

**EVENING REMARKS BY
CHIEF OF AIR FORCE
AIR MARSHAL GEOFF BROWN, AO –
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE
BIRTHDAY 31 MARCH 2015**

The onset of evening has customarily been the time when military organisations pause to remember the fallen. As this Air Force birthday draws to a close, it is appropriate that we pause to reflect on the sacrifice of so many airmen who have paid the supreme sacrifice for Australia. They have set the standard against which all airmen and airwomen now judge their conduct.

They did more than live the Air Force values. They established them for us. Our birthday is a celebration of where we have come from. And the most compelling chapters in our service have been written by those who served in war, especially those who died in the service of Australia. And as we honour their sacrifice, we need to also think about our mates who are deployed in the Middle East tonight. Like our forebears, they are displaying courage, resilience and a love of country that is an inspiration to all of us.

Tonight, we can be proud of our Air Force. Founded in 1921, we are one of the oldest in the world. That has bestowed very rich traditions on us. On days like today, we need to reflect on

the obligations that belonging to an organisation of such rich heritage imposes upon us.

However, no birthday should be a solemn occasion—we also have much to celebrate. Air Force is on the cusp of an exciting new era. By 2020, our oldest platform will be the C-130J. We are in the midst of a modernisation program that will make us the envy of air forces all over the world. Indeed, as I said during the Avalon air-show, modernisation sells us short. We are transforming into a 5th generation, enabled force.

The most potent symbol of our transformation is the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. But it joins the Super Hornet, Growler, Poseidon Spartan as well as the Heron and Triton unmanned systems. Together they will provide us with a powerful, balanced and lethal force.

To a large extent, the degree to which we become a fully integrated and seamlessly joint force will depend on us. Achieving that degree of integration and seamless joint collaboration is what Plan Jericho is all about. I have outlined the scope of Jericho in recent weeks and you can expect to hear much more about it in coming months. It will change the way we do business. And it is not just about aircraft—it will impact

on every element of the way we operate. All of us need it to succeed.

The era that we are entering promises to be challenging, but exciting and stimulating as well. As I approach the end of a long career in Air Force, I envy those of you who have all of this ahead of you. The range of skills and trades that will be needed to harness the combat power of 5th generation platforms and our space and cyber enablers is mind boggling. It is a wonderful time to belong to our Air Force.

Today I wish to thank you all for your service. I also want to thank your families for being a vital part of the broader Air Force family. They make sacrifices that too often go unnoticed and unrewarded. And they don't get a medal or a commendation for their efforts. But today, let us mark this birthday as one big family.

We are rapidly approaching the 100th birthday of this wonderful national institution to which all of us have dedicated a big part of our lives. You should feel incredibly proud of your Air Force and your contribution to making it one of the most respected institutions in our nation. You are fitting heirs to those legendary figures who fought in the skies in bi-planes and

propeller aircraft. Our future looks very bright. I also know it is in very capable hands.