

ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY MS QUENTIN BRYCE AC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
**COLOUR CONSECRATION PARADE FOR NUMBER 1 AIRFIELD OPERATIONS
SUPPORT SQUADRON & GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S BANNER OF NUMBER 27 SQUADRON**
RAAF BASE TOWNSVILLE
22 AUGUST 2010

Ladies and gentlemen, I want you to know how honoured I am, as

Commander-in-Chief,

to review this parade

and to present the Squadron Standard to Number 1 Airfield Operations Support Squadron

and the Governor-General's banner to Number 27 Squadron.

It is a significant day in the lives of these two very different squadrons, and one that members are entitled to recall with a sense of personal pride and abiding respect for:

what you belong to

what you stand for

and the service you give your nation

as individuals

and as members of a magnificent team of Australian Defence Force men and women.

There is some important history that has delivered us here today.

Number 1 Airfield Operations Support Squadron was formed in May 1966 at RAAF Base Fairbairn, and immediately deployed to Vung Tau in Vietnam where its operational capacity came to the fore in its direct support to Number 35 Squadron.

4 squadron members subsequently lost their lives in the Vietnam conflict:

Leading Aircraftsman G. Lagrasta,

Leading Aircraftsman P.R. Knight,

Aircraftsman P.J. Sheriff,

and Corporal R.B. Weston.

Their sacrifice, together with the service of all of our Vietnam Vets, was solemnly and gratefully observed at the National Vietnam Memorial last Wednesday.

On return to Australia in 1972 the unit was disbanded

only to be reformed 12 years later at RAAF Richmond,

then relocated to Toowoomba and eventually, in 1992,
here at RAAF Townsville.

In January 2007, the unit merged with Number 1 Air Terminal Squadron

to form the specialist squadron it is today,
with a total of 470 permanent, reserve and civilian personnel serving here and at 9 detachments around
Australia.

Through your service, you provide essential support

to ADF deployed elements

and combat and expeditionary operations.

A younger squadron, Number 27 (City of Townsville) Squadron was formed at RAAF Base Townsville
in July 1981.

60 members were recruited in the first year under the command of Wing Commander Doug Shipman
who is here with us today, along with many of the commanding officers who followed him.

In 1991, the squadron gained the right to march through the city of Townsville with

swords drawn,

bayonets fixed,

drums beating,

bands playing

and colours flying.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, 27 Squadron has a colour of its own to march behind.

Over the years the primary role of

27 Squadron has been to train and sustain active reserve personnel in support of air force capability.

However, having recently merged with Number 323 Expeditionary Support Squadron, the new unit will
see a blend of permanent and active reserve personnel providing base support for operations, exercises
and emergency assistance.

Friends, these are decades of experience that I've barely touched on.

Officers and members, I have so much admiration and respect for what you do.

In recent years I have been privileged to see firsthand how our Defence Force works,

here in Australia,

and overseas:

in East Timor

and Afghanistan.

I have observed your professionalism.

I've watched you in action.

At ease with the most advanced technology, doing your jobs with confidence and camaraderie.

I have been deeply impressed by those of you:

who operate in the most harsh and volatile conditions,

protecting Australia and building peace and stability

in areas of conflict and vulnerability around the world.

You do so with unfailing resilience,

with selflessness, honour and courage.

Ladies and gentlemen, these colours represent the loyalty and dedication of all the members of the Royal Australian Air Force who have served in these two squadrons over the years.

May they hereafter embed that sense of belonging, continuance and collective pride that bind and inspire these fine Australian servicemen and women.