SUMISSIONS TO 2015 DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

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My submission covers 2 aspects and therefore is in 2 parts. Part 1 can be considered under the broad topic "Force structure and Preparedness". Part 2 can be considered under the broad topic "Objectives of the ADF".

My Submission is based upon my past observations and experience. Therefore I should give a short synopsis of my life’s experience. I joined the Army as a private soldier in July 1954. I was trained, by the Army as an orderly room clerk. During my first 4 to 5 years of service, I studied and qualified as an accountant. I was admitted to that profession in July 1959. From May 1957, I learnt to fly privately at aero clubs on DH82s, DHC1s and Austers in Malaya and Australia. In July 1960, I was due to separate from the Army to return to civilian employment either as an accounting person or hopefully as a commercial pilot. The Army in early 1960, invited me to apply for a position as an Army pilot. I did so and was accepted, attended RAAF Point Cook and RAAF Amberley and was granted wings and a short service commission as a second Lieutenant flying helicopters. After about 3 and abit years flying, I resigned in November 1963. Soon after I found an accounting position but ended up as a flying instructor with Bush Pilots Airways at Mount Isa. In March 1964, I joined TAA as a first officer pilot. Over 22 years I was promoted steadily to Viscount 700/800, Electra L188, DC9 aircraft as a First officer and F27 and B727 as captain. Late in my TAA service, I attended University of Queensland part time and obtained Arts and Law degrees (BA LLB). In 1986, I resigned from TAA and practiced at the Queensland Bar as a barrister. In 1989, I returned to flying in Oman as a F27 Captain, Europe as a F27 Captain and Kuwait as a B727 captain. I am currently a solicitor in private practice. I have 11,500 hours flying experience and number of 1st class ATPLs, a Flt Nav Licence and a Commercial Helicopter Pilots licence. I know a little about aviation law and practice.
Due to the aforementioned experience, I have noticed, heard, read and become acquainted with some members of the ADF who fly defence aircraft. The most noticeable feature of each pilot or aircrew member that I have met from the rank of second lieutenant to Lieutenant Coronel or Wing Commander is the paucity of actual flying hours experience each confident has and is programmed for.

At a heads up conference at a recent Army affiliated Association, I was told by an operational Lt Col that the average Army pilot received about 150 hours a year actual flying time. So far, I met a super hornet pilot who confided that he got about 14 hours average over the last 2 to 3 years and that included his endorsement training.

It can be safely said that most if not all defence pilots are dedicated operators, dead keen and apply themselves to the tasks allocated to them. However, 150 hours a year delivered in lumps of flying, does not render a pilot, any pilot, current and wholly proficient. A pilot flying that infrequently is an accident waiting to happen. When I was flying as an Army pilot, I flew about 300 to 320 hours a year. Even at that level, I was confronted with new, challenging and sometime frightening situations. Such was our force structure at the time, that the only pilot that I could seek guidance or reassurance from was the Squadron Commanding Officer, who left after about 18 months. The other squadron pilots had much less experience to call on and therefore guide me. One was left to stumble through the air as best one could. Had any of us been committed to operations against a substantial enemy our chances of doing a useful job and surviving would have been slim such was our limited experience.

A pilot receiving a consistent 150 hours a year actual flying would have less chance of routinely flying with a full appreciation of his environment than I had. A casual conversation with the few Army pilots I have met confirms this parlous state of mental appreciation of the Cruel Air.

When I joined TAA, I initially flew about 400 hours a year on F27s. The learning curve was steep, the pace was brisk and the expectations were high. However, there were many and varied mentors available to steer a wandering pilot in the paths of aviation righteousness. The flying exposure built up
and I sat for 10 years next to many highly motivated, meticulous and skilled pilots. I had a daily example to follow...I am aware that the Defence force has a more rigid and in your face command system than any airline. Nevertheless, any officer of field rank and the other service equivalents with less than 2000 hours total experience can hardly guide a limited hours lieutenant and service equivalent in peace time flying conditions. A Field officer barely knows how to conduct himself in all conditions at all time in the sky. I am unsure that any major of my acquaintance has as much as 2000 hours actual experience.

I remind you of the B707 accident at East Sale some years ago. All the pilots in the aircraft had limited experience. Squadron Leader Lewin had very little multi engine swept wing jet experience. Yet he was undertaking a fraught exercise as a check captain teaching the 2 other 1st pilots. Lewin undertook a VMC exercise with the yaw dampers deactivated and succeeded in spinning the B707 in from about 2000 feet. All on board were killed. The exercise was beyond Lewin's skill level and would have taxed an experience QANTAS captain. Lewin's lack of B707 flying experience in hours was the direct cause of the accident.

I did not get a command of an airliner in TAA until I had at least 5000 hours flight time experience. Yet there were still some experiences after I was elevated to B727 command that taxed my knowledge and skill to prevent an accident. High flight hours may save a pilot and an aircraft when the circumstances are adverse. If he is only getting 150 hours a year he is not current enough to survive an adverse operational situation.

I urge the defence force to focus on raising the actual flying hours of all squadron pilots lest you start loosing both expensive aircraft and aircrew when push comes to shove in operations.

I make the following suggestions for developing an increase in flying times for all ADF personnel. Firstly, ADF pilots should selectively be loaned for 6 months to civilian flying schools, small charter firms, RFDS and HEMS operations. In this way, ADF pilots will be exposed to infinite weather conditions,
operational considerations and repetitive cockpit sequences to develop experience. QANTAS used this method to increase the experience levels for their pilot cadets some 20 years ago.

A second suggestion to expand pilot levels of actual experience of the more multi engine aircraft pilots is to second them to QANTAS and Virgin as First officers for 6 months to expose them to consistent cockpit procedures in all weathers and conditions. There is a risk in this path in that your aDF pilots or their wives may get to like the QANTAS way of life more that the ADF operation and resign instead of bringing their skills and experience back to squadron level.

A third way to raise actual flying hours in each pilot is for the ADF to provide cheap and simple aircraft such as Warriors and the like to each squadron/flying unit. Each squadron pilot can then put in 5 to 10 hours a week on just simple stick and rudder flying and so build experience.

A fourth way of developing experience is to bring in relatively elderly QANTAS VIRGIN captains into the ADF to provide experience for the up and coming ADF sprogs. The QANTAS driver has a wealth of knowledge that can be imparted by just watching the QANTAS pilot operate. I am aware that Boeing recruit experienced retired Australian Singapore Airlines B747 and B777 captains to instruct in simulators sighted in South Korea for the world’s airlines benefit. Perhaps you may be able to modify this pool of knowledge to enhance the ADF’s pilot level of experience.

I do not recommend that more time be devoted to developing simulator time instead of actual flight hours. Simulators are no more than procedures trainers and cannot hope to duplicate real actual air time. Simulators cannot develop skills in exiting a thunderstorm right side up; resolving conflicting traffic in marginal conditions or an appreciation of load limits in a fluid situation. Real and actual flight time exposure provides answers that simulators cannot do.
The second part of my submissions concerns possible invasion routes into Australia by possible enemies under the rubric of objectives of the ADF.

I am not making any submissions or am in a position to name possible enemies from defined countries or tribal, religious or cultural groupings. I am not able to give a percentage of risks leading to invasion of Australia. I cannot attempt to second guess, or even first guess who, what, when or if an invasion may occur. Nevertheless we are adjacent to Indonesia, a country with 250 million people, many living in cramped conditions and poverty. China has 1300 million people and that country is in dispute with Japan, The Phillipines, Vietnam and Taiwan over scraps of islands many miles from the Chinese mainland. Who knows who might assume power in the foreseeable future and suggest to their inhabitants to move enmass to Australia with our open spaces.

My thesis is based on a common sense scenario that if a aggressive party decides to invade Australia, it will do so through the Northern part of Australia, namely North West Australia, Arnhem Land and Cape York. History confirms that the Japanese in World War 2 bombed Darwin, Broome and Townsville, which are the three principal towns in the areas nominated.

Should an invasion occur our defence force will be required to deal with such an invasion. I mention that Operation Sovereign Borders is concerned with an invasion of sorts. The structure is predominantly a defence structure with Lt Gen Angus Campbell in charge. The onset of boat people have all come into Australia in those 3 areas nominated.

The modern defence force of any country relies on at least 3 basis natural components; oil, electricity and water. Obviously, other more prosaic elements make for a defence force such as people, ammunition, weapons and storage facilities. These are predominantly available and procured from southern Australia or our allies. I am not submitting anything about those more pedestrian matters. I submit that we should learn from history when planning from the future. Stalingrad and Dien Bien Phu were two battles from recent military history. In both of these battles resupply problems eventually defeated the mighty Wermacht and The French Foreign Legion.

On the issues of oil, electricity and water, I submit the three potential invasion defence areas are woefully devoid of infrastructure to receive, contain and distribute these natural features in a consumer function within an Australian Defence Force.

I submit that your defence White Paper policy should consider, plan, develop and put in place infrastructure for the procurement, use of and resupply of these three necessary needs.

Currently, there are no lateral roads, rail lines or navigable water ways whereby these three elements can be delivered logistically to an operating defence force. There is a north south co adjacent road and rail line between Adelaide, Alice Springs and Darwin. There is a ribbon road and rail line between Cairns and Brisbane and a ribbon road only between Perth, Port Hedland and Darwin some of
which is not sealed. There are no navigable waterways. I would suggest that two of these resupply routes can be cut from the sea and the third compromised from the Darwin end.

As a child, I remember troop trains traversing Denison Street Rockhampton. The north south railway system feeding the war effort in PNG was flat strapped and was supplemented by hastily build air and sea facilities.

However, if an invasion occurs in Arnhem Land - no roads, no rail lines and no sea lanes exist or can be made available on short notice for the provision of fuel, oil or fresh water to troops in contact with an enemy.

I submit that the defence force should consider, plan and develop limited and elementary lateral roads and airfields throughout Northern Australia.

I am submitting that at least two roads be constructed from Cairns to Normanton to Groote Eleye area and one from Broome to Katherine. I recognize that the cost will be enormous in the range of and with figures like international telephone numbers. However, the Prime Minister, Mr Abbott, is on record that he wants to known as the Infrastructure Prime Minister and he is also on record that he wants Northern Australia developed as perhaps a food bowl for Asia. If my submission is made part of the white paper going forward it can be seen as a tangible implementation of the Prime Minister’s hopes and aims.

I submit that simple gravel and grass airstrips be cleared adjacent to such roads as they are made. These strips can be used to resupply to adjacent lands both by air and for medical evacuation of wounded to the South.

A third submission, I make concerns something I saw in both Switzerland and Germany. Highways over there seem to have heavy duty runways with perimeter tracks and revetments and with edge lighting incorporated in the auto bahns for emergency use. I am aware that Curtin, Learmonth and Scherger exist as bare bones air bases. My submission is for a more rudimentary and low key airfield development suitable for Army Aircraft and small propeller jet airliners which can be co opted to help in a defence situation.

I mention 3 features of my life experience behind these submissions.

1. As a 2Lt Army pilot flying Bell47 G2 helicopters, I went on an exercise in January 1962 to Shark Bay in Western Australia. The local SAS exercised with 42 Royal Marine Commando from HMS Bulwark. The exercise fell apart after 2 days because the Brits did not appreciate the water supply needs of their troops in the heat of a Western Australia summer. I took quite a few dehydrated, sunburnt Poms to emergency medical clearing stations. The point is the non supply of water can be game changing in just 2 to 3 days.

2. I was part of the aerial evacuation of Darwin after cyclone Tracy in December 1974. An army friend of mine Lt Col Tony Hammett commanded 6 RAR for the Army component of the evacuation. I flew a F27 as captain in and out of Darwin once, from Gove to Darwin to Mount Isa to Brisbane. The
whole town of Darwin was devastated. There were no oil facilities, no gas, no electricity and little water. The aerial armada exodus was by B747, B727 and F27. Each flight was compromised in many operational ways but such was the demand for evacuation of the residents. The evacuation lasted about 2 or so weeks. From what I saw I am convinced that should an invasion occur in the north of Australia, Darwin, Gove, Broome and Cairns would become choke points to slow the movement of troops and supplies in and around the areas by air.

3. I worked as an airline pilot in Luxembourg in 1989/90. I saw first hand the maze of roads, railways, airfields and water courses that is North West Europe. These facilities enabled and facilitated the German thrust across North West Europe in 1940. Equally, the same roads, railways and canals ably facilitated the US army to overcome the German offensive in the Battle of the Bulge in 1945. Northern Australia has nothing to compare with North West Europe’s infrastructure. Pity our Defence force if Australia has to repel an invader in Northern Australia.

Thereby consensus to the above submissions being published by Defence.