ-28A Ghost Bat

From Flight Global, by Greg Waldron 21 August 2024

A Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) officer has become the first non-Boeing pilot to fly the Boeing MQ-28A Ghost Bat unmanned air vehicle. RAAF Wing Commander Phil Parsons completed the training on 13 June, according to Boeing.

The nose of the MQ-28A is designed to be reconfigurable based on specific missions
Source: Commonwealth of Australia

The programme director for the MQ-28 at Boeing Australia, Glen Furguson, says launch and recovery operators such as Parsons will oversee the aircraft's take-off, before handing it off to a crewed aircraft such as Boeing E-7A airborne early warning and control aircraft, or fighters such as the Boeing F/A-18E/F and Lockheed Martin F-35A. Following the mission, control of the aircraft will return to the launch and recovery operator, who will oversee the landing. Furguson adds that the aircraft is designed to fly with an 'operator-in-the-loop'. In other words, an operator is tasked with making key decisions.

Boeing adds that its work on the MQ-28A – the first military aircraft designed in Australia since the Second World War – is moving ahead quickly. The focus has moved from flying and handling to capabilities such as teaming, mission systems, sensors, and testing. In March, Boeing said that it had started construction of a facility in Australia's Queensland state to produce the MQ-28, although no order for operational examples has been announced. The previous month, Australia's Department of Defence told FlightGlobal that eight examples of the aircraft have been delivered so far. Also in February, Canberra provided funding for three additional MQ-28 Block 2 aircraft.

New $100m Drone Package to Grow ADF SUAS Fleet

15 July 2024

From Defence Connect By: Liam Garman

Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy has announced that the federal government is investing $100 million to boost the ADF's small uncrewed aerial systems (SUAS) fleet. The package covers the acquisition of two small uncrewed aerial systems: the Quantum-Systems Vector 2-in-1 and the SYPAQ Systems CorvoX.

The government expects that the package will enhance the Australian Defence Force's surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, potency, and improve force protection across land and littoral environments. The acquisition ensures 'Australian military personnel are provided with cutting-edge lethal and non-lethal capabilities and underscoring an unwavering commitment to National Defence,' a release from the Minister said. The capabilities can also be deployed as a complement to Australia's crewed systems, and are scheduled for delivery in 2025.

Despite the acquisition, Defence has committed to continue trialling low-cost and expendable uncrewed and autonomous systems which can be constructed at scale. The government explained that the announcement will grow the more than 20 drone systems in operation by the ADF. It comes as the Albanese government has earmarked more than $10 billion on expenditure for uncrewed systems. Minister Conroy said the announcement was important in ensuring that the ADF can overcome current and emerging threats.

'Defence's partnership with two pioneering companies is an example of how the Albanese government is not only investing in Australian ingenuity but also in the capabilities our ADF personnel needs to keep Australians safe,' Minister Conroy said in a recent statement. 'With this investment, the Albanese government will grow our defence industrial base, supply chains and create highly skilled, well-paid jobs. The delivery of these uncrewed aerial systems in 2025, within a year of project approval, is a significant demonstration of Defence and industry's strong partnership and intent to enhance the speed at which we introduce capabilities in support of current and future Defence requirements.' The contract is expected to create 30 skilled jobs in Brisbane and Melbourne.