

**Speech by Deputy Chief of Air Force  
Air Vice-Marshal Gavin 'Leo' Davies, AO, CSC  
RAAF 94<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reception  
Anglesea Barracks Officers' Mess, Hobart  
27 March 2015**

Her Excellency Professor The Honourable Kate Warner, AM  
The Honourable Senator Eric Abetz  
The Honourable Alise Archer, Speaker of the House  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good evening to you all. It is a pleasure for my wife, Rhonda, and I to be here to mark this 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Royal Australian Air Force. With the RAAF's establishment in 1921, we are the second-oldest independent air force in the world. Military aviation came of age during World War I when airships and early aircraft were primarily used for reconnaissance. Our four Australian Flying Corps squadrons were part of the Australian Imperial Force and were attached to larger Royal Air Force formations.

During WWI, 800 Officers and nearly 3000 airmen served in the Australian Flying Corps. 175 lost their lives. Many AFC veterans helped to lay the foundation for the future Royal Australian Air Force. Others would enter industry to make significant contributions to aviation, such as Qantas co-founders Hudson Fysh and Paul McGinness. Both received the Distinguished Flying Cross with No.1 Squadron in Palestine. Notably, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, who made the first trans-Pacific flight from the United States to Australia, and our first Chief of Air Staff, Sir Richard 'Dicky' Williams were AFC veterans. During 1920, the Australian Flying Corps was replaced by the Australian Air Corps which led to the formation of the Australian Air Force on 31 Mar 1921. The 'Royal' prefix was added in August of that same year.

Since our formation, Air Force personnel have served proudly in the campaigns of WWII. Of the 215,000 men and women who served between 1939 and 1945, 9870 RAAF personnel lost their lives. Since WWII, Air Force has served with distinction in Korea, Malaya, 'Confrontation', Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. We are also proud of our role in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions throughout the world including Bougainville, Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Solomon Islands, Somalia and Sudan in which many hundreds of Air Force officers and airmen have been involved.

Today we are supporting the fight against Daesh through an air task group that includes F/A-18 fighters, a KC-30 refueler and an E-7 airborne control aircraft, the Combined Air Operations Centre and combat support elements. The air task group has completed over 500 missions, off-loaded over 16 million pounds of fuel and released over 270 weapons during combat missions. Air Force was required to deploy at short notice to the threat presented by Daesh. We do not know what the fight of tomorrow will be, but we must be ready to respond. The launch of Plan JERICO during the CAF Symposium in February this year is part of this preparation. Jericho is the Chief's plan to transform Air Force into an integrated fighting force that will take full advantage of the technologies offered by our new platforms, our innovative people and our support systems.

Australian military aviation squadrons have always operated leading-edge technology—from converting reconnaissance aircraft into bombers by the carriage of hand-released ordnance in WWI, to the incorporation of Gee and H2S radar to gain a decisive advantage in WWII. There are now state and non-state actors having access to more technologically advanced systems and in this changing strategic environment, we must look for new and better ways of staying ahead of our adversaries.

Plan JERICHO will transform Air Force into a 5<sup>th</sup> generation—enabled force that is capable of fighting and winning in 2025; a modern, fully integrated combat force that can deliver air and space power effects in the information age. Our new platforms—such as the E-7A Wedgetail, P-8A Poseidon, Triton, Growler and F-35A JSF—demand new operating concepts, new support arrangements and new sustainment processes. At the same time, our operating environment will be increasingly complex, with large amounts of data being produced and distributed along contested lines of communication. We are going from Nokia to iPhone 6.

With the introduction of new aircraft, our capacity to make the right decision at the right time will be tested. Plan JERICHO will harness the potential of our current capabilities, drive further innovation and change the way we acquire and sustain new capabilities in order to best prepare for this future.

Plan JERICHO is not the final plan for Air Force but rather the first step. While looking towards our future, we must remember, honour and learn from the past. This is a special year in military history as 2015 marks the Centenary of Anzac and 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Tonight, we have with us many of those special individuals who served in the Royal Australian Air Force during WWII and they have been introduced to you by CO 29SQN.

SQNLDR Mick Vautier  
FLTLT Dave Jennings, DFC  
FLGOFF Graeme House  
FLTLT Brian Winspear  
WOFF Les Boon  
FSGT Keith Hansen

We also have with us these former members of the WAAAF:

Acting SGT Marjorie Quinn, MBE  
Ms Audrey Pointer  
Ms Phyllis Smith  
ACW Anne Browning  
ACW Brenda White

These people are a generation of Air Force who were forward thinking and adapted to changes in technology to gain the air power advantage. I believe that Plan JERICHO is a continuation of their legacy. For that, we thank you. And I hope that we, the current and future members of the Air Force, can live up to your expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to make special mention of our guest speaker, FLTLT Dave Jennings, DFC. Dave Jennings is a true example of 'living' history. Dave joined the Air Force in 1940 and trained as a pilot with the Empire Air Training Scheme. After basic flying training in 1942, he was posted to Canada and then to the United Kingdom where he underwent conversion on Lancaster Bombers and was posted to No.50 Squadron—becoming a 'Pathfinder'. As a Pathfinder pilot, he flew 43 missions successfully but on the 44<sup>th</sup> mission

was shot down over Germany. He was captured and sent to Poland's Sagan Prisoner of War Camp, Stalag Luft 3. During his internment, he endured and survived The Long March in the winter of 1944. Dave was eventually liberated in 1945 by US forces and returned home. For his service he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

It is my honour to introduce FLTLT Dave Jennings.

Thank you.