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February 2013



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

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**** **LUNCHEON SEMINAR** ****

Wednesday, 13 March 2013

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

Speaker: AIRCDRE Graham BENTLEY, AM (Retd)

Director Australian Market Development—Lockheed Martin

(See separate Luncheon Notice & Registration Form)

From the President

The period since we last met at the beginning of October 2012 has been busy for Air Force and the broader Defence organisation.

November marked the delivery of the sixth (and final?) C-17A to RAAF Amberley, the end of the decade-long Op SLIPPER deployment of AP-3C aircraft to Al-Minhad Air Base, and the departure of the last C-130H from RAAF Richmond. December saw the delivery of the fifth KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport Aircraft to RAAF Amberley and the Air Force at the forefront of the Whole-of-Government response to Cyclone Evan, with C-17A and C-130J aircraft delivering relief supplies to Fiji and Samoa respectively. Reflecting the changing face of our Air Force, 2013 began with the reformation of 35 Squadron at RAAF Richmond in preparation for the arrival of the fleet of ten C-27J Spartan aircraft from 2015. Meanwhile, domestic relief activity has included two C-17A aircraft each airlifting a 20 tonne mobile diesel powered generator and transformer to Tasmania to restore power supplies following the disastrous bushfires south of Hobart.

At his press conference on Thursday 12 December Minister for Defence Stephen Smith announced that Defence would forward a Letter of Request to the United States to provide Australia with details of cost, production and availability of up to an additional 24 F/A-18 Super Hornets. The Minister stressed that the requested information was needed to enable a decision to be made in 2013 on the composition of the New Air Combat Capability.

The Minister stated that Defence had been tasked to continue to study three of the possible four options originally proposed by Defence:

- Extend the service life of the Classic Hornets;
- Purchase of additional Super Hornets; and
- Acquisition of the F-35 JSF "...when the JSF Program comes to fruition" (sic).

Particularly relevant in the context of this announcement, our first luncheon speaker for 2013, AIRCDRE Graham Bentley, AM (Retd), Lockheed Martin's Director Australian Market Development, will update us on the current status of the JSF Program. I look forward to hearing Graham speak and to seeing you at our **Wednesday** 13 March meeting.

In December the Minister also released details of the consultation process for the general public for the 2013 Defence White Paper.

The Defence White Paper, scheduled to be delivered in the first half of 2013 will consider in detail the implications of the changing strategic circumstances in our region for Australia's national security and defence, including:

- the ongoing strategic shift to our region, the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean Rim, particularly the shift of economic weight to our region;
- the US re-balance to the Asia Pacific and Australia's enhanced practical cooperation with the US pursuant to our 60-year-old Alliance relationship;
- the ADF's operational drawdown from Afghanistan, East Timor and the Solomon Islands;
- Australia's own Force Posture Review – the first in a quarter of a century; and
- the ongoing adverse effects of the Global Financial Crisis, which have continued to have a significant impact on the global economy.

The views of individual members of the public and community groups with an interest in Defence will be an important contribution to the development of the 2013 Defence White Paper. The question is whether we, as individuals, or as a collective representing the RAAF Staff College Association wish to lodge submissions to assist in the considerations underpinning the development of the White Paper. If it is the latter, I would be interested in hearing from you very soon, noting that submissions can be lodged until 28 February 2013 through the Defence White Paper 2013 website at <http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper2013>. Meanwhile, the Australian Financial Review's White Paper article posted on the 'News' section of the RAAFSCA website makes interesting reading.

Finally, by now all of you are likely aware that we have the ability to communicate key information to our members via our own RAAF Staff College Association website at www.raafsca.org. I look forward to your suggestions on what might be done to ensure this website best meets members' communication needs.

Regards,

Ian Pearson

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