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## **DEFENCE NEWS**

### **Royal Australian Air Force update July 2012**

#### **Operations**

**Operation Astute** is the Australian Defence Force's (ADF) continuing contribution to the maintenance of peace and stability in East Timor, following a request from the Government of Timor-Leste to the Australian Government. Air Force is currently planning for force extraction.

**Operation Cathedral** is the ADF contribution in support of the Papua New Guinea elections. Cessation of this operation is expected in August 2012, so planning is well underway for withdrawal of resources. This will be the last operational mission for the C-130-H Hercules Transport aircraft.

**Operation Resolute** is the ADF's contribution to the whole-of-government effort to protect Australia's borders and offshore maritime interests. It is the only ADF operation that currently defends homeland Australia and its assets. 2012 has witnessed an increase in operational tempo and areas of interest which has required Air Force to respond with operation of our P3-C Orion Long-Range Maritime Patrol aircraft from various locations.

**Operation Slipper** is Australia's military contribution to the international campaign against terrorism, maritime security in the Middle East Area of Operations, and countering piracy in the Gulf of Aden. 2012 sees Air Force providing on-going support and transition planning for any future government posture.

#### **Exercise Pitch Black 12**

Up to 100 military aircraft will be in the Northern Territory from July 27 until August 17 as the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) hosts international partners for Exercise Pitch Black 12. There will be 2200 participants from Australia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, New Zealand and the United States. Exercise Pitch Black will be held from RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal.

Air Commander Australia, Air Vice-Marshal Mel Hupfeld, said the biennial exercise would this year feature a mix of first-time and returning participants, making it the most advanced in the event's 22 year history. For the first time at Exercise Pitch Black, Australia will be fielding the Super Hornet, Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control aircraft, and KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport.

"The Indonesian Air Force will make its debut appearance at Exercise Pitch Black 12, and we're very excited to see it attend with its Sukhoi Flanker fighter aircraft. Singapore has been a regular participant and will this year bring its F-15SG Eagle and Gulfstream G550 Conformal Airborne Early Warning aircraft," Air Vice-Marshal Hupfeld said.

"Regionally and geographically, the Northern Territory is ideally placed for exercise participants to bring together large formations of aircraft to conduct complex operations. Exercise Pitch Black 12 is a massive undertaking, not just for aircrews and maintainers, but also for the planning that is involved. Air Force has a deep bond with the Northern Territory extending back to 1938, and holding these events is our way of extending a sincere thank you to the public for its support," Air Vice-Marshal Hupfeld said.

**Wing Commander David Worrall**

Headquarters Air Command, 31 July 2012