



P-8A Poseidon Roll-out Ceremony

Air Marshal Leo Davies AO, CSC

Chief of Air Force

Seattle Washington USA

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Check against delivery

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege and exciting but it is also meaningful, satisfying and rewarding to be here today to witness the roll out of the first of twelve Australian P-8A Poseidon aircraft. The P-8A here before you, is the latest in a pedigree of aircraft that have rolled out of Boeing each providing important and significant operational capability to Australia. This includes the successful introduction into Australian service of the C-17A Globemaster, E-7A Wedgetail, F/A-18 Classic Hornet, F/A-18F Super Hornet, Helicopter Aircrew Training System and, in the near future, E/A-18G Growler. The transition from a capability brief to active Australian service of all of these platforms is the result of many years of cooperation, trust and support between the Royal Australian Air Force and Boeing. The result is 'cutting edge' aviation, technology and capability.

This aircraft waiting to cross the Pacific is 'cutting edge'. It is designed for operations across the full spectrum of contemporary warfare, including long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. The P-8A Poseidon will have greater integration into the ADF combat architecture and this will fundamentally change how our Air Force conducts operations with our Navy, Army, our other RAAF aircraft and our allies.

Maritime security has been a long standing theme in Australia's national security strategy. This strategy is underpinned by strong relationships across our region and the international community to protect our combined maritime interests. The Poseidon will be phased in over the next three years, to replace our current fleet of AP-3C Orions to provide long-range maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare. It will continue the exceptional work of the aircraft it supersedes—the venerable P-3, providing support to border protection through Operation *Resolute*, continuing our regional support to the South Pacific through Operation *Solania* and continuing to support the security of our region through participation in Operation *Gateway* in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea.

The Royal Australian Air Force is developing and evolving new operating concepts, support arrangements and sustainment models to best exploit this future fighting force. P-8A capabilities, when fully integrated with the MQ-4C Triton UAS [unmanned aerial system] and MH-60 Romeo, as part of a maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance family of systems will be formidable. The P-8A is the leading edge of this family of systems but is a primary component of our evolution into a 5th-generation maritime ADF.

The necessity for effective and close maritime cooperation in the international community has been seen time and time again. The initial response to the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 in the Indian Ocean in 2014 saw one of the largest displays of combined international military maritime aviation support in many years. This combined international response included Orions from Australia, New Zealand and Japan; IL-76s from China; C-130 Hercules from the Republic of Korea and Malaysia and, of course, two P-8A Poseidons from the United States Navy. The two USN P-8s provided a first hand glimpse to Australia of our future maritime patrol aircraft capability. The P-8s went further and stayed longer than any other military aircraft.

Australia is exceptionally proud of the close relationship we have with our great ally, the United States of America, and we will continue to provide a meaningful contribution to our common goal in responding to emergent threats to a rules-based global order. The acquisition and introduction into service of the P-8A has only served to strengthen our relationship. The bilateral cooperative program approach for the P-8A between Australia and the United States has been very successful. It is now the model to which for our other Air Force projects aspire.

Working together with the USN to develop mission and system requirements for this aircraft, we have been able to create an advanced platform that will provide both a foundational capability and a growth path for the future decades. This cooperation has extended beyond technological advantage. Here in the audience today, are a number of Australian P-8A aircrew and maintainers who have been embedded with the USN P-8A training schools VP-30 and CNATTU [Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit] located at Jacksonville, Florida since early 2015. Working side-by-side with their USN counterparts, this team has been part of an Australian instructor cadre that are supporting the training of another 220 RAAF personnel here in the United States prior to our own training being established in mid-2018.

Speaking to the team here today, it is obvious that they have been the recipients of some of the best training in the world from the USN, and that this training has been delivered in a supportive and collegiate atmosphere. Some of the crew here today will be flying this aircraft on its first Australia mission in the next few weeks—getting it home! It is with extreme pride that I wish them the very best in this maiden voyage and I look forward to welcoming them home on 15 November.

That home will be with No 11 Squadron at RAAF Base Edinburgh, South Australia, where, in fact, I completed my first operational tour, flying the P-3s that this aircraft will replace. Some may think there should be sadness in this moment, however for me it is instead a moment of excitement. Excitement at what the future can offer, not what our maritime history has delivered so well.

I am impressed with the scale of Boeing's facilities but more so with the scale of commitment of the workforce. The passion, pride and dedication of the Boeing workers are evident in every aircraft produced and accordingly I'd like to recognise a couple of stand out performers.

Paul Lingenfelter, a Washington native who served with the US Navy as an aircraft mechanical structures mechanic working on A-6 Intruder and P-3 Orion, earning the rank of 3rd Class Petty Officer. Following his service, he worked at Fort Lewis

contracting then Goodrich before joining Boeing in 2012 and is now intrinsically involved in the P-8 program. As a modification and structures mechanic, Paul works on several packages but most importantly the sonobouy structure rake installation, as well as first-time structure installations. Paul's work has directly resulted in zero manufacturing defects and improved time management for these areas. Paul you are a great asset to the P-8 program and I thank you for your work on our aircraft. Sorry mate, but your aircraft is coming with me.

Ismael Cruz, a proud father of three children, served with the US Army as a helicopter repair technician. Following the conclusion of his service in 1995 after six operational tours, he joined Boeing as a rigger on the 737 classic, conducting a number of roles on various Boeing commercial aircraft prior to joining the P-8 as one of the original 64 technicians in 2007. Ismael has worked every position on the Renton P-8 line and has worked on every P-8 built to date. As a P-8 functional test expert, he knows the aircraft and everyone involved and he subsequently became a union steward on the P-8 line in 2011. Ismael, thank you for your work on our aircraft and I wish you all the best on your quest to become the oldest contestant on the American Ninja Warrior competition.

I have no doubt that the aircraft Boeing has proudly built here today, along with the collaborative input from both Australia and the United States, will serve our nation with consummate success. I congratulate Boeing on this significant occasion and it is my great honour, on behalf of the Minister for Defence, Senator the Honourable Marise Payne and the Royal Australian Air Force to accept this aircraft into Australian service.

Thank you

Note: Words in square brackets [] were added during editing for clarity.