

# DS

April 2013



**Newsletter  
of the  
RAAF  
STAFF COLLEGE  
ASSOCIATION Inc**

GPO Box 1204 Canberra ACT 2601

[www.raafsca.org](http://www.raafsca.org)

Patrons:

AIRMSHL M. BINSKIN AO, VCDF

AIRMSHL G. BROWN AO, CAF

President:

AIRCDRE I.M. PEARSON, RAAFAR

Vice-President:

GPCAPT M. COTTRELL DFC RAAF (Ret'd)

Secretary:

MR F.J. KELLY Ph: 0428 266 134

Treasurer:

MR D.I. WADE

\*\*\*\* **LUNCHEON SEMINAR** \*\*\*\*

*Thursday, 6 June 2013*

**at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla**

**Speaker: AVM (Retd) John Blackburn AO**

**“Australia’s Liquid Fuel Security”**

**( See separate Luncheon Notice & Registration Form )**

## **From the President**

With the Royal Australian Air Force having celebrated its 92<sup>nd</sup> anniversary on 31 March, (and CFS celebrating its century on 7 March), the men and women of the RAAF have settled into another busy year.

Informing the future direction of the Air Force and broader Defence community will be the 2013 Defence White Paper, scheduled to be published by the end of June. The Minister has [announced](#) that the publication date was brought forward by the Government in part to address how Government addresses the strategic policy and posture implications of the ADF’s operational drawdown from Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. Reassuringly, this White Paper is expected to include consideration aimed at ensuring that the mistakes following our last such major transition and drawdown – Vietnam – will not be repeated.

Air Force’s future is often defined in terms of future platform acquisitions and in this regard exciting developments are on the near horizon. Our venerable AP-3C Orions are expected to reach ‘life of type’ around 2019, the oldest of these aircraft arriving at Edinburgh in May 1978. A second tranche entered RAAF service in the mid-1980s, these replacing the fleet of P3-B Orions that were delivered to the RAAF from January 1968. The outstanding service of ‘the mighty hunters’ is worthy of its own presentation to the RAAFSCA (but of course I’m biased)! Under [Project AIR 7000](#) eight [P-8A Poseidon](#) aircraft are currently planned to replace the AP-3C Orion by 2017-18.

More immediately, construction is well underway with the RAAF’s fleet of 10 Alenia [C-27J Spartan Battlefield Airlift aircraft](#). The first of these aircraft has entered [final assembly](#) at Alenia Aermacchi’s Turin plant. The C-27Js are scheduled to reach initial Operating Capability in RAAF service in late 2016.

Meanwhile, subsequent to our last luncheon seminar address by AIRCDRE (Retd) Graham Bentley AM on the [F35 Joint Strike Fighter](#), media reporting reveals that the first two [RAAF F-35](#) Joint Strike Fighter aircraft are progressing down the US production line and approaching the stage where they will be recognisably aircraft rather than a collection of components.

Our next luncheon speaker, AVM (Retd) John Blackburn AO, retired from the Royal Australian Air Force in 2008 as the Deputy Chief of the Air Force following a career as an F/A-18 fighter pilot, test pilot and strategic planner. He is the Deputy Chairman of the Kokoda Foundation Board, the Deputy Chairman of the Williams Foundation Board and a director of the ASPI Council. In February 2013 the NRMA published his report "Australia's Liquid Fuel Security," which will be the subject of his address to us on Thursday 6 June at the Royal Canberra Golf Club. As the world's ninth-largest energy producer, Australia has abundant renewable and non-renewable energy resources. Despite these resources, we are heavily dependent on imports of refined petroleum products and crude oil to meet our liquid fuel demand. This import dependency has increased in recent years. The very small consumption stockholdings of oil and liquid fuels in Australia, combined with what appears to be a narrow assessment of our fuel supply chain vulnerabilities, does not provide much confidence that the strategic risks to our fuel supply chain are well understood and mitigated by our nation's leaders, the business community or the population at large.

I look forward to seeing you at our meeting on 6 June when I expect John's presentation will confirm some of your worst fears about Australia's Liquid Fuel Security while others may be unpleasantly surprised by what you hear and see, (John being an acknowledged master of PowerPoint presentations)!

I take this opportunity to welcome our newest RAAFSCA member, GPCAPT Pat Cooper, who as a graduate of Canadian Forces Command and Staff College course 32 (2005/06) took up the option open to him under our constitution to join the Association. I look forward to Pat being joined by other RAAF graduates from CFCSC and the other overseas command and staff courses attended by RAAF officers. Pat is currently Canberra-based (Director Aviation Coordination and Operations in Air Force Headquarters), so I hope his work commitments will allow him to attend our meetings.

Finally, I take this opportunity to advise you that for operational reasons, our AGM and final meeting for the year has been rescheduled to Thursday 7 November, at the Royal Canberra Golf Club. Advance notice of this and any other changes to our schedule will be provided via the [RAAFSCA website](#) as soon as the requirement for changes becomes known.

*Regards,*

*Ian Pearson*

Phone: 02 6273 1630  
Mobile: 0407 561 080