

DS

May 2014

*** LUNCHEON SEMINAR ***

Thursday, 19 June 2014

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

Speaker: Air Vice-Marshal Margaret Staib, AM, CSC, RAAFAR

CEO Airservices Australia

(See separate Luncheon Notice & Registration Form)

From the President

Last month the Prime Minister announced that Air Marshal Mark Binskin will replace General David Hurley as Chief of the Defence Force from July 3, and that Air Marshal Geoff Brown will have his term as Chief of Air Force extended for a further 12 months. On your behalf I have written to congratulate both our co-patrons and am very pleased to advise you that both have responded, indicating their willingness to continue their RAAF Staff College Association co-patron roles. (We will have to change our stationery!)



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

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Patrons:

AIRMSHL M. BINSKIN AC, VCDF

AIRMSHL G. BROWN AO, CAF

President:

AIRCDRE I.M. PEARSON, RAAFAR

Vice-President:

GPCAPT M. COTTRELL DFC RAAF (Ret'd)

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Treasurer:

MR D.I. WADE

Also announced last month was Government's approval to acquire an additional 58 F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter aircraft. These aircraft, in addition to the 14 already approved in 2009, will provide the RAAF with a total of 72 aircraft to form three operational squadrons and one training squadron. The first F-35 aircraft will arrive in Australia in 2018 and will be operational by 2020. This announcement follows two other significant acquisition announcements – the first, made just before our last meeting, was that the Air Force will start to replace the venerable AP-3C Orions with the first of eight P-8A Poseidon aircraft that will be delivered from 2017, with all eight of these aircraft due to be operational by 2021. The other announcement, made just after our last meeting, was that Government has committed to the acquisition of the Triton MQ-4C Unmanned Aircraft System, subject to the successful completion of the US Navy development program currently under way. The Triton UAS is an unarmed maritime variant of Northrop-Grumman's Global Hawk. The total number of Triton aircraft to be acquired by Australia and their introduction into service date will be further considered by Government in 2016, based on the Defence White Paper.

While we look forward to the enhanced capabilities that these platforms will provide our future Air Force, right now the men and women of the RAAF have been busy with a host of tasks, ranging from Royal visits by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to two RAAF bases to the massive search of the Southern Indian Ocean for traces of MH370.

In his message to the Air Force acknowledging the RAAF's 'One Team' approach to Operation SOUTHERN INDIAN OCEAN, Air Vice-Marshal Davies, on behalf of CAF wrote:

'For the last few weeks the ADF and the international community has been committed to supporting the Australian Maritime Safety Authority directed search operation for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in the southern Indian Ocean.

The search activities have been centred at RAAF Base Pearce and RAAF Base Learmonth and heavily supported by Air Force assets and personnel. The primary aviation assets involved in the search, being over 42 days and 4.5 million square kilometres, have been four AP-3C Orion's completing 87 sorties, two E-7A Wedgetail's completing 45 sorties and a KA-350 King Air undertaking 14 sorties, totaling 146 missions completed from Australian assets.

Another 182 missions were completed from foreign militaries. These assets have been tirelessly supported by personnel from RAAF Base Pearce augmented by personnel from numerous Bases across Australia. A total of 281 ADF personnel supported this search and worked in a true 'One Team' approach with over 124 foreign military members from seven countries across the globe.

As the search operation transitions to a new phase it is timely to reflect on our success; while under an intense global media spotlight, working in a whole-of-government context, with our fellow Services and with such a large international civil and military contingent.'

Also recently announced was the establishment, from 1 April 2014, of Air Mobility Group. Announcing this development, Air Marshal Brown said that Air Lift Group had been formally re-titled as Air Mobility Group to reflect the role it performs as a Force Element Group within our Air Force.

'Since it was established in February 1987, the Air Lift Group mission was focused on movement of personnel, materiel and forces using a range of airborne platforms. At the time, it accomplished this with a fleet of transport aircraft, although air-to-air refueling was added with the modification of four Boeing 707s in 1990.

The Air Lift Group 'brand' served Air Force well for 27 years, however the introduction of new capabilities, including the re-introduction of air-to-air refuelling with the arrival of the KC-30A, has given us cause to establish a more accurate identity for Air Lift Group. The function of air-to-air refuelling is to extend range, payload and endurance of other aircraft, and as such, it is not adequately described by the term 'airlift'.

The term 'air mobility' more closely describes our expanded scope of operations, and is consistent with current RAAF Air Power doctrine. By establishing a new identity in Air Mobility Group, we also align our terminology with our allied partners. The Royal Air Force, for example, operates its airlift and air-to-air refuelling aircraft under the No. 1 Air Mobility Wing, and likewise, the United States Air Force conducts similar mission under its Air Mobility Command.

The establishment of Air Mobility Group within the RAAF will therefore assist us with coalition integration and improve interoperability. The change coincides with the development of capabilities across the existing Air Mobility Group fleet, including

the C-17A, C-130J, King Air 350, and KC-30A. With the introduction of the C-27J Spartan from 2015, we look forward to further establishing the new identity of Air Mobility Group.'

Amongst this very happy news I am very sad to announce the passing, on 7 May, of our greatly respected member, former Chief of the Defence Force Staff and Chief of Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Sir Neville McNamara, KBE, AO, AFC, AE, (Retd). A Requiem Mass for the repose of the soul of Neville's life will be offered in St Christopher's Cathedral, Canberra Avenue, Forrest ACT on Thursday 15 May commencing at 1000 hours. I'm sure I speak on behalf of all RAAF Staff College Association members when I say that we will long remember Sir Neville with great affection and respect.

The final luncheon seminar for this year is also our AGM, and will be held at the Royal Canberra Golf Club on Friday 17 October. (Please note proximity of date to the RAAF retired officers dinner on Saturday 18 October.) The speaker is yet to be identified – who would you wish to have speaking at our October meeting? In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you at lunch on Thursday 19 June at the Royal Canberra Golf Club.

Regards,

Ian Pearson

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