
RAAF Association (ACT Division)

Patron: Air Vice-Marshal Roxley McLennan AO (Retd)

President: Judy Webster

www.raafaact.org.au



NEWSLETTER September 2021



The Air Force Association is a non-profit organisation promoting social activities, welfare, commemoration events, aviation history and the memory of fallen friends.

ACTIVITIES AHEAD

11 NOV 2021 **Remembrance Day**
To be advised

22 NOV 2021 **General Meeting and lunch**
Ainslie Football Club
1200 for 1230

COVID-19 and ACT Lockdown

Most Canberrans will be aware that the current lockdown is scheduled until 17 SEP 21, all being well. Also, most will know that the AWM is closed until further notice—hopefully, they will reopen in SEP also.

LAST POST CEREMONIES -AWM

The Last Post ceremonies at the AWM have been cancelled, maybe for the remainder of 2021. Sharon Bown has produced a 2022 List which can be downloaded from the ACT Divn web site—but can't be saved back to the web page. Advise Sharon with your preferred volunteer 'slots' or if you have any queries.

PUBLIC FEEDBACK - AWM

With early and enabling works approved, the Director AWM seeks public feedback on the architectural designs of the three Main Works packages at the AWM: the new Southern Entrance, the CEW Bean Building extension, and the new Anzac Hall and Glazed Link.

Australians can offer feedback on the proposed designs and share their ideas for design improvements. Submissions close at 5pm on 10 September. See www.raafaact.org.au

TALISMAN SABRE 21

Talisman Sabre 2, a bilateral exercise with the USA, concluded at the end of July after three weeks activities in Queensland and Northern Territory, with a short activity at Evans Head Weapons Range in NSW. The exercise involved 17,000 personnel, mostly Australian and US, with a number from South Korea, Japan, Canada, Great Britain and New Zealand.

All RAAF aircraft types were involved in the exercise, together with RAN ships and submarines as well as aircraft and ships from the participating forces.

Before the exercise started, the Prime Minister acknowledged the presence of the *Tianwangxing*, a Chinese PLA Navy surveillance vessel, off the coast near the Shoalwater Bay Area. The same ship has been 'spying on' previous Talisman exercises in 2017 and 2019.

Some of the highlights of Talisman Sabre 21 were:

- Participation of the Republic of Korea for the first time with the destroyer, ROKS Wang Geon, in a maritime scenario involving 20 ships and 60 aircraft.
- The first firing in Australia of the US MIM-104 Patriot surface-to-air missile.
- Amphibious forces from Australia, USA, Japan and the UK operated from the HMAS Canberra an integrated landing force.

- US Space Command deployed to Australia for Exercise Talisman Sabre for the first time.
- A paradrop of 100+ US Spartan Paratroopers, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), Alaska, from a RAAF C-17A over Charters Towers, Queensland.
- The use of RAAF Base Scherger in Queensland for transport operations with ground forces.

SENATE INQUIRY INTO DFRDB

On 20 May 2021, the Foreign Affairs Defence & Trade Reference Committee held its open hearing into DFRDB.

The hearing can still be viewed by clicking on this link: [Foreign Affairs Defence & Trade - 20/05/2021 08:50:00 - Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au/committee/hearings/2021-05-20/08:50:00)

Representatives from the Australian Defence Force Retirees Association Inc (ADFRA) attended the hearing: Ken Stone, Independent Advocate ; Herb Ellerbock, ADFRA ; Kel Ryan and Wyn Fowles, DFWA; Defence and Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation and the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Given the low level of interest demonstrated by the Committee members during the public hearing on 20 May 2021, the recommendations in the Committee's report should come as no surprise.

The Committee's report ignores the very significant concerns raised regarding the interaction of indexation and commutation, and the exclusion of a substantial part of members' benefits from indexation. It includes volumes of quotes from individual submissions, yet arrives at few conclusions, deferring instead to the conclusions of the Ombudsman after his 2019 investigation.

DFRDB recipients cannot be expected to take this report seriously and neither should the members of the Senate and the Parliament.

Legal Action

ADFRA have foreshadowed legal action for some time. Now that we have the outcome of the Senate Inquiry, one of our members will apply to the Federal Court for a declaration to cease retirement pay reduction after reaching the life expectancy on which the reduction is based. How long it will take for the Court to consider and decide the application remains to be seen. We will provide Updates at key stages in the proceedings. We are also working on a second application to address the exclusion from indexation of a part of DFRDB benefits.

From the ADFRA Principal

RAAF AMBERLEY 81ST BIRTHDAY - 17 JUN 21

RAAF Base Amberley marked its 81st birthday and Air Force's centenary with a civic reception on June 17 at the new Ipswich City Council building.

It was a chance to commemorate the men and women who have served at RAAF Base Amberley and in the Air Force over the past 100 years and acknowledge the contribution Air Force's largest base has made, and continues to make, in the defence of the nation.

Queensland Governor Paul de Jersey addressed guests in addition to Ipswich Mayor Teresa Harding and RAAF Base Amberley SADFO GPCAPT Iain Carty.

"RAAF Base Amberley has been an integral part of the Ipswich community and has a strong relationship with the people of Ipswich who have supported the base since it commenced operations on June 17, 1940," GPCAPT Carty said.

"The overwhelming sense of community and our collective pride and enthusiasm for our region, enables both RAAF Base Amberley and the City of Ipswich to continue to grow and flourish."

Since opening in 1940, Amberley saw a

diverse range of aircraft types. Directly after WWII, the base was the home of the Air Force's bomber and strike aircraft—with Lincolns, Canberras, F-4E Phantoms and F-111C aircraft, until 2010.

Over the years, the base has seen many changes to hangars, squadron and maintenance facilities, tarmac areas, resident squadrons and units, on-base quarters and off-base married quarters. The base now even has Army units and now has a diverse Defence role.

Today, RAAF Base Amberley accommodates about 6000 military personnel, Commonwealth public servants and Defence aviation contractors and provides permanent facilities for the F/A-18F Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler, C-17A Globemaster III, KC-30A multirole tanker transport and the C-27J Spartan.

“We are extremely proud of our first 100 years as an air force. Our task now is to build on that legacy and define the second century of Air Force together.”

Courtesy of Air Force News

DOES AUSTRALIA HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE?

Amid so much talk of war, the key national security question is: Can Australia win any future war? Senator for NSW and retired MAJGEN Jim Molan AO DSC, analyses Australia's national security paradigm amid growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

"In one sense, Australia has never been better prepared, given our experience with drought, fires and now COVID. A defence emergency might be easier to handle under federal emergency powers than is a virus under the federation. Of most value is the experience which now reside in our national leaders. They know much better what their powers are and how to use them, and the formation of Home Affairs and how the National Security Committee of Cabinet is being used is significant.

But if we think it is difficult to vaccinate our population or conduct quarantine, it is far more difficult to move Australia from a

peacetime environment to preparation for war and its execution. Regardless of the current emergency, we should be preparing now. Planning costs little.

In our region, war is not just possible, it is becoming more likely. The Prime Minister referred to that in his speech in July 2020, and the situation has deteriorated since then. War is not yet inevitable and what may stop it, or allow us to at least mitigate its impact, is deterrence through preparedness. Alliances are our first line of defence but are only as strong as their individual members.

An alliance should never be an excuse for not taking responsibility for national defence and that is the history of alliances since 1945, and I detect a tendency to do that even now. Our defence is primarily our responsibility.

We tried relying on alliance promises in 1941 and it did not go well.

Vagaries such as “drums of war” or “a regional threat” are of no use in determining if what we are doing is the right thing, and if we are doing enough. Only by looking at the specific nature of a likely war, will we be able to assess effectively. It is not what we have, but what we can do. This is not a hard line, it is a reasonable line.

We have the best ADF for 50 years, a credit to Coalition governments. But if we compare it to the tasks which may lie ahead, the ADF demonstrably lacks lethality, sustainability and mass. My deep fear is that if we do not analyse our defence capacity specifically against the likely threat, then we will have a defence force that will literally last only for days in the kind of maritime and air combat that we may face in the next few years. Recent published Defence reports back this view up, as well as my judgement as someone who has run a war.

If this analysis is being conducted behind closed doors, there is no sign that the likely results are being acted on and which should be visible to all. What we have learned from published reports is not comforting. It is the people's national security that is at stake, and the people's money which is being spent. Most Australian would think that the \$270 billion promised by the PM over the next 10 years buys defence perfection, but this must

be tested to the people's satisfaction, not just in some wargaming room somewhere. If the news is embarrassingly not good, that is, Australia is not prepared, that will not be a surprise to our likely adversaries, China and Russia, who will know more about our defence preparedness than 99.9 per cent of Australians.

Recently China has adopted a much more aggressive stance and along with Russia, they consider the liberal democracies to be the "decadent and decaying West". China has directed grey-zone conflict vectors (trade, cyber, diplomacy, theft of IP, influence operations) directly against Australia and our allies, and has built up its military to an extraordinary extent, along with threats to use it directly against this and other nations. Current grey-zone conflict could be easily enhanced by China to include unattributable biological and cyber attacks, trade sanctions almost amounting to a blockade and the use of organisations such as the Maritime Militia against our near neighbours.

Even more worrying, the US has a severely decreased military capability, by my rough estimate, 30-50 per cent less capable than it was at the end of the Cold War (1991) when our belief in infinite US power was created. The consequence is that the US cannot come to the aid of all its allies in the way that it once could, even if it wanted to. The commentary in the US indicates there is little confidence that the US can deter or 'win' a Taiwan scenario war against China. The US could either decide, with immense strategic consequences, not to stand up to an aggressive China, or suffers a military defeat and is forced out of the region.

For Australia, the results are much the same – we are likely to be on our own. A reliance on the presence of the US Marines in the Northern Territory as part of our defence is fanciful. The whole reason-for-being of that force is once tension increases, Marines get in their ships and sail away. They should never be an excuse for not being responsible for our own defence.

It is only prudent that Australia plans for at least three scenario: grey-zone conflict being enhanced; a war between the US and China from which we may be attacked

collaterally; and a war that forces the US out of the region, leaving us on our own for what might then occur. Then once comprehensive planning has occurred, we should decide how much risk we are prepared to accept. As President Dwight Eisenhower said: *"The value is not in the plans, but it is in the planning"*.

National security has changed remarkably while we were handling drought, fires and COVID. As the undisputed government of national security, we must do the serious hard yards now, and talk to the people. Once we start looking at the detail of likely threats, and what our strengths and weaknesses are, perhaps we can even define 'winning'.

Jim Molan, a NSW senator, is a MAJGEN (Retd), from the Australian Army.

SEMINAR FOR SOVEREIGN GUIDED WEAPONS PROGRAM

Defence industry representatives have attended an information seminar detailing the Commonwealth government's plan for the sovereign guided weapons program.

Earlier this month, Defence published a new request for information (RFI) on AusTender, seeking input from defence industry and academia regarding capacity and interest in supporting the Commonwealth government's \$1 billion Sovereign Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise.

The initiative aims to address gaps outlined in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update by providing stakeholders, both SMEs and established primes, with opportunities in advanced manufacturing through the establishment of industry partnerships. The enterprise ecosystem is expected to support Defence's inventory of guided weapons and explosive ordnance, while also including:

- *manufacturing*
- *research and development*
- *education and training*
- *test and evaluation*
- *maintenance and repair*

- *storage and distribution*
- *disposal.*

Defence hosted an information session earlier this week to provide more detail to industry representatives and academics, with representatives from the Joint Capabilities Group and Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) meeting virtually with approximately 350 stakeholders. Participants included manufacturers, SMEs and researchers.

MAJGEN Andrew Bottrell, head of land systems, CASG, said Defence is pleased with the interest they've received since the publication of the RFI. "Since becoming head of land systems, I continue to be impressed by the capabilities and commitment of Australian industry, and the munitions and guided-weapons sector is no different," MAJGEN Bottrell said. "It is not too late to help shape the future and I encourage all companies who believe they have something to offer to respond to our request for information."

Organisations not traditionally involved in the defence industry supply chain have also been invited to consider involvement in the program.

Several stakeholders have already expressed interest in supporting the program, including local munitions company NIOA, which has set up the Australian Missile Corporation (AMC).

A number of firms have joined the AMC consortium, including Quickstep, Moog Australia, Black Sky Aerospace, and Thomas Global Systems.

Lockheed Martin Australia and Thales Australia have also finalised a teaming agreement to facilitate co-operation in the design, development and production of Lockheed Martin's Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) – Surface Launch variant.



AGM-158C

The agreement will specifically focus on booster and rocket motor technologies. The RFI for the sovereign guided weapons program is scheduled to close on 2 August.

Defence Connect 21 July 2021

THE LONG RANGE ANTISHIP MISSILE (LRASM)

The US Navy officially designated the air-launched LRASM as the AGM-158C in August 2015 and conducted its first flight test in a pre-production form in August 2017. The weapon was successfully launched from a B-1B bomber against multiple targets in December 2017. This anti-ship missile was adopted by the US Air Force in 2018 and by the US Navy in 2019.

The missile is all-weather, subsonic and employs an advanced sensor suite, data link and enhanced GPS resistant to jamming. It has a 450kg blast fragmentation warhead and can target high value ships within a surface group. Range is estimated in excess of 370 km.

The missile has reduced radar cross section and IR signature, making it hard to detect and intercept. The launch aircraft provides targeting information, updated by data link if required—terminal guidance is via target IR and/or electronic emission by homing in on ships' command and guidance signals.

The B-1B Lancer can carry 24 missiles, the B-2 Spirit stealth aircraft 16 and the B-52H bomber can carry 20 missiles. The missile is integrated on F/A-18E Super Hornet and the F-15E aircraft—limited to two; but is too long to fit in the internal weapon bay of an F-35 and must be carried externally, compromising the aircraft's stealth capabilities.

The missile can be fired from a Mk41 vertical launch systems, used on many warships. In this configuration, a booster is required, increasing the launch weight to 2,000 kg. In addition, integration of the AGM-158C LRASM on unmanned surface vehicles and submarine-launched is being

developed. Cost of each missile is in the order of USD700,000 and \$1 million.

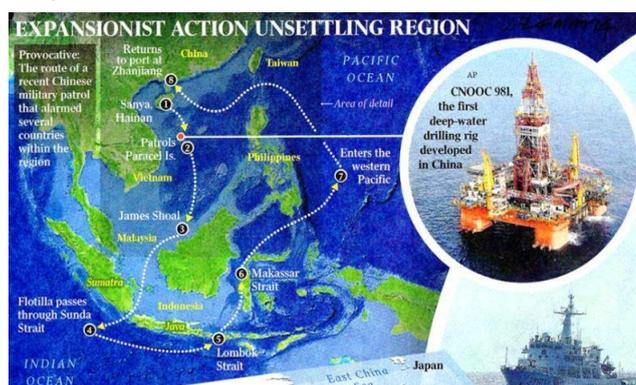
AUSTRALIA'S FOCUS

Australia's focus in the Indo-Pacific area and our northern approaches needs to achieve a level of defence capability to deter any adversary considering an attack on Australia, too difficult to contemplate. To achieve a level of deterrence, Australia must take advantage of its remoteness by investing in nuclear submarines from US/UK, a missile shield and a long range anti-ship missile (LRASM) capability.

There is only one country that has the perceived capability of attacking Australia by aggressive military means—and that is China. Even so, a surface force attempting an invasion would be difficult to mount and more difficult to maintain lines of supply. In such a scenario, Australia's offensive capabilities could wreak havoc on any surface force by concentrating on major 'choke points' with submarines, long range strike force and long range anti-ship missiles. Similarly, intimidation could be thwarted by these forces.

The 'choke points' are the Sunda and Lombok Straits in Indonesia, the Malacca Straits and possibly the Torres Strait. The attributes and limitations of these vessel waterways will be covered in another article.

Of course, cyber and economic attacks and straight out maritime blockades would severely damage Australia's capabilities to function normally. The scenarios above do not mention ballistic missile attacks of course—while possible, such pre-emptive strikes make no logical or common sense as no justification exists for such attacks.



However, logic doesn't enter into China, or other nations, who have delusions of grandeur with a grand plan to create a world order in their own image of communism.

CYBERSPACE AND RECENT ATTACKS

Over the last four years, the Australian government and its allies have attributed malicious cyber activities to China, Russia, North Korea and Iran on a number of occasions. In the recent attacks in July 2021 on Microsoft Exchange server installations, the Australian Government accused China of a major cyber attack. In addition, USA, UK, Japan, New Zealand and NATO, condemned the Chinese Ministry of State Security and their use of private contractors for these attacks.

Do Western countries engage in similar activities in cyberspace? Probably, cyberspace superiority, or dominance, is essential to any military, or country.

What actually is 'cyberspace'? An accepted definition is: "A domain characterised by the use of electronics and the electromagnetic spectrum to store spectrum to store, modify and exchange data via networked systems and associated physical structures."

Control of information from space assets is one example—control of satellite data and voice communications and positioning is carried out mainly by radio frequency. However, communications among ground stations moves over the Internet.

That's how information is moved around. Cyber defence has to assure that network, as cyberspace and space go hand-in-hand.

The tactical aspect of cyberspace is prominent in the air domain. Air Forces rely on cyberspace and advanced technology for targeting weapons, command and control systems, GPS satellites, communication networks and electronic warfare capabilities

The wide and deep tactical and operational reliance on cyberspace is essential for the successful execution of global air and space

operations. Cyberspace exists alongside the other warfighting domains and should be protected and exploited in a similar fashion.

The need to gain and maintain operational cyberspace superiority, or dominance, is essential in future air, land, sea and space dominance.

US air warfare experts predicted in the early 2000s that China plans 'non-contact warfare' and to avoid land war in favour of air, space and cyber attacks—however, they do have a large land army. Their 'blue water' navy and long range missile capabilities are also significant and add further domains.



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