

DS

September 2014

The 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

12:00 hours

Friday 17 October 2014

at the Royal Canberra Golf Club, Yarralumla

to be followed at 12:30 pm by a luncheon

Speaker: Air Marshal Geoff Brown, AO

Chief of Air Force

(Please see separate notice and meeting papers
included with this newsletter.)

From the President

I am particularly pleased to be able to announce that the guest speaker at our October meeting will be Chief of Air Force and our association's co-patron, Air Marshal Geoff Brown, AO. Against the background of events in the Middle East and the Ukraine, the Chief is clearly well placed to update us on current Air Force activities, and likely future developments at this particularly sensitive time.

Recent statements from CAF and Air Force Headquarters, and media reporting about Air Force activity since our June meeting, set the stage for what CAF might be able to elaborate on in his presentation or in response to questions you might put to him.

The speed and readiness of our Air Force was demonstrated by the first [C-17A Globemaster](#) arriving in Eindhoven just five days after MH17 was downed (on 17 July). Air Force provided vital intra-theatre heavy lift capability between Australia, the Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. The mission saw Air Force aircraft operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week for more than three weeks.

Air Force C-17A Globemasters and KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport aircraft moved personnel and equipment, and delivered essential supplies and specialist equipment to investigators working near the crash site in the Ukraine. At the height of the mission, air crews were flying three sorties a day. Maintenance crews worked hard and ensured that aircraft were available for 100% of their scheduled missions.

In total, 44 sorties were flown between Eindhoven Airfield in the Netherlands and Kharkiv International Airport in the Ukraine. This included delivering 466 passengers and 700 tons of equipment to Kharkiv, and 633 passengers and 620 tons of equipment to Eindhoven. Air Force personnel, alongside their Royal Netherlands Air Force colleagues, were instrumental in the repatriation of the bodies of the victims of MH17. Air Force is currently providing assistance to support the repatriation of Australians and Australian residents who were killed in the tragedy.

On 1 August the 14th Rotation of the Heron Remotely Piloted Aircraft Detachment at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan handed over to a new team of 35 Australian personnel from Air Force, Navy and Army after five months deployed to Operation SLIPPER. The Heron mission, initially scheduled to end in December last year, has been extended until the end



**Newsletter
of the
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of this year to provide real-time Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance to ISAF Regional Command-South during the final transition of security responsibility to Afghan National Security Forces and April's Afghan Presidential elections.

On 14 August a Royal Australian Air Force C-130J Hercules crew from Joint Task Force 633 at Al Minhad Air Base UAE completed a humanitarian aid drop into the Mount Sinjar region of northern Iraq. Nine tonnes of high energy biscuits, water and humanitarian supplies were dropped to Iraqi civilians isolated on the mountain. A second air drop of Australian aid to Iraqi civilians was subsequently completed, the RAAF C-130J Hercules delivering 15 palletised bundles of Australian humanitarian supplies to isolated civilians in the Northern Iraqi town of Amirli. The aircraft made the drop in darkness at around 0430 local time in Iraq (1030 AEST) to minimise the risk of ground attack.

Meanwhile, in recent weeks Royal Australian Air Force C-17A Globemaster aircraft have been delivering military stores to Erbil, Northern Iraq. As I type these words the media is reporting that the third such sortie has been flown by aircraft from Al Minhad Air Base, via Tirana, Albania where the aircraft have been loaded, thence a stop at Baghdad where Iraqi officials inspected and cleared the cargo prior to delivery.

On the acquisition front, Australia has handed over an initial \$159 million towards production of its first four P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, effectively sealing the deal for the current plan to acquire eight P-8As. These aircraft will partially replace the AP-C3 Orion fleet and are expected to be joined later by Triton unmanned long-range surveillance aircraft in a composite manned/unmanned fleet. (15 P-8As have been delivered to the US Navy fleet as this edition of DS is being prepared. India has already received four its eight [P-8Is](#) currently on order.)

Already operating at a very high tempo with these operations and acquisition activities, the Air Force has been stretched by such recent exercises as PITCH BLACK and KAKADU, ongoing operations, including RESOLUTE, and further acquisition programs such as the delivery next year of the first C-27J aircraft. There could not be a better time to have the Chief aboard to brief us!

Prior to CAF's arrival we will conduct a short and sharp AGM. To facilitate this I intend to call the meeting to order at midday, and propose we conduct the meeting standing so that we may resume informal mingling until we sit for lunch, and so CAF may mingle with us when he arrives. As always the positions of RAAFSCA President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will become vacant at the AGM and nominations to fill these positions are required. We always welcome new (or even not so new) blood on the RAAFSCA Committee. Those wishing to stand can beat the rush by obtaining a nomination form from the Secretary, or live dangerously by nominating at the AGM.

I look forward to seeing you on Friday 17 October. For the unwary, beware of me waylaying you with tales of my most recent pilgrimage to a selection of Britain's aviation museums! (A very small selection of the hundreds of aircraft photos taken is posted on the RAAFSCA website.)

Regards,

Ian Pearson

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