

## MARITIME SQUADRONS ASSOCIATION



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**Newsletter**

January 2021

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### *President's Message*

Dear Members,

A Happy New Year to you all. I trust you had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and New Year and, more importantly, that you have not been too greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and are managing to stay safe and well and are surviving the social isolation measures and associated restrictions.

As you are aware, due to the COVID-19 pandemic we had to cancel all our regular MSA activities that were planned to have been held last year. While we are hoping that things will improve this year, health advice still recommends that we exercise a high degree of caution, which impacts on the ability for us to hold functions and can often restrict both interstate and intrastate travel. As a significant number of our MSA members are in the COVID-19 high-risk group, many will be reluctant to attend a function due to the potential risk, particularly if infections are still occurring. Hopefully, the much-anticipated COVID vaccines will ease the situation, but how long it will be before they take full effect is another question. For now, all we can do is make tentative plans for any functions and continually review the latest health advice/restrictions. The final decision, however, on whether to hold any MSA event is one for the individual State Representatives, taking into account the prevailing situation and government/health advice at the time.

**2021 Canberra Lunch.** As far as this year's Canberra function is concerned, I am currently investigating the feasibility of organising an informal pub lunch at a local hotel/bar in Canberra on a Sunday in March 2021 (either 14 or 21 March). If it goes ahead, it will be conducted on a 'pay as you go' basis, where the hotel reserves some tables for us in an area and people order and pay for their own meals and drinks from the hotel menu. Obviously, it will be dependent on future ACT government advice re social distancing and any other restrictions that may apply due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the current rules, such an event would be problematic given the restrictions on numbers and social distancing requirements. For now, all we can do is hope that things will change over the next few weeks. Further advice on the Canberra function will be sent out by separate email by the end of February.

As our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was unable to have been held last year, Executive Committee and State Representatives remain unchanged:

President	Keith Brent
Vice President	Barry Collins
Secretary	Maurice Ritchie
Treasurer	Geoff Hyde
ACT Rep	Keith Brent
NSW Rep	Rod Smallwood
QLD Rep	Barry Collins
NQ Rep	Holger Hildebrandt
NT Rep	Jim O'Doherty
SA Rep	Noel Shelton
TAS Rep	Peter Miller
VIC Rep	Graham Wade
WA Rep	Geoff Ward

Tentative dates for your diary—subject to COVID-19 restrictions. I urge all members to support these functions:

- Sunday 14 or 21 March 2021 – Canberra Lunch TBC
- Sunday TBA May 2021 – Adelaide Lunch TBC
- Saturday TBA July 2021 – NSW Dinner TBC
- **Saturday 23 October 2021** – Brisbane Dinner at United Service Club confirmed.

Stay safe and well.

*Keith Brent*

President

January 2021

## *From the Treasurer*

Happy New Year to all our members.

With the start of the new year, it is time for subscriptions to be paid. The year for membership is based on the calendar year and the fee is \$10 per year. Those who are life members do not need to pay subscriptions.

Payments may be made by cheque to my address: P.O. Box 507 Capalaba QLD 4157 or by direct payment to the MSA account: NAB, Maritime Squadrons Association, BSB 084-126, A/c No 205114992.

As you are aware, we were unable to hold any functions last year. Hopefully, this will not be the case this year. The committee has decided to double the subsidy for functions held this year as a compensation for the lack of activity last year.

I hope you all continue in good health and look forward to catching up at one of our functions.

*Geoff Hyde,*  
Treasurer

# *Member News*

## Departed Members.

Since the last Newsletter we have noted with much sadness the passing of the following friends and colleagues;

- Peter Miller 15 Sep 2020

(The notification arrived too late for inclusion in the last newsletter. His wife noted his funeral was delayed due to covid and occurred on Remembrance Day which was their 48<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.)

- Greg Richardson 12 Dec 2020
- Mike MacKenzie 16 Dec 2020
- Bruce Niblett 11 Jan 2021

## New Members

Only one new member has joined the Association since the last newsletter.

Please welcome.

Martin Ball

## Member Updates

### QTH

If anybody knows the latest address/telephone number for Ron Letch, please inform the Secretary asap.

### Email

If you are receiving this newsletter via Australia Post & you have an email address, then you can choose to receive newsletters and other updates via email (and save the Association some money). Just let the Secretary know your email address.

If you change your address or email, **please** inform the Secretary.

*Information please.*

*News from here and there*

From HARS newsletter



Lockheed P2V-4 Neptune 302 (located at our Parkes Aviation Museum) has been reassembled. This aircraft is particularly significant as it is believed to be the only surviving P2V-4 in the world.

## **Triton News**

Australia approves sustainment funding for the fleet of MQ-4C Triton naval unmanned aircraft.

According to a statement released by the Australian Department of Defence on December 30, 2020, the Government of Australia has also approved sustainment funding for the currently approved fleet of three MQ-4C Triton naval unmanned aircraft.

On June 19, 2020, Northrop Grumman Corporation announced the Australian government's decision to provide funding for an additional three of their planned six MQ-4C Tritons and associated ground mission control stations.

In December 2020, Northrop Grumman Corporation completed Phase 1A - initial development - of the MQ-4C Triton Network Integration Test Environment (NITE), located at Royal Australian Air Force Base Edinburgh in South Australia.

The MQ-4C Triton air vehicle is based upon the United States Air Force (USAF) RQ-4B Global Hawk, while its sensors are based upon components of already fielded in the U.S. DoD (Department of Defense) inventory.

The fuselage of the MQ-4C Triton is an aluminum semi-monocoque construction while the V-tail, engine nacelle, and aft fuselage are made of composite materials. It has a length of 14.5 m, a height of 4.7 m, and a wingspan of 39.9 m. It has an internal payload of 1,452 kg maximum and an external payload of 1,089 kg.

The MQ-4C Triton can fly at a maximum altitude of 18,300m (60,000ft). It has a gross take-off weight of 14,628 kg. Its maximum unrefueled range is 18,427 km (9,950 nm) and has a flight endurance of 30 hours. It can reach a maximum speed of 575 km (357 mph).

**Naval News January 2021**

## **Poseidon News**

Australia's maritime patrol capability will soon be boosted, with the RAAF set to acquire two more P-8A Poseidon surveillance and response aircraft, bringing the total fleet size to 14.

Minister for Defence, Linda Reynolds, said the announcement is part of an “unprecedented” \$270-billion investment in defence capability over the next decade.

“Together, the Poseidon and the Triton will provide Australia with one of the most advanced maritime patrol and response capabilities in the world,” Reynolds said.

According to the minister, the additional aircraft will enhance the RAAF’s flexibility to support multiple operations and will play an important role in ensuring Australia’s maritime region is secure.

The continued investment in the Poseidon program was also create more local jobs and opportunities for small businesses. Several Australian companies are already completing work for Boeing Defence Australia and industry investment, including facilities works, is over \$1 billion.

### **\$500 million dollar upgrade for RAAF Edinburgh Base brings hi-tech highflyers to Adelaide**



Aircrew utilise the Operational Flight Trainer inside the new training facilities at RAAF Base Edinburgh.

The base is currently undergoing its most significant change since being formed in the 1950s, with another \$500 million investment in

infrastructure and technology to accommodate the 6000 Defence personnel and civilian contractors who work at the base and adjoining Defence Science and Technology Group hub, the largest Defence R&D organisation in Australia.

And while much of that infrastructure revolves around the 12 Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft currently winging their way to Edinburgh, the redevelopment is also bringing new aircraft, Australian Army units and logistics and engineering jobs on site.

The new capabilities include three major projects:

- AIR 555 Peregrine program: an electronic warfare-type aircraft based on a Gulfstream jet, due to be operating from Edinburgh within the next three years and requiring hangar space and additional infrastructure.
- AIR 7000 Triton program: an unmanned aircraft that will fly out of Northern Australia with the pilot and operators based at Edinburgh. "This is the big game-changer for what's going to happen at Edinburgh," Carruthers says.
- AIR 7003: still in final stages of government decision, this project will see Sky Guardian armed drones fly out of Northern Australia and Adelaide with crews, mission analysts and data based at the information hub at Edinburgh.

And this doesn't include the upgrades to the Woomera Range Complex and town, works at Cultana and upgrades to the Jindalee Over the Horizon Radar Network.

The new hub places Edinburgh at the centre of Australia's military intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and electronic warfare, with operators – uniformed, public servants and potentially contractors – working in a highly secure environment analysing, collecting and disseminating information on a real-time basis.

The significant investment in the Edinburgh base is also an investment in South Australia's future, promising exciting career opportunities both today and for years to come. The Advertiser



## RAAF P-8A Poseidon completes air-to-air refuelling test.



22 OCTOBER 2020 By: **Reporter**

The fleet is one step closer to full operational capability after demonstrating air-to-air refuelling capacity with a KC-30A Multi Role Tanker Transport.

A surveillance aircraft has, for the first time, refuelled the Royal Australian Air Force's P-8A Poseidon fleet with an air-to-air KC-30A MRTT.

The KC-30A departed RAAF Amberley with its 11-metre advanced refuelling boom system for seven refuelling flights between 22 September and 1 October, meeting the P-8A Poseidon – which departed from RAAF Base Edinburgh's No. 92 Wing – at designated training airspace off the coast of Queensland.

Captain of the P-8A Poseidon Squadron Leader Chris Godfrey said the refuelling flights involved "extensive planning".

"The execution of air-to-air refuelling requires extensive planning and training in both the simulator and airborne environment," SQNLDR Godfrey said.

"This included rigorous training scenarios to ensure we were ready for the demanding aerial refuelling flights."

During the missions, crews of both aircraft were required to ensure connections were secure to allow for the proper transfer of fuel, while No. 92 Wing and No. 33 Squadron aircrews maintained communications on the ground.

“Fundamentally, it’s a team effort both in the air and on the ground,” SQNLDR Godfrey added.

“This included our No. 11 Squadron maintenance personnel who worked long hours over the past couple of months to ensure the serviceability of the aircraft for the aerial refuelling flights.

“I was incredibly proud to play a part in the mission and operate within such an effective and focused team.”

Officer Commanding No. 92 Wing Group Captain John Grime said the refuelling flights were an important step towards full operational capability.

“The missions represent a significant achievement for the RAAF P-8A fleet on our path to final operational capability,” GPCAPT Grime said.

“It enhances the existing operational effectiveness of the aircraft’s long-range surveillance capabilities, extending the endurance and radius of action of the platform.”

“The strong partnership with No. 33 Squadron’s KC-30A team demonstrates our ability to integrate fifth-generation capabilities and strengthens our air power contribution for the joint force,” he added.

Officer Commanding No. 86 Wing Group Captain Anthony Bull said RAAF KC-30A crews had benefited from previous refuelling trials with US Navy P-8As.

“Adding RAAF’s P-8A Poseidon to our scope of support reinforces the value of the KC-30A in the battlespace,” GPCAPT Bull said.

## AP-3C Orion finds new home at RAAF Base Edinburgh



In recognition of the AP-3C Orion's distinguished Service history in the Royal Australian Air Force, a decommissioned and refurbished AP-3C (tail no. A09-658) was installed as the RAAF Base Edinburgh Gate Guard.

Air Commodore John Meier, Director-General History and Heritage Branch – Air Force, a former AP-3C Orion Navigator and Tactical Coordinating Officer himself, said the Gate Guard highlights the importance of preserving Air Force history and heritage now, and for future generations.

"The location of the aircraft on the front gate at Edinburgh reinforces the dedication, sacrifice and exemplary service of the many Air Force and civilian personnel who have supported the P-3 Orion capability since 1968," Air Commodore Meier said.

"The History and Heritage Branch has an ongoing commitment to retaining the history of service to the nation by the Orions, as represented by this magnificent aircraft, now on display."

Senior Australian Defence Force Officer RAAF Base Edinburgh, Air Commodore Brendan Rodgers explained that the Base and its

personnel have had a long association with the region – a bond which is reflected through the installation project.

“RAAF Base Edinburgh personnel and families are proud members of the community and our close relationship with the Adelaide region is something that has been fostered over many years,” Air Commodore Rogers said.

“The AP-3C Orion Gate Guard is a befitting tribute to the aircraft’s operational history and achievements and is a symbol of the enduring bond we have with our community.

Flight Lieutenant Rob Nieuwenhoven has been intimately involved in the project as second in charge, he said the passion and skill of team members has been key.

“The success of the project has clearly been through the commitment and talent of members supporting the refurbishment of aspects which require repair and restoration, whilst ensuring the historical heritage of the aircraft is preserved and retained,” Flight Lieutenant Nieuwenhoven said.

Reaching a significant milestone for the project, the aircraft was towed into position at the Base front gate at the end of October.

Australian Army personnel from 1 Brigade joined with Air Force personnel in support of the relocation and tow activity.

On arrival to its new permanent home, final stage refurbishment and restoration works will now take place in preparation for the official unveiling, which is planned to be held during Air Force’s milestone Centenary in 2021.

The project also included extensive works through the decommissioning and refurbishment process to ensure the aircraft is prepared appropriately and safely for public display.

Managed by the Surveillance and Response Systems Program Office, the project has included important contributions by Air Force’s Number 10 Squadron maintenance section personnel, Number 3 Security Forces Squadron personnel, the Australian

Army's 1st Brigade with personnel from 1st Combat Service Support Battalion and 1st Armoured Regiment, as well as consultation and support from Estate and Infrastructure Group, Air Force History and Heritage Branch and various external agencies and organisations including local councils and more.

## **The Service history of the RAAF Base Edinburgh Gate Guard**

AP-3C Orion aircraft, tail no. A09-658, was the first Orion to be built in Palmdale California USA. The aircraft was formally accepted into the Royal Australian Air Force fleet in July 1985 and arrived at its home at RAAF Base Edinburgh in August of that year.

A09-658 was wired for flight data gathering (which was part of modification 5276) with this information utilised to build the Advanced Flight Simulator aircraft flight parameters. A significant operation of note includes its support to the aerial search of civilian aircraft MH370 from March to April 2014.

A09-658's final flight was conducted on 21 October 2016, at which time it was withdrawn from active service and utilised as a taxi-able ground trainer for Number 92 Wing. In October 2017 the aircraft was assigned as static training aid for No. 292 Squadron.

A09-658 commenced the decommissioning process in June 2018 and was later identified for what will be its final posting and enduring service contribution as the static aircraft installation as the se Edinburgh Gate Guard. 30 November 2020

**The Government of Australia** has announced over A\$220m (\$162.36m) investment for major infrastructure upgrades at Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Edinburgh.

Work will include the building of a hangar, maintenance facilities, and operational accommodation.

This is expected to aid the RAAF's intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and electronic warfare capability, MC-55A Peregrine.



RAAF's modified G550s are designated as the MC-55A Peregrine.

Australian Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said: "The Peregrine will be integrated real-time into defence's warfighting networks alongside other defence capabilities to enhance Australia's situational awareness during both peacetime and conflict.

"The Peregrine integrates with other latest generation air, sea and land capabilities to achieve improved survivability and decision superiority.

## RAAF P-8A POSEIDONS HUNT US SUBMARINE IN NEW EXERCISE

written by Adam Thorn January 15, 2021



RAAF P-8A Poseidons are taking part in an anti-submarine warfare exercise alongside forces from the US, Japan, Canada, India and New Zealand in Guam.

The 125 hours of in-flight training will culminate in a mission to find and track USS *Chicago*, a US Navy Los Angeles Class nuclear submarine.

During classroom training sessions, pilots and flight officers from all countries will build plans and discuss incorporating tactics, capabilities and equipment for their respective nations into the exercise.

Lieutenant Commander Kyle Hooker, Officer in Charge of the US Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance aircraft from Patrol Squadron 5 (VP-5) explained the importance of the operations, stating, "As OIC, I am eager for the opportunity to further develop our partnerships with Japan, India, Canada, and Australia while at **Sea Dragon 2021**.

"The COVID environment will be challenging for all our participants, but I know we will come together to adapt and overcome while executing our goal of anti-submarine warfare interoperability."

Each exercise is graded, and the nation scoring the highest total points will receive the coveted Dragon Belt award. The belt was formally introduced last year when awarded to the Royal New Zealand Air Force.

## **Regional News**

**FIJI:** The Australian Defence Force has been helping the Fijian government in their response to Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasa.

In the immediate aftermath of the cyclone, the ADF sent emergency humanitarian supplies to Fiji on board two RAAF C-17A Globemasters, with a third flight on 4 January. Two RAAF **P-8A Poseidon** aerial assessment missions also provided the Fijian government with an early picture of the scale of the damage in remote locations.

## **New Zealand: Work starts on new home for Poseidon aircraft at Ōhakea base.**

Piercing the stones with a shovel at Ōhakea air base, Defence Minister Peeni Henare on Tuesday signalled the start of the largest construction project the Defence Force has undertaken.

Te Whare Toroa, consisting of two hangars spanning 180-metres by 60m, at two storeys high, will be the new home of No 5 Squadron and four new P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The name was inspired by the albatross on the squadron's crest. The new hangars will open in 2023.

" The building works for the P-8 aircraft will be one of the largest and most complex this country and indeed the Defence Force has ever seen." NZ Herald

## **With P8I aircraft, Indian Navy takes part in Quad anti-submarine warfare exercise in Guam**

The exercise, Sea Dragon 2021, began in Guam earlier this month and will continue till 28 January. Along with India, Japan, US & Australia, Canada is also participating.

The Navy has deployed one anti-submarine warfare aircraft, the P8I, for the exercise, which is set to continue till 28 January. The exercise involves drills aimed at tracking submarines.

Defence officials told ThePrint the Navy's participation bears testimony to the level of interoperability achieved by the force enabling it to take part in exercises across the globe.

Sea Dragon 2021 centres on anti-submarine warfare training and excellence to include 125 hours of in-flight training – ranging from tracking simulated targets to the final problem of finding and tracking USS Chicago, a US Navy Los Angeles-class nuclear submarine.



During training sessions, pilots and flight officers from all countries will build plans and discuss incorporating tactics, capabilities and equipment for their respective nations into the exercise. Along with the US, the Royal Australian Air Force, Canadian Air Force, Indian Navy, and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force are participating.

Vice-Admiral Anup Singh (retired), former commander-in-chief of the Eastern Naval Command, told ThePrint that participating in a high-level exercise with an anti-submarine focus makes a lot of sense in today's day and age, particularly in the current geopolitical scenario.

"Guam is one of the largest US naval bases, and the region is of great interest to us. Exercising there with the US will help the Navy to acclimatise with the area, thus adding to the confidence. There is also a lot of global interest in that part of the pacific," he said.

**South Korea:** In November 2020 South Korea launched its second KSS-3 submarine. The first one, the 3,300-ton Dosan Ahn Changho, began sea trials over a year ago. It was announced that Changho broke the record for the time an AIP (air independent propulsion) equipped sub spent underwater. The duration of this feat was not released but since the current record is 18 days, the Changho had to stay under at least that long. It was implied that the South Korean sub remained submerged for over three weeks.

South Korea is building nine KSS-3 subs in batches of three. The second and third batches will each contain upgrades over the previous batch. All KSS 3 are high seas boats with endurance of 50 days, a 18,000 kilometres range and top speed of 20 knots underwater and 12 knots on the surface. These boats are built to regularly operate throughout the Pacific. The KSS 3 boats are highly automated making it possible to get by with a crew of fifty. All are armed with eight 533mm torpedo tubes, four of them capable of launching Harpoon anti-ship missiles. KSS-3 Batch 1 has six VLS tubes for South Korean developed Hyunmoo-3C land-attack cruise missiles (1,500-kilometer range, 450 kg warhead) or Hyunmoo-3C ballistic missiles (800-kilometer range, half ton warhead). Batch 2 and 3 will have ten VLS tubes.

All nine KSS 3s are to be in service by 2029, at which point South Korea will have a fleet of 27 modern diesel-electric submarines. All KSS 3 boats have AIP and batch 2 and 3 will use the new lithium battery technology that Japan demonstrated in March 2020 when the latest of their Soryu class subs entered service.

If all these large diesel-electric subs sound like a smaller, non-nuclear, version of the American Virginia class SSNs (nuclear-powered attack sub), they are. The Australians pioneered this approach with their six Collins class boats that began entering service in 1996. The 3,100-ton Collins class subs had 70 days endurance and were meant to operate over vast distances in the Pacific Ocean.

South Korea has nine 1,200-ton KSS-1 boats and nine 1,800-ton KSS-2s. All are German designs with most built in South Korea. The KSS-2 is based on the German Type 214 and has AIP (Air Independent Propulsion) that enables it to remain under water for more than a week at a time. The KSS-1s were built, mostly in South Korea, during the 1990s and are based on the Type 209.

**North Korea** has 70 subs, but only twenty are large subs and these are all elderly Romeo class boats. The Russian Romeo class was the successor to the Whiskey class boats, which were, in turn, based on the German Type XXI which first showed up in 1943. This was the first modern submarine in that it was designed to spend most of its time underwater.

The Type XXI was a 1,600-ton (on the surface) sub, compared to the 1,500-ton Romeos. Only a few of the North Korean Romeos are operational and these are the only subs that can operate away from the coastal waters. North Korea is building at least one diesel-electric sub that can launch a locally developed ballistic missile.

**China** currently has about fifty modern diesel-electric subs in service. All are based on the Russian Kilo and the latest ones improve quite a bit on the Kilo. China also has twelve nuclear attack subs, which are not as effective as Russian or American designs.

**Taiwan:** In order to bolster its defensive capabilities, Taiwan is building a submarine fleet to mitigate Chinese nefarious designs to

invade the island or install a naval blockade. The construction of eight new state-of-art submarines kicked off last month at the southern port city of Kaohsiung with expected sea trials in 2025, reported CNN.

The Taiwanese submarines are expected to be of the diesel-electric variety, running on diesel engines on the surface, but using ultra-quiet electric motors powered by long-lasting lithium-ion batteries when submerged to exert a heavy toll on the Chinese fleet.

### **General Atomics demos MQ-9's anti-submarine tracking capability.**

General Atomics recently announced that it had successfully flight-tested a dispenser pod as part of a broader demonstration of anti-submarine warfare capabilities it is developing for its MQ-9B SeaGuardian drone. In this particular test, the pods were used to release sonobuoys.



An artist's conception of a fully-configured MQ-9B SeaGuardian drone. The new dispenser pods are seen under the wings.

The anti-submarine warfare test took place last November, with an MQ-9A carrying one of the 10-tube dispenser pods and other anti-

submarine warfare (ASW) related systems as a surrogate for an MQ-9B SeaGuardian. The demonstration, which was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Navy, involved the drone flying over that service's expansive test ranges off the coast of Southern California, while transmitting data to a ground operations centre hundreds of miles away at the U.S. Army's Yuma Proving Ground in Arizona.

The Drive

## *History Corner*

### *In memoriam.*

17 Nov 1980

FltLt Noel Anthony RIP

Nimrod MR2 XV256

Crewed by 206 Sqn, it suffered a massive bird strike on take off from Kinloss, Grampian when just 20ft off the runway. Only the number 4 engine was undamaged, and the RAAF exchange pilot ordered full power on it and the other three damaged engines. However, he was forced to make a crash landing into a forest 1,300yds from the end of the runway. The aircraft was quickly engulfed in flames. The two pilots were incapacitated due to severe blows to the head during the crash and due to the severity of the fire it was not possible to rescue them. The other eighteen crew were able to escape but all suffered smoke inhalation.

"The aircraft suffered such a severe loss of thrust that maintenance of height and flying speed quickly became impossible. It was the captain's skill in keeping the stricken aircraft airborne long enough to make a very smooth and controlled crash at minimum speed into the treetops that undoubtedly saved, the lives of the 18 crew members. After the accident 77 dead sea birds were found on or near the runway. It is not known how many others were ingested by the aircraft engines."

## *In Europe*

### No 10 Squadron

Extremely bad weather in October restricted most flight operations and the priority became searches for survivors of U-boat attacks.

Back in Australia the Squadron was “adopted” by the Women’s Weekly magazine and was sometimes known as the Women’s Weekly Squadron. The magazine organised drives for subscribers to donate useful items, including food to be sent to the Squadron.



On 27/28 November the Squadron lost an aircraft when an air raid destroyed a hangar with a Sunderland inside.



As 1940 ended the four Sunderland squadrons were short of aircraft. Only 20 Sunderlands were delivered that year, just enough to match attrition.

## *In Australia*

2 December 1940 - Advisory War Council considered purchasing Japanese aircraft.

On this day in Canberra, the Advisory War Council meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister Robert Menzies, noted that on 29 October the Australian Minister to Japan, Sir John Latham, had suggested that an order for aircraft might be placed with Japan. Sir John had observed that an order for about £500,000 worth of aircraft might be placed with Japan as there was a possibility that such a transaction might put Japanese interests in opposition to Germany. The Council noted from the observations of the Minister for Air, Mr John McEwen, that the Aircraft Production Commission had investigated a possible purchase and that the Mitsubishi Shoji



Kai Ltd company was anxious to supply both service and training types. The Council further noted that the Air Board was of the view that any negotiations should be on the basis of immediate delivery. The Minister for Air subsequently wrote to the Prime Minister on 12 December 1940, on behalf of the Chief of Air Staff, stating that:

*"By making inquiries for operational types, we will reveal to Japan not only that we are short of this class of aircraft at the moment, but that our prospects of obtaining them from British or American sources are not clear. We cannot expect the best performance fighters from Japan in view of the relations existing between that country and Great Britain at the present time..... Japan is a potential enemy and one with which hostilities cannot be ruled out, and to obtain operational aircraft from such a source would deprive us of any possibility of tactical surprise in the event of war since the Japanese would be thoroughly familiar with the capabilities and limitations of their aircraft. Difficulties of inspection both during the manufacture in Japan and on delivery would be very great and incapable of solutions under present conditions. In this connection, sabotage by means of delay action explosives is a real possibility".*

## **No 6 Squadron**

Beginning in early 1941, the Squadron started patrols over the sea approaches to Sydney Harbour using Avro Anson aircraft.

## **No 11 Squadron**

Operations from Pt Moresby gradually increased now that the Squadron was equipped with four C-Class flying boats. They were A18-10 (Centaurus),

A18-11 (Calypso),

A18-12 (Coogee)

A18-13 (Coolangatta).

The Squadron patrolled a large area from Thursday Island, Bouganville, Tulagi (BSIP) and down to Noumea (French Caledonia).

Due to Australian influence in 1940, the Free French had taken control of New Caledonia. This was in contrast to French Indo-China

where the Vichy French authorities were forced by the Japanese to allow large military forces to be stationed in that area.

The Squadron began a prescient program of establishing Forward Operating Bases and a network of coast watchers and communications throughout the area.

### **No 13 Squadron**

The Squadron continued its coastal patrols and daily shipping patrols mostly to the West of Darwin as far as Broome.

### **No 14 Squadron**

From February 1941 anti-submarine patrols of the approaches to Fremantle and Albany began in conjunction with other duties.

### **No 24 Squadron**

On the 15 Oct 1940 the Squadron moved from Amberley to Garbutt. Once established, it continued maritime reconnaissance flights.

## **A Final Thought**

**THE SUPREME ART OF WAR IS TO SUBDUE THE ENEMY WITHOUT FIGHTING.**  
SUN TZU