TAKE OFF

F-35A pilot starts training

First night mission on RAAF Lightning II

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An Australian F-35A Lightning II. Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin.

SQNLDR Andrew Jackson became the first Australia pilot to start training on the F-35A Lightning II, when he started the demanding program on Australia Day. Photo: CPL David Said.

New airfield recovery squadron raised Page 8

Exercise Red Flag takes to the sky Page 3

Cadets save man and carer Page 7
COPS sees cause for great pride

CPL Max Bree

FROM the rusted Russian tanks left as remnants of the Soviet war in Afghanistan two decades ago to the gleaming high-rise buildings of Dubai, VADM David Johnston’s time on Operation Slipper as Deputy Commander JTF 633 was marked by stark contrasts.

VADM Johnston, the current Chief of Joint Operations was the deputy national commander of Australia’s air, land and sea operations during his deployment to the Middle East between 2010-11.

“Any operation is pretty special to be on, though you’ve got to deal with separation from family and friends, including during the time it takes to prepare,” he said.

“But once you’re stopping narcotics flowing over the ocean, providing security or training people as we’re doing now, you realise you’re in a profession where people have the chance to make a difference.”

VADM Johnston said he was impressed with the way each service worked but was more interested in what brought them together.

“It didn’t matter if you were a soldier, sailor or airman, it was the common things that really stood out,” he said.

“They committed to the work, to each other and the pride in what they were doing was really special to us all.”

Flying into Afghanistan, VADM Johnston was surprised by scenes of rudimentary urban development set against the backdrop of towering mountains, of green ribbons marking orchards and crops growing alongside rivers that ran through rocky, lifeless deserts.

“You see history laid out in front of you with things like old Russian battle tanks and villages who are very much living like they have for centuries. It’s an intriguing place to be in,” he said.

When flying back to our main base in the Middle East you’re among sky-scrapers and a modern community. You can make that transition in a day and it’s pretty remarkable.”

VADM Johnston said HOJOC was strengthened by personnel who had deployed on Op Slipper or were experienced in supporting it.

“Slipper has been a part of our DNA in JOC for the full decade the operation has been running,” he said.

“That’s brought a very strong sense of understanding what we need to be doing when we deploy a force and how we support it when we aren’t a battle-space owner.

“We’ve learned how to design a force, work with the force providers, project it offshore pretty quickly and insert it into a broader coalition environment.”

VADM Johnston said Op Slipper also gave the ADF specialised skills.

“Countercursions have some peculiar elements to them that a military force really needs to understand.”

“We’ve gained those insights because we’ve been part of that operation for a very long time.”

That operation came to an end last year and marches will be held in all capital cities and Townsville on March 21 to recognise ADF, Australian Public Service and Australian Federal Police personnel who were involved in Op Slipper.

“It’s an extraordinary number of ADF people who have deployed.”

VADM Johnston said.

“We see a lot on Anzac Day about previous campaigns. These marches are unique because they’re about people who’ve recently gone and returned home.”

VADM Johnston said the march also honoured the 41 soldiers who didn’t return from Afghanistan and the 262 personnel who were wound or killed during Operation Slipper.

“It’s a chance for people in the community to see how many people have been part of this operation and for Slipper personnel to feel the gratitude and pride from the Australian community for what they’ve all done,” he said.

Agreement on aircraft noise review

THE Aircraft Noise Ombudsman can now independently review the management of military aircraft noise after a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on January 19.

The Defence Department, Airservices Australia and the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman agreed to the memorandum to improve the outcomes for Defence aircraft noise inquiries and complaints.

While the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman also oversees the reporting of civil aircraft noise complaints, the memorandum means they can now review independently issues such as the effectiveness of community consultation.

Leading the initiative, Air Force’s Director for Combat Capability, GPCAPT Richard Lennon, said the change would improve outcomes through the use of a consistent whole-of-government approach.

“Successful initiatives in one agency could be transferable to the other, improving aircraft noise management in both civil and military arenas,” he said.

“Defence has an honest and open approach about the noise experienced by residents living near our bases and training areas, and we are working with communities to reduce noise impacts while balancing operational and training requirements.”

The Aircraft Noise Ombudsman is an independent administrative office that reviews the handling of complaints or inquiries made to Defence about aircraft noise. If members of the public are unable to achieve a satisfactory outcome, they can contact the Aircraft Noise Ombudsman for an independent review.

While aircraft noise will never be eliminated completely, Defence monitors aircraft noise levels and conducts community consultation to reduce the impact of noise on the public without affecting operational outcomes.

“Now we can predict when or where Defence will need to respond, so our pilots and crews need experience in a range of environments,” GPCAPT Lennon said.

“We reduce noise by limiting the speed of aircraft over populated areas, minimising flying over residential areas, and minimising flying late at night or early in the morning.”

Australia Day buzz

Eamon Hamilton

FOR the 150 RAAF personnel at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada on January 26, it was a different experience of Australia Day from most.

Launching the first missions that day for Exercise Red Flag 15-1, they had a role in the world’s greatest air combat exercise.

For the first time, according to CO 10SQN WGC DR Jason Begley, the AP-3C is working alongside the world’s most advanced command and control, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and electronic warfare platforms in service.

Red Flag’s training outcome is simple – re-create the first 10 missions of combat in a training environment, thus considerably improving the chances of survival for a military aircrew if they experience the real thing.

These, including Royal Air Force Typhoons, US Air Force B-2A Stealth Bombers and F-22A Raptors, and US Navy EA-18G Growlers. For the exercise, the RAAF has sent a pair of No. 37 Squadron C-130Js to conduct tactical airlift missions, along with a No. 10 Squadron AP-3C Orion conducting overland surveillance.

The Orion contributes to a detailed battlespace ‘picture’ in the 31,000 square kilometre test range, where ‘Blue Force’ formations fight their way through contested airspace to strike their targets.

On the ground, a No. 41 Wing Air Battle Management element is directing aircrew in the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), while a group of RAAF personnel are also working in the Combined Air Operations Cell at Nellis.

WGCDR Begley said the platforms they are working alongside include the E-3 Sentry, E-8 JSTARS, RC-135 and EP-3E, and the EA-18G.

“The NTTR is the benchmark for realistic live simulation of a near-peer adversary air defence system,” he said.

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Back at Nellis Air Force Base, the threat is still evident, with ‘Red Force’ attempting to disrupt the cyberspace and telecommunications dimensions of Exercise Red Flag.

“There are multiple injects to maintainance and operations designed to delay or degrade the ability to launch missions,” WGCDR Goldie said.

“Twenty-four-hour operations have tested the detachment’s ability to generate and plan missions.”

Off to Ex Cope North in Guam

FLGOFF Natalie Giles

PERSONNEL and assets from Nos. 3, 33 and 37 Squadrons and 395 Expeditionary Combat Support Wing will participate in Exercise Cope North in Guam from February 15-27.

Almost 2000 personnel and 80 aircraft from seven countries will converge on Guam in the Western Pacific, home of the US Andersen Air Force Base from where the exercise will be conducted.

This is the fourth time the RAAF has participated in the exercise that started in 1978. Cope North is a multinational field training exercise with the US Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defence Force and RAAF. It is sponsored by Commander Pacific Air Forces.

The exercise will involve a large force employment air combat exercise with dissimilar air combat training and a humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise that will run concurrently, but with separate exercise scenarios.

Australian Contingent Commander GPCAPT Phil Gordon said Cope North would provide excellent opportunities for RAAF personnel.

“They’ll be working closely with key allies to improve interoperability and effectiveness in a multilateral environment,” he said.

The humanitarian and disaster relief component of the exercise will operate from February 15-18 and will focus on providing support in the aftermath of a simulated earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

The sequence of training activity coordinated by No. 84 Wing before Exercise Red Flag has allowed each of the contributors to the missions – maintenance, logistics, administration, operations and aircrew – to perform at their best.

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F-35A demonstrator launched

TRAINING F-35A Lightning II maintenance personnel is one step closer with the release of demonstrator software that replicates components of the future logistics information system for the aircraft.

Air Force, Lockheed Martin Australia and Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO) officially launched the concept demonstrator to explore and gain familiarisation of the future Autonomic Logistics Information System (ALIS) for the F-35A Lightning II at Lockheed Martin Australia’s Canberra Headquarters late last year.

Lockheed Martin developed the Standard Operating Unit (SOU) – Lite to replicate the operating unit software component of ALIS, while emulating hardware components.

DMO Joint Strike Fighter Program manager AVM Chris Deeble said that the successful development of the SOU-Lite was an important step for the JSF program and the start of a fundamental change to business process.

"SOU-Lite provides a great opportunity to engage stakeholders at an early stage of introduction of ALIS in Australia and effectively operate the F-35A in RAAF service," he said.

"ALIS is the toolset around which the aircraft will operate and be supported, and is a shift in the way Air Force operates its aircraft.

The operating unit will be integrated with Defence systems and comprise squadron based servers, off-board mission support workstations and portable maintenance aids.

The maintenance aids are ruggedised laptops that will allow technicians to access ALIS while performing maintenance on the aircraft.

Each operating unit will communicate with the ALIS Australian Central Point of Entry hosted by the Air Combat Systems Project Office at RAAF Base Williamtown.

The Central Point of Entry will be the information link between Australia and other JSF Program partners by communicating with the F-35 Autonomic Logistic Operating Unit at Fort Worth in Texas.

Through the logistic operating unit, ALIS will be used to share maintenance information and request spares and equipment for the Australian F-35A fleet.

ALIS will begin initial operation in Australia in late 2016, two years before the first Australian F-35A is scheduled to land at RAAF Base Williamtown. This will enable effective integration with Defence and external systems as well as commence training the wide range of Air Force personnel that will use the system.
ADF showcase is a first for the Avalon Airshow

CPL Aaron Curran

THE Australian International Airshow (AIA) at Avalon will be bigger and better than ever with an ADF showcase featuring for the first time.

Running from February 24-March 1, the airshow’s theme is ‘Heroes of the Sky’, commemorating the Centenary of Anzac. March 1, the airshow’s theme is "Heroes of the Sky", commemorating the Centenary of Anzac.

First RAAF F-35A Night Sortie

Last week, a RAAF F-35A flew its first night sortie with a US pilot. The Lockheed Martin F-35 crew chief is marshalling “Dingo 2” back to its parking spot after the aircraft’s first night mission.

Training fires up

AIR FORCE’S first F-35A pilot started training on the Lightning II aircraft on January 26 at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida, US.

SQNLDR Andrew Jackson said it brought the introduction of the 72 F-35As into RAAF a step closer.

“The F-35A will be Australia’s first fifth-generation aircraft and will provide the RAAF with a leading air combat capability,” he said.

“I’m excited to be given the opportunity to take a leading role in its introduction.”

SQNLDR Jackson will undergo an intensive training program before he takes his first flight in the coming months.

“The fifth-generation F-35A capabilities represent a quantum shift over legacy fighters. I am looking forward to the training challenge it will present,” he said.

This aircraft will give fighter pilots a level of situational awareness that far exceeds legacy platforms. Experiencing this level of capability first hand is something every pilot dreams of.”

SQNLDR Jackson will have an important future role as an instructor pilot for Australian and international F-35A pilots, and was selected for his operational flying skills, extensive experience and leadership.

“It will be a great honour to work and train alongside the US and other international air force pilots,” he said.

The second Australian F-35A pilot, test pilot SQNLDR David Bell, will begin his training in mid-2015.

The first F-35A aircraft will arrive in Australia at the end of 2018 with the first operational squadron to be established by 2020. The F-35A will replace the aging F/A-18A/B Hornets.

Avalon Program

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

• Gold Pass holders can enter the airshow site from 9am.
• Gold pass holders aged over 16 can enter the exhibition pavilion from 9am.
• Gates open to the public from 2pm.
• Ground exhibits from 2pm.
• Exhibition pavilion open to the public from 2-5pm.
• Those aged 16 and under can access the exhibition pavilion from 2pm.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, and SUNDAY, MARCH 1

• Gates open to the public from 8am-6pm.
• Ground displays 8am-6pm.
• Exhibition pavilion open to the public from 8am-5pm.
• Public flying displays from 3-9pm.
• Flying displays from 10am-4.30pm.

Friday Night Alight spectacular.

Public flying displays from 3-9pm.

Friday Night Alight spectacular.

PUBLIC FLYING DISPLAYS

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

• Gates open to the public from 8am-6pm.
• Ground displays 8am-6pm.
• Exhibition pavilion open to the public from 8am-5pm.
• Flying displays from 10am-4.30pm.
• Historic re-enactment arena displays throughout the day.

First RAAF F-35A Night Sortie

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Change is in the air component

THE Air Component Coordination Element Middle East Region (ACCE MER) is up and running after a transfer of authority from the Australian Air Component at Joint Task Force 633.

WGCDR Steve Laredo, as the final Air Component Commander, handed over the reins to new ACCE MER Commander WGCDR Sarah Stalker in a ceremony at Australia’s main logistics base in the Middle East on January 14.

The ACCE MER provides coordination and tasking support to HQ JTF 633 for all aircraft supporting ADF operations in the Middle East including Operations Highroad, Okra, Manitou and Accordion.

WGCDR Laredo said it had been a privilege to lead the component for the past six months.

“This period has been one of the busiest the Air Component and JTF 633 have seen in many years,” he said.

“I gladly hand over to WGCDR Stalker, who inherits a very good team that will continue to provide first class service to the personnel deployed in the MER.”

Commander JTF 633 RADM Trevor Jones said the air group operating out of Australia’s main logistics facility was the longest residency of any element to be based there.

“In terms of longevity across the ADF, only RAAF Butterworth in Malaysia has operated for longer,” he said.

“You are a credit to the ADF with regard to the experience and support your team has provided and continues to provide to the broader team in the Middle East.”

The Australian Air Component (AAC) has been deployed to the Middle East since 2003. Over the past 13 years, the AAC has overseen the establishment of the Control and Reporting Centre manned by air defence controllers, AP-3C Orions, remotely piloted aircraft (Project Heron), C-130J Hercules and C-17A Globemaster transport aircraft.

Operations have used AAC aircraft based in the MER and both Heron and the Control and Reporting Centre based in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Incoming Commander ACCE MER WGCDR Stalker, on her sixth rotation to the Middle East, said it was a busy period for her team. Some of her aircrew were deploying for their sixth rotations and for longer deployments than normal.

“The next period is going to be challenging and present some unique opportunities,” she said.

“We do our job well and we maintain high levels of reliability with aircraft to support the MER operations.

“The focus for my tenure is to look after all my people to make sure they are safe and continue to provide quality service to operations in the region.”
CPL Aaron Curran

A REGULAR training day for 3 Wing Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) at Tahmoor Gorge took a dramatic turn with the rescue of a young man and his carer.

On January 16, staff and cadets were taking part in the Abseiling Course when a young man with autism was swept over two waterfalls at the Mermaid Pools area.

FLGOFF (AAFC) Julie Crompton was instructing cadets when she saw the man drifting down the creek towards a notorious pool of deep water known for its turbulence called the Washing Machine.

The waterfall was fairly rocky so was pretty banged up.

But FLGOFF Crompton said the man was then suddenly swept over the next 10m-high waterfall into a spot they call the Mermaid Pool.

“By the time I got to the top of the Mermaid Pool, I was not sure he was going to be conscious,” she said.

He was bobbing up and down and only just managed to keep his head above water. I told the carer he needed to go in there and get him to the edge of the pool and directed him to a spot where he could jump off the ledge into deeper water.”

The waterfall and cliff rescuers had to scale to get the injured man out.

FLGOFF Crompton’s father, FLTLT (AAFC) Grahame Fisher, was further up the cliff line and made his way to her location.

“I asked her what she needed me to do,” he said.

“She asked if I could stay and set the equipment and anchors as there was no other way out of the pool.”

Luckily for the man and his carer both, FLGOFF Crompton and her father were trained in vertical rescue by the State Emergency Service.

“When Julie told the carer they were trained in rescue her relaxed and said ‘thank you’,” FLTLT Fisher said.

“We worked out the easiest and safest way out was through a hole in the rock. Julie has a masters in special education and works with children with autism on a regular basis, so she was best placed to deal with the man and put him in the harness.”

After 45 minutes, both were hauled safely out of Mermaid Pool.

“They were very grateful,” FLTLT Fisher said.

“Julie did an outstanding job and the cadets were marvellous.”

Cadets’ course gets real
New squadron on the way

EXPLOSIVE Ordnance Demolition and Airfield Engineering will be combined into a single airfield recovery squadron.

To be raised in July, No. 65 Squadron will provide critical recovery capability if an airfield receives battlefield damage.

As part of transition arrangements, in May 2014, Airfield Engineering Flight and Explosive Ordnance Flight were removed from their respective parent units of 383 Contingency Response Squadron and 1 Security Forces Squadron and placed under the interim management of HQ 95 Wing.

OC 95WG GPCAPT Peter Davis said the new squadron’s number was a combination of the last bomb disposal and airfield construction squadrons – No. 6 Bomb Disposal Squadron and No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron.

The Airfield Recovery Squadron will sit within 95WG as a part of Combat Support Group.

Establishment of 65SQN will focus AFENG Flight and Explosive Ordnance Flight primary roles while allowing for collective management and employment of this essential capability,” he said.

Commander CSG AIRCDRE Scott Winchester said standardising airbase operations was one of the main reasons behind the CSG reorganisation.

He said the removal of AFENG Flight and Explosive Ordnance Flight would enable effective uniform delivery of expeditionary airbase and non-airbase operations.

“The new squadron will combine the unique forces of AFENG and EOD to create a capability that has not previously been combined within one unit,” AIRCDRE Winchester said.

He said there would be minimal impact to members already posted to these flights.

The majority of members would remain in their current location, with only a few movements required to staff a new 65SQN HQ to be established at RAAF Base Amberley.

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More AAFCANS as they go mobile

CPL Nick Wiseman

UPGRADES are planned for Army and Air Force Canteen Services around Australia, including mobile food vans that provide food, drinks and convenience items to workplaces away from the canteens.

More than $4.2 million has been invested over the past three financial years into AAFCANS outlets across Australia to provide a more valuable service to airmen and women.

With free Wi-Fi already available in many outlets, the organisation is determined to create a more relaxing and welcoming environment to enjoy a coffee or meal.

Army and Air Force Canteen Service board member AIRCDRE Ian Pearson said although a lot of hard work had already been done, there was still plenty ahead.

"AAFCANS exists to serve the members of the Army and Air Force," he said.

"People need to go in and have a look and see for themselves how it’s changed."

The most recent addition to the AAFCANS family is the new café at the Australian Defence Force Academy, while many outlets across Australia are scheduled for upgrades, including the introduction of new technologies such as Pay Wave to speed up service.

AIRCDRE Pearson said people had come a long way from the days where it was known as the local ‘greasy spoon’.

"While there is always the option to go get a made-to-order burger, we’re now providing updated food menus that are consistent with healthier expectations," he said.

"We want to create an environment where people can enjoy a contemporary café experience with good coffee, food and a meeting place for all ranks.”

AAFCANS also operate vending machines where profits are given back to the local base welfare committees to help improve local facilities and services.

In the previous financial year, profits from vending machines totalled more than $300,000.

Profits from the traditional AAFCANS outlets will assist in keeping prices of their items competitive with other facilities outside of the bases.

AIRCDRE Pearson said getting the service to where it is now, had been a massive turnaround.

"I think many people will be pleasantly surprised when they see what has changed and what is planned," he said.

AAFCANS has 34 outlets across 25 AFP bases with plans to increase that over the coming years.

More information can be found at www.aafcans.com.au

The Future of Canteens

- Trialling a ‘future food van’, which will include hot coffee on the go.
- Free Wi-Fi in all outlets.
- Modernising the menu incorporating healthier food options (as well as the old favourites).
- Branded vending machines at selected bases that keep profits local.
- Gift cards such as iTunes and other brands will be available later this year.
- Convenience shop-style outlets in some areas.
- Large screen Foxtel TVs in outlets.
- Upgrades such as Pay Wave to speed up transactions.

Pilots tested

FLGOFF Natalie Giles

THE Air Force’s best pilots are being put through their paces on the 2015 Fighter Combat Instructor (FCI) course.

The course aims to graduate expert leaders and instructors capable of tactics development, validation and instruction.

It is only the second time that F/A-18F Super Hornets are included in the course, which is held every two years.

This year’s activity runs from January 12 to June 26 at No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit at RAAF Base Williamtown.

Air Combat Group’s new Commander, AIRCDRE Steve Robertson, said the course was a test of skills.

“The Fighter Combat Instructor course takes experienced fighter aircrew and challenges them, at the highest level, in air combat tactics and large force employment,” AIRCDRE Robertson said.

“This is without doubt the most challenging course of a fighter pilot’s career.”

The inclusion of the Super Hornets adds further complexity to the planning and support provided to the course.

The FCI course will train F/A-18A Classic Hornet pilots and F/A-18F Super Hornet crews, with support being provided by squadrons within 81 and 82 Wings.

The course is also supported by the E-7A Wedgetail from No 33 Squadron at RAAF Base Williamtown and the KC-30 Multi-Role Tanker from No 33 Squadron at RAAF Base Amberley.

The Fighter Combat Controller and Fighter Intelligence Instructor courses are being run concurrently with the FCI course.

Upon graduation, the students will be able to put their newly developed skills into practice and make decisions that will help shape the way the Air Force fights.

This is particularly important given the current Operation Okra deployment in the Middle East.

“Operation Okra highlights the importance of graduating highly skilled aircrew capable of tactics development and planning at the highest level,” AIRCDRE Robertson said.

The course is being conducted primarily at RAAF Base Williamtown, but will move to RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal for the final month to use the Delamerie and Bradshaw Ranges.

The F/A-18 Super Hornets are scheduled to arrive at RAAF Base Williamtown on March 23 and will remain on base for five weeks.

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FOR the fifth time in the 25-year history of Defence Communications Station – Canberra’s Annual Efficiency Award, a non-Navy member, Air Force’s CPL Gavin Tyson, has won the coveted unit honour.

“It’s recognition for my team. They do all the hard work – I just manage them,” CPL Tyson said.

OIC LCDR Colin Coke presented the award last December last. The award goes to the junior sailor, airman or soldier who consistently performs to the highest standard and displays the strongest adherence to service values.

CPL Tyson said it was not something he expected to receive.

“I’m just doing my job,” he said.

“This is a project where you have to be fairly dynamic and the introduction of these technologies and my role can be quite challenging.

“I guess I’ve made life a little easier for my supervisors by being proactive and simplifying as much as possible.”

CPL Tyson and his team run a helpdesk at the communications station that provides support and assistance with the implementation of modern deployable communication technologies.

LCDR Coke said the award decision had been unanimous among the senior members of the unit.

“CPL Tyson not only led his team, but also had to step up to team leader due to his supervisor being sent overseas on operations,” he said.

“Undaunted, he also attended meetings on my behalf with contractors and users to provide subject matter expert input as to how we would provide support to the end user once deployed and how updates would be managed.

“I had several feedback calls and emails from end users on the exceptional support from CPL Tyson and his team and the help they received on resolving any issues they had.”

WOFF-AF Mark Pentreath will personally congratulate CPL Tyson later this year when he visits the Air Force component of the Defence Communications Station – Canberra.

“I continue to be immensely proud of the professionalism exhibited by our junior leaders across the Air Force,” he said.

“CPL Tyson’s award not only demonstrates his exceptional work ethic, but also his unwavering commitment to our Air Force values.”

With 2015 in full swing, CPL Tyson said it was back to business as usual.

“The award was a great acknowledgement of the team that we’re heading in the right direction,” he said.

“But there are still lots of challenges and work ahead because it is such a new system.”

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FLTLT Paul Bowes received a Royal Aeronautical Aviation Safety Award trophy and certificate and CAF Commendation and Badge for work on fixing FM interference in AP-3Cs in Afghanistan.

Photo CPL Colin Dadd

AFTG's focus on safety recognised

Denise Hughes

AIR Force Training Group (AFTG) says two safety awards and a CAF Commendation is evidence that it is continuing to improve and maintain a safe working environment. AFTG Chief of Staff GPCAPT Terence Deeth praised the efforts of AFTG personnel.

"The priority and effort our staff put into the management and betterment of safety systems reflects great credit on the members and units involved," he said.

The two recipients of 2014 safety awards were CPL Leon Suter, of the Air Force Band, and No. 31 (City of Wagga Wagga) Squadron. CPL Suter's award was in the category of Solution to an Identified Work Health and Safety Hazard for his work to find a solution to the ongoing issue of noise exposure for members of the unit. CPL Suter's work was further acknowledged when he received a CAF Commendation and a nomination for the Defence Safety Awards to be announced later this year.

After completion of a Defence Occupational Noise Officer course, CPL Suter undertook personal study, in his own time, to gain a deeper understanding of the area of noise exposure. He began collecting and analysing noise exposure within the band rehearsal room, on parade and in other venues. With this information, he was able to put forward suggestions of how the unit could be protected from noise exposure.

He then found suitable earplugs which the musicians are now using. CPL Suter also identified the need for less exposure to high-level noise over long periods in a single day, resulting in a new approach to rehearsals, and a noise management strategy and noise control plan.

In the 12 months since the introduction of these measures, members have had no further reduction in their hearing levels.

The second 2014 Safety Award was won by No. 31 (City of Wagga Wagga) Squadron in the category of Workplace Health and Safety Management.

The squadron is the smallest unit in the Air Force but it made a big effort to improve safety.

The unit set up a Safety Management System in compliance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. Even though the unit has a small number of personnel, that doesn't reduce the level of governance and reporting required, which is equal to any other unit.

FLTLT Paul Bowes received a Royal Aeronautical Aviation Safety Award trophy and certificate and CAF Commendation and Badge for work on fixing FM interference in AP-3Cs in Afghanistan.

SGT Dave Morley

AN AP-3C Orion captain has received a coveted Aviation Safety Award from the Royal Aeronautical Society (RAeS).

Aircraft Research and Development Unit pilot FLTLT Paul Bowes received the award for investigations he carried out on radio wave interference while operating an AP-3C out of Al Minhad Air Base in 2011.

This work also resulted in him receiving a CAF Commendation.

FLTLT Bowes said AP-3C crews had been regularly experiencing VHF Omnidirectional Range (VOR) bearing splits and fluctuations when navigating with reference to the Al Minhad VOR.

"The safety risks of false bearing indications were sufficient to warrant restrictions during instrument approach," he said.

"In 2011, new information regarding the calibration of the Al Minhad VOR became available to the AP-3C detachment and I suspected that the VOR anomalies may have stemmed from issues more complex than reliability of the Al Minhad VOR and investigated the matter further."

FLTLT Bowes' investigation identified the AP-3C displayed VOR bearing anomalies not present in other aircraft types operating from the air base.

He said he examined a range of issues and found the AP-3C VOR/ILS receivers were not certified immune to FM interference that arises from the increasing number of TV and radio stations around the world, and the observed bearing fluctuations at Al Minhad could be attributed to this.

"The investigation raised the profile of FM immunity within No. 92 Wing and Maritime Patrol Systems Program Office and triggered raised awareness of FM immunity within Air Force and foreign operators of P-3 aircraft as a worldwide issue," he said.

He said he was surprised to receive the award.

FLTLT Bowes said the benefits of his investigations to Air Force were AP-3C crews were now aware of the vulnerability.

"C-130J Hercules have been modified to remove the vulnerability and, although ultimately the likelihood was low, the knowledge and engineering outcomes have removed this issue as a potential cause for an ADF aircraft accident," he said.

The RAeS Australian Division awards an Aviation Safety Award annually to Defence to recognise individuals who have displayed innovation and excellence in safety management.

In 2014, for the first time, the award was presented to two co-winners.

Rhys Lehmann, of Defence Science and Technology Aerospace Division, also received an award for his work to improve the safety of Chinook operations after the fatal crash of a CH-47D in Afghanistan.
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The industry-only Trade Sessions of the 2015 Australian International Airshow and Aerospace & Defence Exposition are Tuesday 24, Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 February and until 1400 on Friday 27 February. Only qualified trade visitors may attend during these times. These industry-only Trade Sessions are reserved for those with a professional, business or operational involvement in aviation, aerospace, defence or related government or industry sectors.

Registration as a trade visitor is required. Business card, company identification, applicable association membership card, CASA license or similar evidence of qualification may be required as a part of the registration process.

The cost of entry as a trade visitor to Avalon 2015 is AUD$60 per person per day.

Defence personnel will be given FREE entry on Tuesday 24 to Thursday 26 February and until 2pm on Friday 27 February on presentation of their current Defence identification.

No person under the age of 16 years will be admitted during the Trade Sessions.

FSGT Leslie Overland

A NO. 10 Squadron airborne electronics analyst has achieved 10,000 hours of flight time.

WOFF David Gelling achieved the 10,000 hours during a surveillance patrol late last year and has had the privilege of flying on P-3B, P-3C and AP-3C Orion variants in his career, which has spanned more than three decades.

The recent milestone just adds to his long list of achievements. WOFF David Gelling reached 8760 hours in 2010, equivalent to a year in the air. He was only the second AEA to do so.

He has also accomplished the rare milestone of an A Category for his operation of the radar on a P-3C in 2001.

WOFF Gelling joined Air Force in 1984 as an airborne electronics analyst, after persisting with an IT degree at university for several years.

He admits that at that age he couldn’t have begun to imagine such a lengthy career and 10,000 hours in the air.

WOFF Gelling graduated from Airmen Aircrew Flying Training School in Edinburgh in January 1985 before proceeding on to P-3C Conversion Course where he became a categorised AEA in July.

During his lengthy career, WOFF Gelling has held categories in radar, acoustics, non-commissioned sensor employment manager and electronic warfare.

He said he felt fortunate to have remained in flying roles for the majority of his service.

“There have been so many highlights as there’s always a new challenge, even now,” he said.

One of the biggest challenges had been the change in specialisation from acoustic warfare to electronic warfare because “it really is fundamentally different and requires a different way of thinking”.

Crew Captain FLTLT Michael Holding said “we’re fortunate to have the benefit of WOFF Gelling’s extensive experience, not just in the operation of the aircraft sensors, but as an experienced P-3 aviator and warrant officer in the Air Force”.

WOFF Gelling said the milestone would not have been possible without the support of, and acceptance by, his family for his passion for flying maritime.

With the draw down of the AP-3C and introduction of the P-8 Poseidon, WOFF Gelling is once again looking forward to new challenges.
13 YEARS COME TO AN END

Resolute mission in Afghanistan as Operation Slipper changes to Operation Highroad, MAJ Sarah Hawke reports.

The 13-year ISAF mission in Afghanistan has come to an end. The official announcement was made by the new NATO-led train, advise and assist mission, Resolute Support, formally in January 1.

As part of the official handover ceremony, ADF Brigadier Nick White, who led Resolute Support Operations and Resolute Support, said:

"We're always chasing reports of potential threats in the environment. It's important to ensure all the advisers are prepared for the threats they're dealing with. The inauguration of the National Unity Government and the start of the Afghan Security Forces' assumption of responsibility during the historic 2014 presidential election is an opportunity to build momentum behind projects identified under the Fund. Resolute Support is a trust fund manager with a portfolio of projects to develop the required governance levels needed for long-term stability in Afghanistan.

"The Afghan National Security Forces take the lead on a number of projects identified under the Fund. Resolute Support is a trust fund manager with a portfolio of projects to develop the required governance levels needed for long-term stability in Afghanistan. The Afghan National Security Forces take the lead on a number of projects identified under the Fund. Resolute Support is a trust fund manager with a portfolio of projects to develop the required governance levels needed for long-term stability in Afghanistan."
Feature

17SQN welcomes visit of Air Force leadership team to RAAF Base Tindal for first time, LACW Chloe Stevenson reports.

O. 17 Squadron, which holds the Hawker Siddeley Trophy for being Air Force’s most proficient support squadron, will have a VIP audience this week.

For the first time, the Air Force leadership team will hold its forum at RAAF Base Tindal.

Up to 40 one-star and two-star officers are expected for the forum from February 11-13 to discuss strategic matters.

CO 17SQN WGCDR Mark Larter said the forum coincided with visits by CAF and Defence Secretary Dennis Richardson.

“It is a fantastic chance to really demonstrate what we’re achieving here in the Top End,” he said.

“Those achievements are notable because 17SQN entered 2014 with a new complexion after No. 322 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron and Air Movements Section had been assimilated into the squadron.

“So the beginning of 2014 heralded a new horizon for 17SQN members,” WGCDR Larter said.

“The unit structure had been changed and we were looking down the barrel of an unrelenting exercise period.

“But the members of 17SQN rose to that challenge with positivity and resilience, providing unyielding support to base operations.

“And he expects that to continue.

“With a busy year already under way, and the dry season exercise period looming, I put my full confidence once again in 17SQN personnel to face our future challenges with all the tenacity, determination and professionalism I have come to expect from our hard-working team.”

And he expects that to continue.

“With a busy year already under way, and the dry season exercise period looming, I put my full confidence once again in 17SQN personnel to face our future challenges with all the tenacity, determination and professionalism I have come to expect from our hard-working team.”

WGCDR Larter said 17SQN paused in December to take stock of its achievements in the year since members of the former 322ECSS were presented with the new blue-brimmed caps of 17SQN.

At a Commanding Officers’ call end-of-year address, WGCDR Larter expressed his gratitude for the members’ dedication and diligence throughout an unprecedented period of high-tempo exercise activity. He also complimented 17SQN members on their outstanding adherence to CAF’s values and Pathways to Change culture.

He said they had also earned praise from high-ranking domestic and international guests through the year.

Several medals, commendations and promotions were presented.

One went to new mother LACW Kate Toohey, who was awarded a Commanding Officers’ Commendation for her work in the 17SQN warehouse throughout the Tindal distribution of the General Purpose Uniform.

LACW Toohey said the commendation was unexpected.

“I am very grateful to have received this award. It has rounded off for me what has been a great posting,” LACW Toohey said.

Meanwhile, 17SQN Supply Services has received a new state-of-the-art narrow aisle side-loader forklift.

The new forklift was custom-built for the existing infrastructure of the 17SQN warehouse after consultation with the squadron over the past 20 months.

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Sea rescue recognition

A number of Air Force members were among those honoured in the Australia Day awards. CPL Mark Doran talks to two of them.

For his outstanding devotion to duty, WOFF John Lindsay, of No. 92 Wing Aircraft Life Support Section, was awarded the Conspicuous Service Cross (CSC) on Australia Day.

WOFF Lindsay and his team at RAAF Base Edinburgh are responsible for the safety and survival equipment fitted to aircraft or worn by aircrew, as well as providing training should it be required in a serious aircraft emergency.

WOFF Lindsay was recognised for his dedication, which was seen as critical in enhancing operational capability within his section.

His innovation, vision and inspirational leadership had resulted in the delivery of an improved and sustainable Air Sea Rescue capability that would save lives at sea.

The Glasgow-born warrant officer was initially stumped when he was informed he was receiving the CSC and thought someone was pulling his leg.

“I still haven’t adjusted to the fact it has been awarded, though I am sure it will eventually sink in and I can enjoy it for what it is,” WOFF Lindsay says.

“The response has been overwhelming. I have received an abundance of congratulatory handshakes, phone calls and emails, but 92WG is a very busy environment and has a habit of bringing you back to earth rather quickly.”

“My wife, FLGOFF Angeline Bove, was a bit miffed because she received a phone call from a workmate after the announcements were made on Australia Day who asked her to congratulate me on being awarded the CSC.

“The cat was out of the bag. I had been requested to keep it quiet, so I did.”

As a former sailor with the Royal Navy who also spent many years on Her Majesty’s Yacht Britannia, WOFF Lindsay joined RAAF in 1991 after a visit to Australia on holidays made him decide to migrate.

As the Warrant Officer in Charge of the Aircraft Life Support Section, WOFF Lindsay says he thought devotion to duty was just part of the job.

“This award also reflects the efforts of all the people I have worked with and highlights the Aircraft Life Support Fitter trade and the capability we provide Air Force.”

CPL Cameron Lambert was awarded the Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM) for meritorious devotion to duty in the Airfield Engineering Flight at No. 383 Squadron.

CPL Lambert has been in the Air Force for close to seven years as an electrician and is posted to RAAF Base Townsville.

His role involves working with his team to provide field power reticulation for Defence assets at airfields, including remote airbases during exercises and overseas operations.

CPL Lambert says it was a humbling experience to be awarded the CSM and be recognised for his achievements.

“I don’t like to rely on the phrase, ‘oh, that’s the way RAAF has always done it’. I’m always looking for new and better ways to complete tasks and I ensure my peers know they can help develop each other and our mustering.

“My wife, FLGOFF Angeline Bove, was a bit miffed because she received a phone call from a workmate after the announcements were made on Australia Day who asked her to congratulate me on being awarded the CSC.

“The cat was out of the bag. I had been requested to keep it quiet, so I did.”

As a former sailor with the Royal Navy who also spent many years on Her Majesty’s Yacht Britannia, WOFF Lindsay joined RAAF in 1991 after a visit to Australia on holidays made him decide to migrate.

As the Warrant Officer in Charge of the Aircraft Life Support Section, WOFF Lindsay says he thought devotion to duty was just part of the job.

“I was just doing what I needed to do to make sure my personnel were being looked after and to ensure we provided our capability,” he says.

“This award also reflects the efforts of all the people I have worked with and highlights the Aircraft Life Support Fitter trade and the capability we provide Air Force.”

Second-best won’t do for this electrician

Slipper in 2009-10 and has returned recently from a short stint in the MER as part of Operation Okra.

He says joining the Air Force has given him the opportunities to travel and be a pivotal part of critical operations.

“Working in the Middle East has been fantastic for my career,” he says.

“We were able to work alongside the United States Air Force engineering element, which provided the opportunity to further our skills and working relationship.

“I want to continue to challenge myself in my career and may consider a commission in the near future.

“Devotion to duty to me means I do everything in my capacity to further my troops in their careers and promote the vital skills my mustering provides within our organisation.”

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Record-breaking reservist

He’s run 100km a week, in freezing cold and blistering heat, in preparation for the North Pole, Michael Brooke reports.

A

ctic adventurer LAC Marcus Fillinger will embark on a record-breaking polar ice dive expedition and the world’s coolest marathon in April.

LAC Fillinger, a No. 28 Squadron photographer at the Army History Unit, will return to the scene of his world-first solo dive at the North Pole in 2003 to help the under-ice free-diving champion, Austrian Christian Redl, with a record-breaking dive attempt under the polar ice cap.

LAC Fillinger will serve as the safety-diver for the descent.

He says while his experiences from 2003 will help prepare him, there are always issues such as movement of the ice cap that can add days to the journey. “Polar expeditions are always difficult, presenting inimitable challenges and dangers,” he says.

While we will be travelling with a team of huskies, each of us will be hauling 130kg of gear so there’s a mental toughness we will need to have to overcome the worst of what nature can dish out.”

LAC Fillinger says the expedition could involve other dangers such as polar bears.

“I will carry a can of bear deterrent pepper spray, which has a range of 12m,” he says.

“We will also have the dogs as sentries when we sleep or do the dive.”

Before the expedition, LAC Fillinger will tackle the North Pole Marathon on April 9, which will involve as many as 30 runners from around the globe.

“I will be running in -40C, which will pose all kinds of hardships,” he says.

“Your ice-mask builds up, your lungs almost freeze, and after a few laps you are perspiring in your cold-resistant clothing, which can cause frost-bite.”

“The marathon is a constant process of thawing yourself out, removing sweat-soaked clothing, and even multiple forms of foot-wear because the sea ice we run on turns to slush with so many people running on it.”

LAC Fillinger says a Russian Antonov 26 twin-engine aircraft will carry the competitors from Svalbard in Norway to ice-base Borneo, a scientific research station on the North Pole.

“The organisers will use a bulldozer to create a purpose-built 1km race track, which we will complete 42 laps of,” he says.

“I will just be happy to finish the circuit, but weather permitting that could be in about five hours, which includes stops to rehydrate and eat protein.”

To prepare for the marathon LAC Fillinger did running and exposure training at Charlotte’s Pass in NSW during the winter, but to keep his training up he also had to tackle the heat of summer.

“I have run 100km each week, first in freezing cold, and now in blistering heat, to maintain a steady level of fitness,” he says.

LAC Fillinger has completed numerous expeditions over the past 20 years and he says his most significant lesson was never go anywhere, including the North Pole, without your credit card.

“The operators of the Antonov 26 aircraft are very particular about daily exchange rates for aviation fuel purchases, which we need to be cognisant of, because there are not many other transport options at the North Pole,” he said.

LAC Fillinger hopes to raise awareness of his charity, Alphadog AnimalArmy, to continue the rescue work of native wildlife and domestic animals.

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Conquering the west

THE Air Force Balloon had never been west of Burnie in trips to Tasmania over the past 25 years – but it pushed new boundaries when it visited the island late last year.

Over three days, it visited schools in Smithton, Stanley and Queens town for educational visits that included display flights and discussions.

At the invitation of the Van Diemen Company, the crew also visited Cape Grim, the extreme west point of Tasmania, where former Air Force member Nigel Somerville mans the Bureau of Meteorology weath er station, collecting data vital to enhancing planetary climate models.

The north-west coast area presented national parks, plantation forests, intensive agriculture and complex maritime weather patterns. The difficult conditions make hot air balloons a rare sight in the region. PTOFF Derrin Lou said a number of students asked him about the process to join the Air Force.

“A highlight for me was the interaction with the local community and their interest in the displays and balloon flights,” he said.

The Air Force Balloon has another busy year planned, with visits to Melbourne, the Canberra Balloon Spectacular, Camden Military Tattoo, and support for the Paroo Shire Anzac Centenary celebrations in outback Queensland and Western Australia.

You can follow the balloon at www.facebook.com/RAAF.Balloon

Ted’s big adventure

WHEN CPL Kyra Poole decided to use an Air Force teddy bear at Australia’s Logistics Base in the Middle East Region as a communications tool for her two sons at home in Australia, she probably didn’t count on VIP attention.

Ted got his photo taken with both Prime Minister Tony Abbott and CDF ACM Mark Binskin during the PM’s visit late last year.

CPL Poole, of the Air Load Team for Operation Accordion, was chuffed with Mr Abbott’s interest.

“He really appreciated the concept of having a communication tool like this and seemed to get a real kick out of it,” she said.

“I photograph my bear doing things around work and my boys do the same with their bear for things around home.

“We exchange photos and it’s a good way for us to have things to talk about.”

CPL Poole said her bear was a common sight around the ALT section and everybody knew its story.

“Ted often pops up anywhere where I am working and is great for morale around the section,” she said.

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He was Australia’s first military pilot to graduate at Point Cook, served as the first Chief of Air Staff and earned the moniker of the Father of the Air Force, writes the Office of Air Force History.

Sir Richard Williams circa 1977. This studio portrait of the RAAF’s first Chief of Air Staff adorns the cover of his autobiography These are Facts. Sir Richard was wearing an original RAAF uniform. Despite being presented with the new uniform introduced in 1971, he never wore it, stating ‘I am inevitably, sentimentally attached to the dark blue which distinguished the RAAF for its first 50 years’.

Photos courtesy of the Office of Air Force History.

THE RAAF lost one of its founding fathers when AIRMSHL Sir Richard Williams died on February 7, 1980, 35 years ago.

Being the first Australian military pilot to complete pilots’ training at Point Cook, and with extensive combat and command experience with No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps (AFC), Richard Williams was to become an important figure in Australian aviation history.

He went on to become the major force behind the creation of the RAAF and served as the first Chief of Air Staff, a position he held for most of the 1920s and ‘30s.

Born in Moonta, South Australia, Williams enlisted in the Australian Military Forces at 19. In 1914, he attended the first pilot training course at Point Cook and was the first member of the course to graduate, having trained on Bristol Boxkites and BE2a aircraft.

Promoted to Captain in January 1916, Williams was posted to a flight commander position in ISQN, AFC, shortly before it was to sail for Egypt.

Flying BE2c biplanes, Williams’ squadron provided support to the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in its advance towards Palestine.

Early in 1917, Williams led his flight of five aircraft in an attack on a Turkish cavalry division.

The attack, conducted under anti-aircraft fire, caused such damage that the Turkish commander had to cancel the attack he was preparing.

On another occasion, Williams landed in the desert to rescue an AFC pilot who had been shot down behind enemy lines.

For his gallantry over this period, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in April 1917.

Given command of ISQN in May, Williams’ formal but fair dealings with his subordinates earned him respect.

Twice mentioned in dispatches in January 1918, he was promoted to temporary lieutenant-colonel on June 28 and seconded to command the 40th Wing of the Royal Flying Corps.

Williams’ war service was further recognised when he was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in January 1919.

Back in Australia, he sat on a board of Navy and Army officers tasked with developing a policy for the new Air Force.

When the Air Board was established in 1920, Williams was the senior member, with the rank of Wing Commander.

He continued to guide the service after its formation on March 31, 1921, with his title being changed to Chief of Air Staff on October 2, 1922.

Between September and December 1926, with a fellow pilot and a mechanic, Williams undertook a round trip in a seaplane from Point Cook, along the Australian east coast to Papua, New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands.

The object of the flight was to study the area from a defence point of view and to gain experience in operating away from base.

For accomplishing the feat without serious incident or delay, he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1927.

During the Depression years when tight budgets inhibited the growth of all three services, Williams fought successive proposals to abolish the Air Force as a separate service.

In 1933, having secured the future of the Air Force, Williams attended the Imperial Defence College, London.

Promoted to Air Vice-Marshal in 1935, he finally achieved equivalence by the industry, while maintaining an enviable safety record.

He was appointed Knight of the Order of the British Empire in 1954. Later, he retained his connection to the Air Force through his role as President of the Air Force Association.

When he died on February 7, 1980, in Melbourne, Williams was remembered as the Father of the Air Force.
NEW continuous improvement measures for the scheduling of maintenance test flights (MTF) for AP-3C Orions have reduced significant delays.

Members from No. 92 Wing, Maritime Patrol SPO (Defence Materiel Organisation) and Airbus recently implemented the measures to ensure flying hours for MTF and transit activities could be minimised. This resulted in more hours for operations and raise train sustain (RTS) activities being created.

The measures also resulted in a reduction of time taken for an R3 maintenance test flight and pickup. The post R3 maintenance test flight and pickup times have now improved from an average of 15 days to an average of five days.

OC 92WG GPCAPT Phil Champion said the benefits were clear. “The better coordination of activity between the three organisations helps lessen the burden on 92WG resources so more effort can be invested in delivering important JOC-related operations as well as high-end warfighting skills and RTS activities,” he said.

Aircraft availability for tasking at 92WG had been impacted through delays in the pick up of aircraft from the Airbus deeper level maintenance R3 servicing line in Richmond. On completion of an R3, each aircraft is required to complete a MTF before a separate transit flight back to RAAF Base Edinburgh. There were often significant delays, sometimes for up to three weeks. An Airbus initiative discovered a number of causes for the delays.

Airbus Richmond adopted a more flexible seven-day work schedule. Airbus Richmond also agreed to stagger shift starts to accommodate MTFs as well as some other workforce process improvement initiatives.

92WG’s training element, No. 292 Squadron, has assumed responsibility to schedule its crews for MTFs and transit flights back to Edinburgh, which has lessened the impact on operational crew availability.

Lessons-learnt meetings between Airbus maintainers, MPSPO, aircrew and 92WG Operations will occur after the activity in order to ensure ongoing success.

Cutting the delays

THE NEW MEASURES

As a result of the initiative, the following changes to maintenance test flight practices have been delivered:

> A Standing Instruction for post R3 MTFs was created.
> Coordination of activities now occurs between Airbus, MPSPO, aircrew and 92WG Operations up to three weeks before drop off/pickup activities.
> Engine-related issues are identified and agreed between aircrew and maintainers after the engine runs that are conducted on the delivery date.
> The Fleet Planning Steering Group identifies and pre-positions aircraft test flight spares to reduce delays caused by failures on start-up.
> Consultation with ALSPO occurs to assist with T56 engine preservation/rotation during the deeper level maintenance R3 activity.
> Airbus Richmond adopted a more flexible seven-day work schedule.
> Airbus Richmond also agreed to stagger shift starts to accommodate MTFs as well as some other workforce process improvement initiatives.

92WG’s training element, No. 292 Squadron, has assumed responsibility to schedule its crews for MTFs and transit flights back to RAAF Base Edinburgh, which has lessened the impact on operational crew availability.

Lessons-learnt meetings between Airbus maintainers, MPSPO, aircrew and 92WG Operations will occur after the activity in order to ensure ongoing success.

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Avital Terkowski

GRIEVANCES will be redressed more quickly under changes to streamline the way Defence personnel report and manage incidents and deal with complaints.

The CDF, supported by the Service Chiefs, has directed changes to responsibilities, policies and practices that support ADF decision making, particularly on military justice issues.

The CDF-directed initiative Re-thinking Systems Review Implementation (RSRI) will be rolled out from March.

LTGEN Mark Evans, who is leading the initiative, said the changes were designed to provide a fair and efficient system to resolve personnel issues as quickly as possible.

"RSRI is about ensuring our men and women won’t have to wait months or years for a decision to be made, and that these decisions are equitable," he said. "We are focusing on less complex and quicker processes for incident and complaint recording and reporting and redress of grievance."

He said the changes included empowering commanders to make decisions and supporting commanders in the decision-making process.

The changes were also removing decision-making complexity for junior commanders.

"We are going to have a much simpler incident reporting process that’s less legalistic, and involves fewer layers of review," LTGEN Evans said.

"The CDF and Service Chiefs expect commanders to make just and equitable decisions in a timely way and quicker processes for incident and complaint recording and reporting and redress of grievance."

"Clear in my mind then was that earliest intervention on some of these matters was the best solution," he said.

"Generally, the longer an issue is allowed to remain unresolved the more difficult it becomes to fix."

He said if there was one thing he would like to achieve out of RSRI, it "would be that we are outcomes focused rather than process focused."

"It is about a command that is robust and can make decisions and it is about our people being content that the organisation is looking after them fairly," he said.

"Decisions won’t always go in their favour, but they will be based on good judgement."

The longer an issue is allowed to remain unresolved the more difficult it becomes to fix. — LTGEN Mark Evans

KEY CHANGES

Stage 1: Jan – June 2015

- The release of revised incidence reporting (DI(G) Admin 45-2).
- Incident Recording (DI(G) Admin 67-2 and Form AE530 – Defence Incident Record).
- Guide to Decision-Making in Defence (including fact finding guidance).
- Stage 2: July – December 2015
- Interim ICT system based on the Defence Policing and Security Management System for incident recording and reporting, consistent to the three services.
- Consolidation of DI(G) Admin 45-2 and DI(G) Admin 67-2 into a combined, single incident reporting and incident recording Defence instruction, supported by a fast fact finding manual.
- Roll-out of online forms for incident reporting and recording.

Stage 3: Beyond January 2016

- Intention to roll-out an Enterprise Recording Reporting and Case Management system to replace the interim ICT system.
- Review, de-conflict and consolidate policies related to inquiries.

Welcome for families

THE Defence Community Organisation hosts events around the country each year to welcome members and their families to their new posting locations.

The events allow families to find out about services and activities in their area and meet other Defence families in a relaxed setting.

Acting regional director DCO Sharon Scouller said some events were low-key morning teas while others, like those in Townsville and Darwin, were full-scale expos with community stalls, local government representatives, ADF equipment displays and live entertainment.

She said while there was a focus on people new to each location, all ADF members and their families were welcome to attend.

“Moving to a new community can sometimes be daunting, so our area offices put an emphasis on connecting families with each other and community groups in each area,” she said.


IN BRIEF

Submissions extended

SUBMISSIONS to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs’ review into its Statement of Principles for Chronic Multisystem Illness have been extended to March 27. Written submissions should be made to the Specialist Medical Review Council by email, SMRC_registrar@dva.gov.au, or post, Council Secretariat PO Box 895, Woden ACT 2606.

Prince of Wales award

APPLICATIONS are open for the Prince of Wales award. The award gives reservists an opportunity to undertake a training or development activity, either in Australia or overseas, related to their civilian occupation or profession and is worth up to $8000. Applications close on February 28 (Defence Form PH 441). For more information, see Defgram 630/2014, Military Personnel Manual Chapter 2, Part B – Prince of Wales Award, or www.defencereserves.gov.au for more information.

Claims deadline

CLAIMS for RAAF DASS and Studybank reimbursement must be submitted as soon as possible (and no later than March 31). After this cut-off date claims will not be paid even if funding has been approved. Claims can be emailed to education_assistance@defence.gov.au or faxed to (02) 6127 8846. For further information, visit the Education Assistance Schemes website on the Defence intranet.

The longer an issue is allowed to remain unresolved the more difficult it becomes to fix. — LTGEN Mark Evans
Sleeping while on the job

HEN members deploy there are many tasks to complete and worry about, from fitness and health to administration, but not many people think of a basic human function – sleep.

Sleeping is rarely in the forefront of people’s minds, but it is the one function that can make or break you during deployment.

Psychologist Mark Gribble, of the Royal Military College – Duntroon, said sleeping on deployment could be a different type of sleep to what we normally get at home.

“We need to look at what sleep deficits will occur on deployment,” he said.

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“As an example, if a soldier is very fatigued they can take a nap between watches,” he said.

“If you can get a 20 to 40 minute nap it can be hugely beneficial and make you refreshed and alert.

“You may need more sleep but it is a good immediate top-up on the sleep you may have missed.”

Mr Gribble said men were the worst at addressing the lack of sleep because they thought they could keep fighting through it.

“They need to have some markers to check if they are being productive or need rest,” he said.

“You need to be aware of yourself.”

He said there were two things personnel could do to check if they needed more sleep.

“Breathe and talk to yourself,” Mr Gribble said.

“Ask yourself questions such as ‘why am I feeling like this?’ and ‘how will I perform better?’ then take 20 minutes off.”

Lack of good quality sleep is not only an issue on deployment.

Mr Gribble said most people had never been taught what good sleep was and how to do it properly.

“Forty per cent of the population will report in any given year that they have sleep problems,” he said.

Fortunately, we have one of the best uniformed psychology units in the world.

“Three hours of investment to fix the problem may be all you need and it’s free.”

For more information, the ADF Mental Health Strategy Sleeping Soundly fact sheet is available by clicking on the ‘Fact Sheets’ tab at http://intranet.defence.gov.au/vcdf/sites/DMH/

A good night’s sleep might be just what the doctor ordered, CPL Aaron Curran reports.

Taking time out for a quick nap could help keep you alert.

Photo: Michael Franchi

February 12, 2015

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Hawaii run fulfills goal

Four PCOs made a pact a year ago to do the Honolulu Marathon together, SGT Dave Morley reports.

A YEAR’S hard training paid off for four personnel capability officers (PCOs), three from RAAF Wagga and one from AFHQ Canberra, when they took part in the Honolulu Marathon.

Early last year, WGCDR Wendy Gill and her daughter SQNLDR Naomi Gill, WGCDR Jo Elkington and SQNLDR Lisa Power set themselves a challenge to run a marathon.

WGCDR Gill and SQNLDR Gill had both completed marathons previously but wanted to improve their times and felt the group approach would assist with their motivation and training efforts.

WGCDR Elkington had completed one 42km event 26 years ago.

“We progressed through the training for the marathon throughout the year, which included opportunities to compete in various activities such as the Canberra running festival, Sunshine Coast half-marathon and Sydney City-to-Surf,” she says.

SQNLDR Gill says the event started in the dark at 5am, which meant they arrived on December 14.

The day of the Honolulu Marathon arrived on December 14.

SQNLDR Gill says the event started in the dark at 5am, which meant getting up at 3am to arrive at the start line along with about 35,000 other participants.

“The image of doing a marathon in Hawaii is probably a beautiful sunny day, perhaps a bit tropical, maybe a bit humid, but basically a pleasant day, perhaps a bit tropical, maybe a bit humid, but basically a pleasant weather experience,” she says.

“Forget that image. It was a cold morning, pouring with rain and wind squalls throughout the day. The wind blew sideways across the main route and at times blew runners’ hats off. “The weather made the task for the volunteer officials more unpleasant than they had anticipated.

“All four PCOs achieved the goals they had set.

SQNLDR Gill completed the marathon in 4hrs 30mins, and WGCDR Gill finished in 5:33.

WGCDR Elkington finished in 7hr with SQNLDR Power 4min behind her.

WGCDR Gill says the key to the achievement was the group working together to support and encourage each other, even in the early days when work and family priorities competed with training priorities and fitness.

“We were happy to report a fantastic sense of achievement, from the marathon itself as well as the fitness and training that paid off throughout the year,” she says.

“It certainly provided a focus and created a team challenge to all get over the line.

“Doing a marathon is as much a mental challenge as a physical one, which reinforces the individual’s mental strength and resilience.”

WGCDR Gill says they had all become a little addicted and were looking forward to their next marathons.

“Potentially we will do the Gold Coast marathon in July or one in New Zealand in November,” she says.

The four PCOs were among just a handful of runners from Australia.

SQNLDR Lisa Power, WGCDR Jo Elkington, WGCDR Wendy Gill and SQNLDR Naomi Gill.

When SQNLDR Power was deployed as the PCO for Task Group 633.2, Australian Air Component, she continued most of her training there.

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“All of the runners even decided to ditch their shoes because they were so wet,” SQNLDR Gill says.

Challenge yourself over 100km

DEFENCE members are being sought to take part in the Anzac Anniversary 100km challenge on April 25.

Participants will cover a 100km course while raising funds for Soldier On and Mates4Mates.

Participants will start at St Ives Showground in Sydney and finish at the Manly-Warringah War Memorial Park at Manly Dam.

The 100km challenge can be split into three sections.

• 27km with each member in a team.
• 33km in a relay team consisting of two members.
• 40km in an individual challenge.

Participants can then choose one of the three members.

It can be tackled as 100km solo, in a team covering the 100km together or in a relay team consisting of two or three members.

In the case of a relay team, participants can then choose one of the 27km, 33km or 40km sections.

For more information visit www.anzacdaychallenge.com.au/biganzac/index

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For more information visit www.anzacdaychallenge.com.au/biganzac/index

Get all your news and sport in AIRFORCE News

Most people wouldn’t rate skydiving as much of an indoor sport, but the Taipan Defence team which won the four-man formation title at the ADF parachute championships might beg to differ.

Along with other competitors, the team used the new vertical wind tunnel in Sydney to hone its skills in the lead-up to the titles in Sydney in December, where it won for the third year in a row.

A number of RAAF personnel were among the 40 Defence skydivers to challenge each other in a race against the clock to complete formations while in freefall at more than 200kmh.

Eight teams contested the four-man freefall.

The event requires a four-person team to leave an aircraft simultaneously then complete as many stipulated formations as they can in a 35 second window.

The Air Force members were SqnLdr Sean Walsh, who was team captain, and WOFF Shaunn Segon, the team photographer.

“We have worked hard to keep the team largely intact over the past four years,” SqnLdr Walsh said.

“The usual ADF pressures did force one change in the line-up and geography made getting together to train difficult.

“However, we were fortunate to be able to schedule some time in the excellent new vertical wind tunnel in Sydney and this gave us the opportunity to get together in simulated freefall before the event and this certainly contributed to the team winning again."

He said he and WOFF Segon, who have been members of the team from its birth, were both thrilled to have won gold again.

WOFF Segon has a front-seat view.

“As a cameraman I get to see the competition from a different perspective,” he said.

“It can be really challenging to be in the correct spot to film as the teams complete large formation moves.”

The ADF parachute championships went for five days, during which 800 descents were made.

WOFF Kris Siczewski travelled from No. 75 Squadron at RAAF Base Tindal.

“It is a long way to go for a sporting event but well worth the effort,” he said.

“Skydiving is similar to flying in some ways as you rehearse a plan on the ground that you want to execute in the air.”

The championships will be held again in the last working week of 2015.

For more information about the Australian Defence Parachute Association, email skydiving@defence.gov.au

Surfers hone skills at camp

From Back Page

FLTLT Colless-White said the Hurley High Performance Centre helped fix little mistakes of both experienced and inexperienced surfers.

“It provided all riders access to world-class surf coaches and the HHPC’s cutting-edge services, including surf sessions with video analysis, skateboard sessions, breath control, strength and pool training,” he said.

“Unfortunately, the surfing conditions were less than ideal during our time in Tweed Heads but they improved slightly for the Air Force championships,” FLTLT Colless-White said.

FLTLT Vanessa Stothart, who won the women’s component of the Air Force titles, said before the training camp she struggled with duck diving.

“The camp was great and the skate sessions, nutrition advice and video analysis helped a lot,” she said.

“It is the best thing in the world to see improvements in your results.

“We need more females to embrace the sport so I say to them give it a go and get out there.”

LAC Joshua Peate, of RAAF Base Richmond, won the shortboard category and Colin McIntosh took out the longboard category.

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Training courses will be commencing in February 2015 – proudly supported and subsidised by the Commonwealth Government A to B Program for Tradies and the Northern Territory Government under the NT Training Entitlement (subject to funding eligibility).
Crest of a Wave

CPL Aaron Curran

Air Force surfers should be at their peak for the interservice championship after participating in a training camp and the single-service competition on the Gold Coast.

Twenty-two Air Force surfers have been chosen to go head to head with Army and Navy’s best at One Mile Beach near Newcastle in May. They were selected after the Air Force Surfing Championships from November 23-28 following the training camp at the Hurley High Performance Centre (HHPC), which is the surfing branch of the Australian Institute of Sport.

The camp aimed to prepare the team members for the interservice titles by providing them with added skills training and information to make them better competitors.

Air Force Surf Riders Association (AFSRA) president FLTLT Nick Colless-White said the training provided sustained and improved skills required for high-level performance at the interservice titles.

“This was the first time that Air Force surfers attended a training camp at the HHPC,” he said.

“After seeing what they provided our members it won’t be the last. The camp was a huge success, and by all reports, every member improved significantly over the two days we attended,” FLTLT Colless-White said.

Continued, Page 27

Shortboard winner LAC Joshua Poate hits the lip of a wave during the Air Force Surfing Championships.

Photo: CPL Shannon McCarthy

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