AIR FORCE NEWS

RNZAF ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Our mission
To carry out military air operations to advance New Zealand’s security interests with professionalism, integrity and teamwork.
Air Force News is the official magazine of the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) — established to inform, educate and entertain its personnel and friends.

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Contributions need to include
- writer’s name, rank and unit
- photos provided separate from the text – at least 300dpi.

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THANK YOU!

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Rebecca Quilliam, Air Force News editor.
By Corporal Sam Pearson

Question: What do you envisage the RNZAF will look like in 80 years, how do you see it changing in those years and what part would you like to play in its future?

The Air Force is a very different organisation now from its inception in 1937, and it will change further over the next 80 years. The old adage of “adaptability is the key to air power” still rings true, and today the RNZAF has reacted well to the challenges posed by the 21st century. It is a very difficult task to predict what the RNZAF will look like in 80 years. However, one thing that is certain is that the RNZAF will have to continue to modify to an ever-changing global environment.

One factor that changes constantly in our world is technology. The capability of RNZAF aircraft today would have been considered science fiction to the first New Zealand airmen. Eighty years from now the aircraft and technology we operate will probably be just as daunting as a No. 5 Squadron P-3K2 Orion would have been to an airman in 1937.

New technology could enable us to operate in new environments and situations that aren’t possible today. However, despite a lot of change on the horizon there are some things that I hope stay the same about our organisation.

I am proud to be a member of such an inclusive and diverse organisation as the NZDF. One of the best resources the NZDF has is its people. The way we recruit and look after our people today will enable us to have a wide range of experience and ability for the future. For example, as an Air Warfare Specialist (AWS) on No. 5 Squadron I am expected to operate as part of a large crew of up to 18. Every member of the crew has different beliefs, genders, and background and this diversity presents us with a range of experience that enables us to react to any situation we may encounter.

I am unsure that I will still be around for the RNZAF’s 160th anniversary, however, in the future I would like to continue to be part of it. Part of my role as an AWS is to take part in search and rescue (SAR) operations on the P-3K2 Orion. This is the most important role that No. 5 Squadron has and our ability to respond quickly to an emergency anywhere in the Pacific can mean the difference between life or death. It is my hope that in the future I will be able to continue to take part in such important operations, maybe one day developing and enhancing our SAR capability.

The RNZAF will continue to be a force for good in New Zealand over the next 80 years. Despite the challenges that the future may present, our past has demonstrated that we can overcome adversity and accomplish our goals.
During breakfast on an official visit to Malaysia recently my host group brought out a cake to mark my one-year anniversary as the Chief. Two things struck me about this: one – we have some very good friends around the world, the kind who make the time and effort to note what’s happening in each others’ countries; and two – where has that year gone?

Last year I set out my vision and priorities in the Annual Command Directive and since then we have made significant progress towards those goals. Our focus on Military Air Operations is evident, especially when you look at the achievements of Operation TEAL last year. The team achieved fantastic C-130 mission success rates, earning accolades from our coalition partners. This success was the result of our whole organisation – not just the deployed teams, but from all corners at home and abroad. With such focus we can achieve remarkable results. Operation TAKAPU, with a P-3K2 in the Middle East, will continue to build on this success. They have already picked up where they left off last time and are working on ways to continuously improve.

In October last year we had the official opening of our Tūrangawaewae. This was an important milestone in maturing the RNZAF and is part of our formal acknowledgement and celebration of our bicultural nature. The Tūrangawaewae team is up and running, putting our asset to great use in supporting our Air Force community through education, formal hosting or just a place for us to gather and enjoy each others’ company.

More recently we held our 80th Anniversary Air Tattoo and I can say without a doubt I was greatly impressed. To me, our Tattoo displayed all the traits of a professional and competent service full of dedicated, positive and loyal service people. The flying demonstrations showed off our aircraft in an exciting way and provided spectators a sample of the military air operations we stand ready to undertake 24/7. The tented displays presented a wide variety of our trades and the specialist tools they use, from 3D printing to working with composites or watching Warrant Officer of the Air Force trying to change a tyre. Most of all the Air Tattoo showed me our people, our well-trained, professional, committed people coming together as a team to engage with the New Zealand public. I received many comments on the day, and in the weeks that followed, praising us for a fantastic event. A common theme in all comments was about you, our people. Everyone from visiting air chiefs to the New Zealand public on the day commented on the friendly, engaging and professional conduct of everyone involved. Your efforts certainly made me very proud – well done!

Looking to the future – we are in a good space. The Government has made a long-term commitment to replace our aging C-130, B757 and P-3K2 fleets and the Future Air Mobility and Future Air Surveillance Capability projects and many other infrastructure projects are under way. These projects are essential to ensure the NZDF is able to serve New Zealand’s interests into the future, particularly with the C-130 and P-3K2 fleets approaching the end of their structural life.

The one thing I do not see changing as we move into the future is the value we place on our people. The people we have are an integral part in our ability to provide Military Air Operations as part of A Force for New Zealand. As such I will continue to ensure your needs are considered as we go forward including the operational enabling allowance and defence housing policy.

Finally, as it’s our 80th anniversary please take the time to celebrate (responsibly) with our fellow airmen and service people. Reflect on how far we have come from our humble beginnings and where we are going to in the future. Eighty years as an organisation is something to be proud of!
Kia ora tatou
I am delighted to offer my congratulations to the Royal New Zealand Air Force as it celebrates its 80th anniversary.

In February, I was one of the many thousands of people who attended the Royal New Zealand Air Force Tattoo at Ohakea Air Force base. The display of aircraft, from vintage planes to the very latest in modern airpower, was a fitting tribute to the expertise and commitment of the men and women who have served in the RNZAF over the past eight decades. It also offered a thrilling visual history of your service.

That history includes the bravery of the New Zealand airmen who served in the Second World War, where three Victoria Crosses were awarded and includes the arrival of women into the service. Over time, the role of women has evolved, from the WAAFs of the Second World War to the changes in 1987, when all restrictions on their service were lifted.

Our young Air Force came of age in the Second World War and has continued to play a part in world affairs, whether in active roles in the conflicts of Malaya, Korea and Vietnam or the peace-keeping initiatives in the latter half of the 20th century. In times of need, the Air Force’s contribution to humanitarian missions has been very much appreciated by those who have received their help.

Support for the New Zealand and United States Antarctic programmes continues to be an important role for our Air Force. The seasonal ice flights offer valuable logistical support and are a vital component in the continuance of the scientific research being undertaken in Antarctica.

Congratulations to our Air Force personnel, past and present, for 80 years of honourable and loyal service.

The Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy, GNZM, QSO
Governor-General of New Zealand
The RNZAF in 2097?

By the Office of Strategy Management

This commemorative edition of the RNZAF News looks at the past 80 years of the RNZAF but what will our Air Force look like in 80 years? In 78 years we went from the Wright brothers’ first flight to the Space Shuttle. One wonders if the Wright brothers ever thought the next 80 years would involve the development of a reusable space vehicle. We too are faced with being unable to determine what technology will look like in 80 years, yet we can use future-based thinking to consider what we might want it to do. The aim of this article is to provide some ideas on how and why our Air Force will be different 80 years from now.

Determining how and why the Air Force of 2097 will be different requires the application of assumptions: things that are likely to remain unchanged and what will be different. What we want the future Air Force to do will continue to be shaped by New Zealand’s geopolitical situation, which is sure to change. Consider a continued rise in the world’s population, rising sea levels and potential changes in sea temperature. From this it is certain that New Zealand will remain geographically isolated from its neighbours and it is possible that our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) will contain plentiful, sought-after resources to feed a large population. These scenarios suggest that New Zealand will need an Air Force capable of using its technology to continue undertaking the core air power roles: air mobility, surveillance, and attack.

An Air Force that is capable of the core air power roles would remain a critical support element of the NZDF as a whole. Eighty years from now New Zealand will still need an NZDF that affords protection of her approaches and EEZ. Roles such as preserving rules-based international order and protecting sea lines of communication are also likely to remain. All of this suggests the scope of roles that our future Air Force must provide for the NZDF will remain varied – including the ability to engage in war fighting, transportation, surveillance, search and rescue, and disaster relief.

Given typical life spans of our aircraft, in 80 years we will be close to our third iteration of platform change from our current fleet. Considering how difficult it is to know the future, our Air Force will need to remain agile, likely through the use of multi-

These aircraft designs were sent to Air Force News a couple of years ago by Sean Ruffels, who lives in Australia. Sean had written a note on the back of one of them generously offering them to the RNZAF for future consideration. These young designers are our military’s future and it will be exciting to see their designs come to fruition.
role aircraft. Future-based thinking can help us consider what the shape of the future Air Force fleet may look like.

**Air Mobility Forces**

It is likely that despite technology improvements, the requirement to move people and equipment will remain. The RNZAF will need to transport quickly and efficiently, so this may be a mix of aircraft that can deploy the NZDF locally, regionally and globally. We may see sub-orbital, high-speed airlifters being developed and used by military forces.

**Space**

The Air Force will be a player in the space domain as it becomes more accessible, and we will need to understand not only how to best use the information from space, but also how future conflicts will be fought using the space. Given the enormous area that New Zealand is interested in, the wide-area surveillance provided from space will be a major feature in the future force.

**Surveillance and Response Forces**

This is likely to be the area that changes the most for the RNZAF. The change in aircraft capability is small in comparison to how technology has developed in the same period. So, it is essential to consider the effect that the RNZAF is attempting to achieve, rather than the means of transporting it. ISR will be predominant and the RNZAF would expect to have a fused and networked capability, with all platforms contributing. With increased domain awareness, ‘search’ is likely to drop from our vocabulary.

**Air Manoeuvre Forces**

Helicopters (manned or remotely piloted) and possibly vertical take-off aircraft could be used to move people and equipment on the battlefield.

**Attack Forces**

The ability to influence with the use of force will remain in the future, but the weapons of the future might be quite different. A couple of examples might be non-lethal and direct-energy weapons. We will continue to seek maximum utility from all our limited assets, so as weapons get smarter and more flexible it is likely that multi-role platforms will also have the ability to deliver force if required.

**Our people**

Eighty years ago, the people in the Air Force wouldn’t have been able to imagine the trades and skill-sets that we have today. In a similar vein, there are skills and jobs in the future that we can’t imagine. The convergence of information technology, robotics, artificial intelligence and nano-technology will absolutely change the face of the workforce. So, given all of the comments in the previous paragraphs, we will need to address the composition and expertise of our people – it will likely be a very different group from today. Where would we work, how would we communicate, and how would we integrate bases and HQs into the new structure? Undoubtedly, as we have done in the past, we will continue to adapt in order to be relevant in the future world.

**Future Projections**

All of these projections are based on scenarios that we identify with today. However, we must consider how we adapt to scenarios that are significantly different to what we know now. What happens if the world exhausts its fossil fuel? Alternatively, the remaining fossil fuel is so expensive, that air travel becomes unaffordable for most. In these instances, what options remain to move people and freight large distances efficiently e.g. by sea or by using dramatically different types of aircraft? Thinking in this manner helps us consider the situation if air power can no longer be relied on for reach and speed with respect to transportation.

Changing demographics could result in New Zealand being aligned differently in the future. Given our location, an isolationist superpower could have a dramatic effect on what we have to protect, and our military alignment may be limited to regional countries.

The future will undoubtedly be different to what we predict. Eighty years is a long time in military developments, and there will be generational steps in aircraft and technology. However, most importantly, the Air Force of the future will consist of high-calibre personnel who will operate, maintain, support and protect our assets. In this respect, the Air Force of the future will be no different to the Air Force of today.
By Rebecca Quilliam

Last month Air Force News ran a poll on the Air Force Facebook page for our most popular current aircraft. Of the eight options, the C-130 took the top place by a country mile and it was clear that many voters were smitten with the transport aircraft. It's easy to see why...

The Air Force's five C-130 Hercules are workhorses, travelling the length and breadth of the world and carrying a wide range of cargo.

They live at No. 40 Squadron in Whenuapai and the Squadron’s Commanding Officer Wing Commander Andy Scott said since their arrival more than 50 years ago, they have seen their fair share of action – “from wars in Vietnam in 1965 through to the Middle East today”.

“They fly missions in places as diverse as Afghanistan and Antarctica. They carry people, bombs, bullets, cars, cargo and even exotic wildlife. They fly from international airfields to grass paddocks, to snow and ice. They provide aid to disaster zones and evacuate people to safety. Basically, the C-130s do a bit of everything.”

C-130 pilot, Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Dave Natapu said the aircraft was arguably the most successful military aircraft ever. “The fact that we are flying a plane that is over 50 years old is a testament to just how well it does its job. It’s the jack of all trades of the military transport world and it does it really well,” he said.

There have been many highlights in the aircraft for FLTLT Natapu, including conducting steep tactical approaches on Night Vision Googles to remote airfields in Iraq and blasting around the low-level awareness trainer in Arizona.

An early poster that was produced at the same time as the first C-130s were introduced said the aircraft was “...a heavy duty hauler, it’s a push-button cargo-dropper, it’s an airborne ambulance, it’s a high-speed infantry carrier, and it’s a paratrooper’s best friend.”

Air loadmaster Sergeant (SGT) Dave Wood, who has travelled around the world on the aircraft, said the poster summed up the plane nicely.

He’s been on board with all manner of cargo, but one of the more challenging items to pack was an Asian elephant called Anjalee in 2015. The pachyderm from Sri Lanka had just finished her three-month quarantine period on Niue when the C-130 flew her to New Zealand, where she was taken to her new home at Auckland Zoo.

“It’s an honour to be a part of the ‘truckie’ community. It is amazing just how many C-130 operators you run into in different parts of the world, and catching up is always good fun.”

FLTLT Dave Natapu

“It was a massive task to undertake and we worked with a lot of organisations, including Ministry for Primary Industries, Customs and the zoo,” SGT Wood said.

“She was an oversized piece of cargo that pushed the edge of our limitations with height and width.”

Avionics Technician, Acting Corporal Greg White said while the aircraft was five decades old, the upgrades had brought the airframe into the modern era. “It’s still looking good from an avionics point of view.”

The aircraft operated in the world’s harshest environments and maintained an excellent mission rate, he said.

“The Middle East and Antarctica are the two extremes of the planet, but the aircraft performs fine. And that’s what makes it such a versatile aircraft and why they are still producing them and using them.”
The C-130 Hercules calls the hangars at No. 40 Squadron, at Whenuapai, home. Here is a look at the history of the country’s first transport squadron and its impact here and overseas.

No. 40 Squadron’s lineage goes back to 1943, with the introduction of Douglas Dakota twin-engine aircraft. Also based at Whenuapai were Lockheed Hudsons, Lodestars and the Dakotas, so the squadron was able to provide transport support to New Zealand and allied forces in the South West Pacific. No. 40 Squadron was disbanded in 1947, when most of the personnel and aircraft were transferred to the National Airways Corporation, but was reformed in 1954 with four new Handley Page Hastings CMk3. Three ex-TEAL DC-6 aircraft were added in 1961. No. 40 Squadron was re-equipped with three new C-130H Hercules in 1965, and a further two in 1969. Two Boeing 727s joined them in 1981. They were retired in 2003 and replaced with two Boeing 757s.

Government and Defence tasks take the aircraft and crews of No. 40 Squadron around the world. Australia, Fiji, India, the Middle East, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tonga, Vanuatu and Western Samoa are some of the places visited on humanitarian tasks. During the Gulf War in 1990/91 two Hercules, crews and support personnel were sent to Saudi Arabia, where they served with an RAF Transport Squadron. Since 1965 the Squadron has operated annual flights to Antarctica during the southern continent’s summer months.

The Squadron has carried out re-supply and support missions for NZDF deployments to Somalia, Bosnia and Bougainville. More recently, it has operated in the Middle East with regular flights by both aircraft types into the area each year in support of NZDF personnel based in Afghanistan.

DID YOU KNOW?

• The first C-130 flight into Vietnam was on July 6, 1965. The flight was an orientation for the following deployment of the NZ Army into Bien Hoa. The deployment started 10 days later

• On April 29, 1965, the C-130 NZ7001 flew direct to Honolulu – 3840nm/12hr 20 mins. At the time it was the longest flight by distance by any NZ civil or RNZAF aircraft. It then flew on to Dobbins in Kentucky, USA, before travelling home on September 9

• In one of its original design specs, the C-130 would be able to land on an aircraft carrier

CURIOUS CARGO

Over the years NZ 7001 has carried thousands of passengers – mostly crew, some VIPS and some who were a little more unusual, including penguins, some seals bound for Australia, a monkey, Anjalee, a Sri Lankan elephant, and two crocodiles, named Scar and Goldie, weighing more than 450kg each and destined for Auckland’s Butterfly Creek.
Future Pilots

Eyes on the Skies!

PLTOFF Magnus Holding

Pilot Officer (PLTOFF) Magnus Holding is part of the inaugural group training in the T-6C Texans. The 18-month course finishes later this year and if all goes to plan, PLTOFF Holding hopes to take his new-learned skills to the world stage.

“I always saw myself doing an active outgoing job. I was always keen on team dynamics, sports, that sort of stuff. The more I looked into the Air Force, the more I realised the culture of the Air Force really values those sorts of traits – teamwork, leadership and a dynamic outgoing work environment.”

The 24-year-old has long had a fascination with United Nations peacekeeping, so he took advantage of a plan where the Air Force paid for him to study and earn a degree in politics at Otago University before starting officer training. Then all going to plan, PLTOFF Holding would like to pilot C-130 Hercules around the world.

“I’ve always wanted to take part in a peacekeeping operation and No. 40 Squadron always seems to be at the forefront of any exercise or operation that we get involved in.”

His training confirmed his decision to join the military was a sound one.

“It’s better than I imagined. Every day we’re doing something different and it’s extremely challenging.”

The group has been part of Exercise WISEOWL at the top of the South Island and putting their skills to the test in the mountainous region.

PLTOFF Holding and his colleagues will complete the wings course in October and then be posted to one of the squadrons for further specialised training.

“It’s been really full-on, but really exciting. We’re flying around some really cool parts of the country – some amazing views – loving the flying. It’s a pretty cool thing to be flying side-by-side with your close mates.”
Officer Cadet (OCDT) Olivia Landau was just a teenager when she dreamed that flying for the Air Force would be her future. That wish will come true when she starts pilot training in a few months on the Air Force’s newest capability, the T-6C Texans.

“I looked out at the Airtrains at Base Ohakea and for some reason I had this thought, ‘This is home,’” OCDT Landau said. Ten years ago she was visiting the base as a 13-year-old air cadet, but soon she really will be calling Ohakea home as she starts training on the Texans with No. 14 Squadron.

Now 23, she joined the Air Force five years ago working in mission support, after topping her recruit training. “I initially applied to be a pilot but when I went to the selection board they said I needed more life experience.”

OCDT Landau was posted to No. 230 Squadron in Auckland and within her first two years she was deployed on an operation to the Middle East, “which was a pretty big deal for an Aircraftman”, she said.

With experience under her belt OCDT Landau returned to the selection board wanting to be a helicopter loadmaster, but to her surprise her testing indicated an aptitude for pilot training.

“That’s how I was offered the position of pilot,” she said. After gaining her wings, OCDT Landau wants to fly NH90 helicopters because that is where she feels she will make the most difference to people’s lives.

“So that traper lost in the bush – you know you can save their life. It was that tangible human aspect that drew me to it.”

However, a position with No. 3 Squadron is not guaranteed for OCDT Landau. It depends if there is a spot available on the training course, and if she has the “right hands and feet” for the role.

“I’m so excited. It’s an amazing opportunity and I just have to grab it with both hands.”

Training in the Texans would be an amazing experience, OCDT Landau said. “The Texans have over 1000 horse-power, so it’s absolutely insane the power that they’ve got behind them. It’s not daunting, but it’s going to be a challenge.”

“I was pretty stunned for a few days – I wondered if I could do it. But I realised I had to believe in myself to achieve what I wanted. They saw something in me that said I could do it, so I’m going to trust that and I’m going to trust myself.”

Future Pilots

OCDT Olivia Landau
On April 1 the Royal New Zealand Air Force turned 80 and the bases threw parties.

Base Auckland got into the swing with a specially designed three-tier cake, cut by Chief of Air Force, Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies and Aircraftman Germaine Purea-Colvin. The base also put on a family day for dignitaries and friends and family of base personnel. New and old aircraft were displayed on the flight line for the day.

The Black Falcons aerobatic team decorated the sky with a fly past to mark the occasion at Base Ohakea. The RNZAF band played a Beat the Retreat under the darkening skies.

Tradition was not forgotten in Wellington, where a church service at Old St Paul’s Cathedral commemorated the anniversary. One of the speakers was the RNZAF’s youngest member, Aircraftman Joe Penno.

The service was led by RNZAF Principal Chaplain, Di Woods. She led the congregation in a spirited version of Happy Birthday, to acknowledge the celebration of the day. She advised that the RNZAF should “rejoice in the future and the potential that lies before us”.

“The hope of new equipment and airframes, for new skills to use them effectively, and for new recruits – the people who will be the aviators of the next decade.”

Woodbourne joined the festivities with a Charter Parade through Blenheim.

The parties were not contained to New Zealand, with our deployed personnel celebrating with cake. It was presented to the team conducting maritime security operations in the Middle East.
Black Falcons’ Fly Past at Base Ohakea

Church service to mark the anniversary, Old St Paul’s Church, Wellington

Hannah Angelo and Kaitlyn Scott enjoy family day at Base Auckland

Cutting the cake in the Middle East

Base Ohakea celebrations
By Luz Baguio, Public Affairs Manager – Joint Forces New Zealand

Air Force airmen and aircraft play a central role in a number of the New Zealand Defence Force’s (NZDF) operations here and overseas. Already the Air Force has kept up a demanding pace with the first quarter alone featuring the launch of at least three major operations.

In February, the NZDF deployed a 55-member detachment and a P-3K2 Orion surveillance aircraft to the Middle East to work with international partners in maintaining maritime security, including countering piracy and the trafficking of people and drugs.

Although the detachment had to adjust initially to new ways of working, the mission is progressing smoothly and has drawn positive feedback from international partners, according to Wing Commander (WGCDR) DJ Hunt, the mission’s Commander.

“The past few weeks have seen a steady tempo being established and the whole team is settling into their rhythm. The feedback from our partners has also been positive,” he said.

The NZDF detachment has been helping patrol 3.2 million square miles of international water in the Middle East to assist a coalition of nations in maintaining maritime security, WGCDR Hunt said.

“The results being produced and the mission focus have given the detachment a real sense of purpose. The big picture is that our mission locates suspect vessels and passes the details on to agencies such as the Combined Maritime Forces,” he said.

“The contingent’s mood is upbeat. Morale-wise, people are missing their loved ones and vice-versa. However, the results being achieved are going some way to alleviating this.”

He said temperatures remain mild and have not been a problem for the contingent.

“We are heading into spring and the weather has been quite wet – not your typical dry desert weather. A number of days have been particularly bad with thunder, lightning and sand storms.

“The biggest challenge though is around getting used to the way things are done here – it’s not hard but just different. And this is right across the board, from air operations through to road traffic rules.”

An Orion also patrolled about 1.3 million square kilometres as part of Operation TAUTAI 2017, a regional fisheries monitoring and surveillance operation based out of French Polynesia.

The NZDF reported 46 fishing vessels as part of the multinational operation, which was coordinated by the French Navy’s Maritime Inter-Agency Centre in Papeete last month.

Back home, the NZDF deployed one of the Air Force’s NH90 medium-utility helicopters to support the Police’s annual crackdown on cannabis growers in February and March. About 70 hours were flown during 12 days of sorties to suspected cannabis-growing areas in Auckland, Taranaki, Whanganui and Manawatu.
“The operation has prevented millions of dollars of social harm in our communities and is one of the tangible ways that the NZDF assists the New Zealand public,” Air Component Commander Air Commodore Darryn Webb said.

“ Apart from contributing to all-of-government efforts to maintain a safe and secure New Zealand, the operation has provided an excellent opportunity to put our training into effect, and has strengthened our engagement with NZ Police.”

Next month, the NZDF is sending about 30 personnel and one of the Air Force’s C-130 Hercules strategic airlift aircraft to support coalition operations in the Middle East, Commander Joint Forces Major General (MAJGEN) Tim Gall said.

“The Hercules’ primary task is to transport people, equipment and supplies in support of New Zealand and Australian operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Sudan and the Sinai Peninsula. It may also support coalition operations in these countries.”

The aircraft and the supporting detachment were being deployed for a month from mid-May at the request of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and would operate as part of their Air Mobility Task Group, MAJGEN Gall said.

“This short-term deployment aims to provide additional capacity during a period of high operational tempo.

“The upcoming mission also marks our latest contribution to security and stability in the Middle East and affirms our longstanding commitment in the region.”

The NZDF detachment will include aircraft technicians, logistics specialists, maintenance personnel, and an Air Movements Load Team to support coalition aircraft in the region.

This will be the second time in a year an NZDF air transport team has been deployed to the Middle East. An Air Force C-130 Hercules aircraft and a 32-member detachment were sent to the Middle East in May last year to provide logistics support to coalition operations for six months.

The NZDF air transport team clocked about 640 flying hours on 82 missions to Iraq and Afghanistan, which is equivalent to completing nine round-the-world trips, by the time they finished their mission in early December 2016. It transported 771 tonnes of vital supplies and about 3200 military personnel while operating as part of the ADF task group.
When we hit the gym or pound the pavement, we're exercising to get and keep fit, not just for our own health but so we are ready to respond when the situation demands it. In the same way, our Force Elements (FE) exercise to ensure that they are ready to meet the level of capabilities required of the New Zealand Defence Force.

The Best Way to Keep Fit is to Exercise!

By Squadron Leader Simon Eichelbaum, Public Affairs (Air)

An RNZAF C-130 drops a high velocity combat deliver system above Londonderry Drop Zone, during the AATTC

Photo: Master Sgt. Erin Hickok, US Air National Guard

Australian Army 176th Air Dispatch Squadron, and NZA’s 5 Mov Coy, 2nd Combat Service Support Battalion, Logistic Regiment, collect an airdrop load at AATTC

Photo: Staff Sgt. Patrick Evenson, US Air National Guard

Participants of the AATTC in a pre-flight brief on the RNZAF C-130

Photo: Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Defence
The exercises are, in the Air Force’s case, conducted under Chief of Air Force’s directive, to ensure we are fit to meet the requirements of the NZDF Output Plan: Prepared, Protect and Project.

The Master Activity Schedule is held at Headquarters Joint Forces New Zealand. It details the exercises required by each service and Commander Joint Forces to generate the required levels of capability. They range from single-service domestic activities, to full-on combined Joint exercises involving the Services of a number of different nations working together in a common setting – the massive RIMPAC exercise held off the islands of Hawaii every two years is a good example.

Generally the FEs step up the difficulty level, taking crews and support personnel through a ‘crawl, walk, run’ process that introduces greater complexity over a succession of activities, building up and maintaining training and experience.

Names such as BLACKBIRD, BERSAMA SHIELD, RIMPAC and SKYTRAIN are all part of the exercise programme. By working up to the high-level war-fighting skills required at the top end of these exercises, our personnel are required to practise the full range of their capabilities. This in turn means that they have the necessary skills to conduct any of the activities they might be called upon at short notice, such as assisting other government agencies, search and rescue, or counter-terrorism.

A recent case in point has been No. 40 Squadron, which has just returned from Australia having participated in “AATTC”. This is the Advanced Airlift Tactical Training Course, delivered by the United States Air Force’s 139th Airlift Wing. The course gives our crews the chance to hone the tactical skills they learned on their conversion courses, then practised further through local exercises such as SKYTRAIN.

AATTC is normally held in St Josephs, Missouri, but this year they put the show on the road and came to Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Richmond, near Sydney. This allowed greater participation from the RAAF, and also gave an opportunity for the NZ Army’s 5 Mov Coy to go over and work alongside potential coalition partners, building and recovering loads used for the tactical air drops.

The value of this training can be seen during events like last year’s Kaikoura earthquake, where the very skills practised at AATTC were used to air-drop water and supplies to the people isolated in the damaged region. These skills are also required when No. 40 Sqn deploys to the Middle East on operational duty, where all the training is put to real-world use to achieve missions safely and efficiently.

So the next time you are strapping on the lycra and throwing on that ever-fashionable sweat band, remember that your exercise is a reflection of our constant activity to keep us ready for action.
Sir Henry Wigram was a key player in establishing the Royal New Zealand Air Force. After an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the New Zealand Government to be involved in state-backed aviation, he created his own flying school, the Canterbury (NZ) Aviation Company, to train pilots for war. In 1923 the base was bought by the Government and renamed Wigram Aerodrome.

(Source: christchurchcitylibraries.com)

Sir Henry’s vision regarding future wars in the air is clear from this quote more than 20 years before the start of World War II, perhaps predicting the Blitz in 1940 and the debacle in Singapore in 1942:

Aerial Navigation might be an immense factor in the event of a war taking place. It would be perfectly possible for a fleet of these machines to hover over the Thames and set fire to the docks and timber yards and pretty well destroy the shipping of the Thames. We are only on the eve of developments that might take place. We might find Great Britain unable to render us assistance, and therefore we might be subjected to attack. We do not know where it might come from. It might come from Germany, or it might come, as is even more likely in the years to come, from the East.

Henry Wigram to Parliament, 14 October 1909. (Hansard)

The First Air Chief
Sir Ralph Cochrane

When the New Zealand Government decided that it required a permanent, separately governed air force, RAF Wing Commander Ralph Cochrane was brought from Britain to review the country’s air power requirements. He prepared a report recommending that the independent force comprise permanent squadrons stationed at an expanded network of new aerodromes, supported by a territorial force of reserve personnel. The plan was accepted, and became the blueprint for the modern RNZAF. Ralph was asked to remain in New Zealand to implement the plan and was appointed the RNZAF’s first Chief of Air Staff in 1937.

Source: Air Force Museum of New Zealand
Standing last month at Ohakea at the 80th Anniversary Air Tattoo, I couldn’t help but recall that I’d stood in almost the same spot as a young officer watching the equally impressive air show for the RNZAF’s 21st birthday in 1958. This led to the thought that, give or take a month or two, the RNZAF and I were born in the same year.

War clouds were gathering at the time. But a young lad growing up in the quiet New Zealand countryside was largely unaffected. Not so for the RNZAF. Its early development was driven inescapably by abrupt and brutal events that imperilled the world.

Group Captain Ralph Cochrane and the government of Michael Savage did their best to prepare for what they sensed was to come. New Zealand contributed in serious scale to the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, providing trained aircrew to the Royal Air Force. But, in 1939 at home, the RNZAF itself still numbered fewer than 1,000 personnel, with a handful of obsolete aircraft. To meet the rising threat in the Pacific, there then began an expansion at extraordinary pace. The RNZAF reached 42,000 personnel by 1944, with more aircraft than it had had people only five years earlier. It had also become New Zealand’s spearhead in the war in the Pacific, since the 3rd NZ Division was recalled because the manpower burden of maintaining it had become too heavy to bear.

The historian F.L.W. Wood described our general wartime effort as “frantic, ingenious improvisation”. Accordingly, the names of many New Zealand aircrew entered into legend. They spanned from senior command to the most junior, and across all theatres of war. Many lost their lives. But whether they lived or died it was their skills, their standards, their devotion to duty in battle that forged our Air Force.

Some of them were still serving when I began as a Compulsory Military Trainee in 1956. They taught us how to operate as an Air Force, though thankfully at a slower, or at least a less frantic, pace than fate had dealt them two decades earlier. But they did impart their spirit of ingenious improvisation; of making the very best of whatever equipment the nation had decided it could afford to grant them, whether it be needed at home or abroad.

Those needs have included operational involvement in, or in support of, repeated operations in South-East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Afghanistan, Bosnia, around and within the Pacific rim, and elsewhere. Distance has been no insulator.

Throughout, the RNZAF has striven to be the best at what it does. And that is more than an empty slogan, or an idle boast, for it keeps faith with the writ handed down by our founders 80 years ago. Long may it be so; and long may the nation be proud of, and provide adequately for, its own Air Force.
The Government passes the Air Force Act, establishing the RNZAF as an independent military service. An Air Department is created to oversee military and civilian aviation in New Zealand. Cochrane is appointed the first Chief of Air Staff.

1937

The RNZAF becomes the first of the three services to accept women, with the New Zealand Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAFF) formed under Frances ‘Kitty’ Kain.

1941

World War II ends. By the end of it, 3635 RNZAF personnel have been killed on active service, 350 in the Pacific and 3285 in Europe – the majority with RAF Bomber Command.


1945

Air Vice-Marshal Ian Morrison oversees a comprehensive re-equipment programme that sees the RNZAF acquire its first post-war American aircraft: P-3 Orions, C-130 Hercules, and Bell UH-1 Iroquois helicopters.

Pictured (right): FLTLT LW Tarr and Paul Ashby at the Lockheed factory at Burbank, California, with the first Orions bound for the RNZAF.

1962
New Zealand commits combat forces to the Vietnam War. C-130 Hercules airlifts troops into South Vietnam, while Bristol Freighters begin regular resupply missions from Singapore.

Two Hercules join the Allied coalition forces in the Persian Gulf region prior to the outbreak of the Gulf War.

The Government scraps the RNZAF’s combat wing, disbanding both Skyhawk squadrons (Nos 2 and 75) and the Aermacchi jet trainer squadron (No. 14).

P-3 Orions, C-130 Hercules and personnel deployed after a tsunami causes substantial damage and loss of life in Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga.

C-130s, Boeing 757s, an Orion, Beechcraft Super King Airs, and Iroquois helicopters sent to Christchurch following a devastating earthquake that severely damages the city and kills 185 people. It was the largest single movement of personnel and freight in RNZAF history.

The Air Force’s Tūrangawaewae (a place to stand) opens at Base Ohakea.
Last month Air Force News ran a poll on the Air Force Facebook page for the most popular retired Air Force aircraft. We selected one aircraft from each decade dating to 1937 and the clear winner was the A-4K Skyhawk. We promised to feature it in this issue and we loved putting this together...

The Skyhawks were bought in 1970 to replace the obsolete English Electric Canberra. They were a stunning breath of fresh air for their combat capability and were homed primarily with No. 75 Squadron. They were bought at a time the RNZAF was going through modernisation of the entire fleet – also bought were P-3 Orions, C-130 Hercules, Sioux and Iroquois helicopters.

In the late-1980s the Skyhawks underwent a significant upgrade, Project Kahu, which dramatically improved their capability and vastly extended their working lives.

Air Commodore (rtd) Jim Barclay said initially the decision to buy the A-4 was met with disappointment by No. 75 Squadron.

“It was this Navy shipboard attack bomber and we were singularly unimpressed.

“But I can tell you, having flown it myself for a few thousand hours, it was the best buy for New Zealand. The ferry range got it easily from here to Australia, and the combat capability being small, single-engine, single-pilot, it was ideally suited for what we needed and it could carry a bloody good weapons load. It served us well.”

In 1984 he became Commanding Officer of No. 75 Squadron and as OC Strike Wing, saw in the increase to the fleet of a further 10 Skyhawks, bought from Australia.

During his time as CO 75, the aircraft were sent to a US exercise in the Philippines, called Cope Thunder.

“We were there for two weeks and we didn’t lose one sortie at any time, such was the capability of our ground crew in servicing these airplanes and getting them up. We’re particularly proud of that.”

Wing Commander (rtd) John Scrimshaw trained in the Skyhawks not long after their purchase, in the United States. After they were shipped to New Zealand he flew the first Skyhawk from Whenuapai to their home at Ohakea.

“I was one of the few who were in favour of the Skyhawk. I think they proved themselves well in Vietnam. The important point was we could afford to buy a reasonable number of them – we got 14.”

The aircraft were excellent to fly, he said.

“The Venom was good to fly, and the Canberra was nice to fly, but I wouldn’t have liked to take the Canberra into a shooting war, whereas the Skyhawk was smaller and carried a good weapons load that could be delivered far more accurately than the Canberra.”

Don Simms was an Avionics Technician at the time and worked on Project Kahu.

“It was an amazing project at the time – it was such cutting-edge technology. Project Kahu was a great example of Kiwi ingenuity and making some really smart decisions about how to do things.”

After the upgrade the Skyhawk could easily hold its own against the Australians’ F-18 Hornet, he said.

“The basic airframe and engine were very reliable. It could take
a lot of damage from bird strikes and things like that. It got the pilots home a number of times, whereas other aircraft might not have been able to,” Mr Simms said.

They were never used in combat by the RNZAF, but came close twice. The first time was during the Gulf War in 1990/1991.

“We were all set to go, but in the end the Government decided to send the Hercules and some medics,” Mr Simms said.

The next time was in 1999, during the East Timor crisis. The Skyhawks of No 2 and 75 Squadrons were on standby to deploy to northern Australia if required.

Even though the RNZAF no longer uses them, some of our old Skyhawks are being used by Draken International as ‘enemy aircraft’ on contract to the United States Air Force for their pilots to practice with.

Mr Barclay said because of the upgrades they had three decades ago, they can provide realistic opposition to keep up with the modern US technology.

“They are the best Skyhawks in the world, without doubt.” Some of the ex RNZAF Skyhawks operated by Draken are 50 years old this year.

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DID YOU KNOW: Skyhawks played key roles in the Vietnam War, the Yom Kippur War, and the Falklands War. Sixty-three years after the aircraft’s first flight, some of the nearly 3000 produced remain in service with several air arms around the world, including flying from the Brazilian Navy’s aircraft carrier, São Paulo.
The Air Force Museum has put together 80 profiles of Air Force personnel who have served at different stages throughout its 80-year history. The figures range from aircraftmen, air vice-marshals, ground crew, pilots and even a squadron mascot. All have contributed to making the RNZAF the richly diverse service it is today. Here are just some of those who contributed during the past eight decades...
Air Commodore Sidney Wallingford – 1929

In January 1930, Sidney Wallingford piloted the first New Zealand military aircraft to fly on active operations. Having served with the Royal Flying Corps in World War I and the Territorial New Zealand Air Force, Sidney joined the New Zealand Permanent Air Force (NZPAF) in 1929. After an incident during the Mau protests for Samoan independence he was despatched with a NZPAF Moth floatplane to Western Samoa. There he conducted general reconnaissance operations in support of New Zealand troops, as well as dropping messages and propaganda.

Leading Aircraftman George West – 1938

George West (Ngāi Tahu) became the first Māori member of the RNZAF when he joined as an aero engine fitter in 1936. Aside from his regular duties at Wigram, George served as the station’s bugler, responsible for playing the 6.30am reveille (wake-up call). He quickly discovered that if he set his alarm for 6.25am he could wake, climb out of bed, raise the window, lean out with his bugle, play the wake-up call, close the window and go back to bed! Sadly, George died on 12 May, 1939, when the Vickers Vildebeest he was flying in as a passenger crashed on the airfield at Wigram.

Sergeant James (Jimmy) Ward – 1941

After a bombing raid over Münster, Germany, on 8 July, 1941, second pilot Jimmy Ward and crew were returning to England when their Wellington bomber was attacked by a German night-fighter aircraft. The enemy was shot down, but not before severely damaging the Wellington. A fire broke out on the aircraft’s fabric-covered wing and when all other attempts to extinguish it failed, Jimmy donned his parachute, headed on to the wing, edged his way towards the fire and smothered the flames with a canvas engine cover. The captain nursed the damaged aircraft back to base, where they landed safely.

Jimmy Ward became the first of three New Zealand airmen to be awarded the Victoria Cross (VC), the highest British Commonwealth military decoration for valour “in the face of the enemy”.

Leading Aircraftman Samuel Owen Meredith – 1942

A mechanic with No. 1 Aerodrome Construction Squadron, engaged in building new airfields for the RAF in Malaya, Owen Meredith found himself caught up in the fall of Singapore. As Japanese forces advanced, the British realised they had no choice but to evacuate. In the midst of retreat, Meredith sustained extensive burns during an air raid and was admitted to hospital, where he was captured when the Japanese took the city and became a prisoner of war (POW). He spent the rest of the war in the notorious Changi POW camp, but survived his ordeal to return home in September 1945.

Wing Commander John (Johnny) Checketts – 1943

September 6, 1943 was an eventful day for No. 485 (NZ) Squadron fighter ace Johnny Checkettts. During a dogfight with German FW 190s over enemy-occupied France his Spitfire was hit. There was a “terrific explosion” and the cockpit filled with flames. Johnny was badly burned but managed to bail out, landing in a field of farm workers. He was hidden safely with a French family and his wounds were treated. With help from the French Resistance, Johnny evaded capture for nearly two months and made it back to England, where he continued to serve in a number of command posts.
Flight Lieutenant Leonard (Len) Chambers – 1943
On the night of 16 May 1943, Len Chambers was wireless operator/air gunner on Lancaster ‘P for Popsie’ of the elite No. 617 Squadron RAF. His target was the Möhne Dam in Germany and the secret weapon to be used was the now-famous ‘bouncing bomb’. Len’s Lancaster successfully breached the enemy defences and made for the dam; it was the third to attack, but the bomb failed to breach the dam. A later aircraft did succeed in cracking and destroying it. No. 617 Squadron became known as the ‘Dambusters’ in honour of this raid.

Flight Lieutenant George Jameson – 1944
The events of 30 July, 1944, placed Christchurch-born George Jameson firmly in the history books. In the early hours of that morning, while patrolling off the coast of Normandy, France, in their Mosquito fighter-bomber, he and navigator Norman Crookes encountered a swarm of enemy aircraft. During the skirmish that followed George destroyed three of them. By the end of the war he was credited with the destruction of 11 enemy aircraft – the highest night-fighter score of any New Zealand pilot.

Air Commodore Stuart (Stu) McIntyre – 1960
An accomplished jet pilot, Stu McIntyre deployed to Singapore with No. 14 Squadron in 1955 as part of New Zealand’s response to a request from the British Government for support during the “Malayan Emergency”. On 1 May, flying an RAF-loaned Venom, Stu led the RNZAF’s first operational strike since World War II, against a terrorist position in Malaya. He carried out 48 operational strikes during the campaign. Stu later flew Canberra and Skyhawk aircraft, and held various flying and command roles, including Base Commander at Ohakea and aide-de-camp to the Governor-General and to Her Majesty The Queen.

Wing Commander Maurice Conly – 1970
While most artists have a studio to work in and a place to set up their materials, Maurice Conly’s life as the RNZAF’s only official artist was a little different to most – his studio was the world. His career with the RNZAF, beginning in 1941 and spanning 54 years, took him all over the world, from the jungles of Bougainville, Malaysia and Vietnam to the icy tundra of Antarctica. In his work Maurice captured the daily activities of the Air Force and its people, as well as providing artwork for RNZAF publications, such as Contact magazine during World War II.

Warrant Officer Dale Kutia (née Canty) – 1977
Dale Kutia joined the Women’s Royal New Zealand Air Force (WRNZAF) in November 1972 as a clerk, general duties. At that time, WRNZAF personnel were limited to certain trades and women were paid 80 per cent of what men received for doing the same job. More than 40 years later, Dale is the longest continuously serving woman in the history of the RNZAF, having witnessed huge changes for women in the Air Force since gender integration in 1977. She has been described as an inspirational leader, with a “passion for all things people”, and her long and dedicated service has been recognised by several awards and commendations.
Flight Lieutenant Angela (Angie) Dickinson – 1988
When Angie Dickinson graduated with her “wings” at Wigram in 1988 she became the RNZAF’s first female pilot. Although gender integration in the New Zealand Defence Force had occurred in 1977, women were still barred from becoming air crew and entering other combat trades until a Government decision in 1986 opened non-combat flying roles to women. Angie’s 12-year career with the RNZAF was ground-breaking and diverse, involving flying Iroquois helicopters with No. 3 Squadron and C-130 Hercules transport aircraft with No. 40 Squadron.

Warrant Officer Viti Flanagan – 1991
When Viti Flanagan joined the Air Force in 1983 and trained as an aircraft technician, only two other women had done so before and she came up against some ingrained attitudes, especially from superiors. Under more enlightened leadership with No. 5 Squadron, Viti specialised in engine work and became the RNZAF’s first female engine runner. Extremely competent and experienced, Viti was included on the team to deploy when the Gulf War broke out in 1991, but could not go. The idea of women entering combat zones still met opposition and restrictions remained in place until 2000.

Squadron Leader Kelly Bint (née Logue) – 2001
In 1999, Kelly Logue qualified as the first (and only) female fighter pilot to fly in the RNZAF. Kelly joined in 1996 and, after 10 months of initial pilot training on Airtainers, chose to specialise as a transport pilot. After some encouragement she changed her specialisation to air combat, and trained on Aermachis for two years, before progressing to the Skyhawk. In 2001 she was posted to Nowra, Australia, flying Skyhawks with No. 2 Squadron, until the RNZAF’s Air Combat Force was disbanded in the same year. Kelly then converted to flying C-130 Hercules. She retired from the service in 2008.

Sergeant Adam Coates – 2009
Air Warfare Specialist Adam Coates was on the first RNZAF aircraft to be deployed to Samoa after the 2009 tsunami, to conduct disaster reconnaissance. He recalls that “the scene presented to us was something none of the crew will forget”. Adam, who joined in 2007, spent three days operating from a P-3 Orion, looking from above for significant damage and survivors in the water. This information was used to prioritise assistance from multi-national support agencies. Adam was subsequently deployed to the Persian Gulf, for anti-piracy patrols, before moving to an instructor posting.

Warrant Officer Douglas (Wal) Wallace – 2016
In 2006 Wal Wallace (Ngāti Tūwharetoa), an avionics technician, became the new Māori Coordination Officer (MCO) for the RNZAF. In his 25 years of service, Wal has always been a strong supporter of Māori culture within the NZDF. As MCO, he had the opportunity to help lead the charge on the planning and construction of the Air Force’s new Tūrangawaewae (“place to stand”). The Tūrangawaewae manager since 2016, Wal credits this accomplishment as both the highlight of his career and a huge step towards a truly bicultural Air Force.
As we enter the 21st century it is clear that the RNZAF has made huge advances in gender integration. Today’s women who serve in the Air Force are as confident and capable as their trailblazing predecessors and, with the full support and recognition of the Air Force behind them, they are able to perform every role available. New Zealand society, however, wasn’t always ready for women in combat.

The WAAF and WRNZAF 1941-1976

The Women’s Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) was formed in 1941 in response to critical manpower shortages but it was not expected to last past the end of World War II. In the years immediately following the war, planning committees met to discuss the possible future shape of women’s services. Although the Women’s Royal New Zealand Air Force (WRNZAF) was formed in 1954 as part of the RNZAF, its value was often questioned.

A 1961 exercise to align women’s trades with men across the three Services was prompted by the 1960 Government Service Equal Pay Act, but while the trades were aligned, women were paid only 80 per cent of the salaries men got for doing the same work, on the basis that they were not as effective. Unlike men, women were required to be single on enlistment and marriage – or worse, pregnancy – was considered reason for discharge. A ceiling on the proportion of women in the service was set at 8 per cent and the annual turnover rate was an amazing 34 per cent.

A Decade of Change: The Gender Integration Process

In 1976 a comprehensive review of Defence policy on the employment of women culminated in Defence Council Paper 8/76, which set out the aim “to integrate women as far as possible on an equal basis with men, within each of the services, and to remove any unnecessary discrimination between the sexes”. The policy was implemented in July 1977, when the WRNZAF was disestablished and women were integrated into the RNZAF. The policy did, however, contain restrictions that effectively kept women from some trades and training opportunities, particularly aircrew.
Equal pay was introduced at once and many women received significant increases in their pay packets. The integration was not just about pay scales and opportunities but also about conditions of service. This meant that women could not be discharged for getting married and, in 1979, with the introduction of the Maternity Leave Employment Protection Bill, women could no longer be discharged simply because they were pregnant.

Accordingly, in 1979 a uniform maternity smock was introduced.

**First Flyers: Women pilots and technicians**

In the mid-1980s the first women technicians started to trickle on to the operational squadrons. Workplace integration improved when appropriate facilities were provided.

The biggest changes, however, came in 1986, with the lifting of the restrictions on women aircrew, and in 1988, with the lifting of restrictions on women flying combat aircraft. The first female pilot graduated in 1988, and other women joined her in 1993.

**The RNZAF in the 1990s**

In 1993 Wing Commander Mary Cox became the first female of Wing rank since Wing Officer Frances ‘Kitty’ Kain had been appointed Superintendent of the WAAF more than 50 years previously. In 2001 Cox broke another barrier, when she became the first female Group Captain and first woman in the New Zealand Defence Force to be appointed as a Defence Adviser.

In the 1990s the RNZAF also gained its first female helicopter loadmaster and its first strike pilot. The announcement in late 1999 by the Chief of Defence Force that he would not use the Human Rights Act to prevent servicewomen going into combat marked the end of a most successful decade for women in the RNZAF.

**Into the millennium: Women in the RNZAF today and into the future**

In July 2000 Defence Force Order 05/2000 cleared the way for women to take a full and equal part in all service activities including combat, peace enforcement and humanitarian operations.

In 2000 there was also the introduction of a greater range of family-oriented policies, including the appointment of Family Community Facilitators on all bases. Today, the number of women has increased by 10 per cent since the time of integration, and women now comprise 17 per cent of all personnel. In just over a decade women’s numbers in the officer ranks have increased by 33 per cent.
Military Dogs Working for 50 Years: Let Slip the Dogs of War

MWD Cooper latches on to the arm of the Practical Training Assistant.

LAC Gareth Havill, MWD Cooper and CPL JD Hines

Section photo
The Military Working Dog Unit has played a major role throughout the Air Force’s history – and this year it’s celebrating its 50th anniversary. The dogs and their handlers are a mainstay on bases and contribute in operations and exercises. *Air Force News* takes a look at the unit’s history and meets the dogs that work today.

The unit was formed in 1967, after the purchase of the P-3 Orion aircraft from the Americans. The contract stated the aircraft required a certain level of security, which was either having armed guards or military working dog (MWD) patrols.

“We picked working dogs because they are a force multiplier, they’re cheaper and they can do the work of seven to eight people. We’ve maintained that ever since,” MWD handler Corporal (CPL) JD Hines said.

The dogs’ job begins as the sun sets, maintaining security of the air bases through the night. Their task has been the same for the past five decades.

The dogs are trained to detect and apprehend any person who should not be on the base. “We don’t just focus on the flight line and aircraft, which are key assets, but we patrol the perimeters, the married quarters, the domestic side of base – everywhere,” CPL Hines said.

The dogs are required to board all RNZAF aircraft, including the helicopters. It’s a foreign environment for the new dogs and training takes place in a methodical fashion until they are happy to be flying and even be winched off.

MWD handler Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Gazz Havill said they started with getting the dog used to being on a still helicopter, so it gets used to the feel of the metal floor, the new smells and being close to the crew and controls. Then training is eased up to a helicopter with its rotors and engine going, until finally it goes on a flying journey.

“It’s just practice and doing it over and over again and rewarding them with each step.”

For the majority of the past 50 years the unit has been made up of German Shepherds, but in recent years that has changed. Now there are also Belgian Malinois and Dutch Shepherds, which tend to have a longer working life than their German Shepherd cousins and have a tendency to suffer fewer degenerative issues.

MWD handler LAC Liam Elder said the dogs were retired when they started slowing down later in life and were unable to do the job. They would then undergo socialisation training to ensure they were suitable for a home environment – often their handler’s home.

CPL Hines said the relationship between handlers and their dogs was pretty special.

“*We are massively attached to them. Not only are they our workmates, but they’re literally our livelihoods. We spend five or six days a week, nine hours a day with them. You can imagine the bond.*”

*CPL JD Hines*
Rocky, a Dog’s Tale

Rocky had already had a tough life when he started with the Military Working Dog Unit. But after a few years’ training he became one of the unit’s stars. Retirement at his handler’s home should have been a relaxing time for the then middle-aged dog, but shortly after finishing his working life the German Shepherd disappeared and was not found until more than two years later.

Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Glenn Blay was a handler with the Military Working Dog (MWD) Unit in 2000 when Rocky arrived from the Taupo pound. He had been rescued from his home, where he lived with about eight other dogs and had to fight for food that was thrown to them once a week.

“When we got him he was skin and bones. He was quite a scared dog because of where he had come from and the beatings he received,” FLTLT Blay said.

But after a concentrated training effort, Rocky ended up being a fully trained and productive member of the unit.

“Rocky had the most amazing nose,” FLTLT Blay said. “He wasn’t the most fearsome dog out there, but his nose was just incredible. He would pick up a man from miles away that not many of the other dogs did.”

After a successful career, which included a deployment to the Solomon Islands and rounding up a group of vandals damaging a Whenuapai school, Rocky retired in 2008. He was sent to stay with a friend of FLTLT Blay, south of Sanson, for a few weeks before FLTLT Blay arrived in Ohakea to start a new role as a helicopter loadmaster.

During that time, Rocky disappeared. FLTLT Blay eventually accepted he would never see Rocky again and had a ceremony to commemorate him.

But in the middle of 2010 he received a call to say Rocky had been found by a vet, alive, wandering the streets in Tuakau, Auckland.

The vet took Rocky to the pound, where they were able to scan the information about him on his microchip.

FLTLT Blay jumped on the earliest plane to Auckland, where he was finally reunited with his dog.

“It was pretty surreal, seeing the little tubby fella come running out of the kennel. He came running straight up to me. Hard to explain really.”

Media discovered a family had bought Rocky from someone at a pub at Tuakau and had been looking after him.

Rocky stayed with FLTLT Blay for another four years before he died of old age.

Deployed Dogs

Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Deane Wilson was in the last group of handlers to take part in an operation with their dogs overseas. A Leading Aircraftman at the time, he and his German Shepherd Såg were sent to the Solomon Islands in 2003 in a rare overseas deployment.

Most nights the pair worked from about 1am–2am until dawn patrol began about 5am.

“We conducted patrols of the camp and down the flight line. There were four of our Hueys out there and four Hueys from the Australian contingent we were living and operating with,” he said.

The New Zealand military were in the country as part of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), to help restore civil order and stabilise the government. At the time FLTLT Wilson was deployed there was a weapons amnesty and a ceasefire was put in place with local militia groups.

Såg, despite being a four-year-old long-haired German Shepherd, acclimatised to the Pacific temperatures pretty well, aided by the fact they were able to avoid the worst of the heat, FLTLT Wilson said.

“We were working at night-time, when the temperatures were a relatively cool 26–27°C. We also had a fan set up next to his kennel.”

During the deployment Såg and FLTLT Wilson had the chance to work with the Australian dog teams in theatre, both the military working dogs and the explosive ordnance detector dogs, “which were great opportunities”.

Living in the Pacific also meant dealing with the monsoon season, he said.

“We were sitting out on the flight line one day and behind me I could hear what sounded like a freight train heading towards us. I turned and there was a wall of water falling from the sky. It was coming up the domestic terminal and I grabbed Såg and we legged it for the hangar. We just got there when it bucketed down. Såg looked at me like, ‘That was lucky’.”

Såg stayed with the Air Force until his retirement at the end of 2006.

“We searched everywhere. I pretty much drove from Auckland to Wellington and back, looking down the sides of the roads, put out fliers, contacted everyone we could, but we couldn’t find him. I was pretty devastated.”

Flight Lieutenant (FLTLT) Glenn Blay
The Royal New Zealand Air Force is 80. But its beginnings can be traced to a time long before 1937, to a dusty, open paddock just outside Christchurch and to the foreshore of Waitemata Harbour at Kohimarama.

During the Great War of 1914–1918 there came into being the Canterbury Aviation Company at Sockburn and, separately, the New Zealand Flying School in Auckland. The name Henry Wigram, later Sir Henry, is stamped indelibly on the former, while the latter was the child of the Walsh brothers, Vivian and Leo. Between them these two commercial flying schools trained nearly 300 New Zealand airmen who went on to serve in the Royal Flying Corps during World War I.

This had been the war to end all wars. History has been hard on that hope, but naturally enough when the war ended neither the New Zealand Government nor the public were much disposed to think about the changes aviation might bring to their South Pacific fastness. A few visionaries dreamed dreams – among them Bettington, Bolt, Isitt, Seabrook, Walsh, Wigley, Wigram, and Wilkes. Wigram, a public figure of influence, insisted that the Government should take an interest in organising military aviation in particular. Eventually, in 1923, it did. At the Sockburn Airfield, which had been gifted by Wigram for the purpose, and around the nucleus of his Canterbury Aviation Company, the New Zealand Permanent Air Force was formed as part of the Army.

Thus an air force has existed since 1923. In 1934 the Permanent Air Force was renamed the Royal New Zealand Air Force, but it remained part of the Army. Then, on April 1, 1937, under the legislative authority of the Royal New Zealand Air Force Act, it was re-formed as a separate Service.

Aviation had long had curiosity interest but the country had been uncharacteristically slow to grasp its full meaning, in the military and civil dimensions. Perhaps because of this, the few early leading figures now stand out from the background in a sharply determined and colourful relief. Their history is rich in character and endeavour, and it has been ably chronicled.

The Air Force Museum at Wigram charts and preserves in responsible custody the nation’s military aviation past, so those yet to come may understand better why we have been where we have been, and the paths that took us there.

Map of Bases 1937-2017

Source: RNZAF Golden Anniversary Souvenir Booklet
Photos Through the Years

1938
First Senior RNZAF rugby team at Wigram

1940
Portrait of Flying Officer Edward Sadler wearing flying gear at Wigram

1941
Group of airmen holding the RNZAF Ensign, Fiji

1956
Beaver after the first landing at Skilton Inlet, Antarctica

1967
Twelve Vampires flying in formation

1969
Vampires flying over the crowds watching the bi-Centennial parade in Gisborne, during Ex Golden Kiwi

1982
Ex Southern Safari. Soldiers with full combat equipment and rifles walking towards an Iroquois at Tekapo Army training area

1986
Four TA4k Skyhawks in formation

1988
Iroquois landing on a rock outcrop in a ravine somewhere in the Malaysian jungle

2004
Orion P-3

2005
Kiwi Red parachute team descending with smoke trails, Wigram Classics

2009
Tsunami relief for Samoa. Iroquois picking up personnel from the Island of Manono
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>WAAF driver towing a fuel tanker behind a ‘Case’ tractor in front of an Avro Anson. Navigation Reconnaissance School, New Plymouth</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>New Zealand’s first jet fighter, the Gloster Meteor</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>RNZAF personnel assisting in dockyard work during the 1951 Watersider’s Dispute</td>
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<td>1970</td>
<td>Arrival of RNZAF Skyhawks, being towed through the streets of Auckland</td>
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<td>1973</td>
<td>Fire personnel loading a ‘patient’ onto a stretcher during a crash fire exercise at Base Wigram</td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Skyhawks refuelling from a USAF Hercules tanker</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>FGOFF Angie Dickinson watches an Adele Penguin walk past at Cape Royds, Antarctica</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Iroquois, on snow, with bales of hay loaded to be dropped to snowed-in sheep in Canterbury after a major show-storm</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Skyhawk firing a rocket</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>AC Christiaan Kuhn and LAC Daniel Eavestaff erecting a mast during Ex Tunex Astra in Samoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>P-3K2 Orion aircraft conducts a maritime surveillance patrol over the waters of New Zealand’s Exclusive Economic Zone</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2017 Air Tattoo, military air show at Base Ohakea</td>
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