

168287/ET-01 VMM-262 ex YZ-13/VMM-363 **D0204** dec13
168295/YS-15 VMM-162 f/n **D0212** dec13
VMM-America is the detachment of the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing at Camp Bastion, Helmand province, Afghanistan. The Ospreys are flown by VMM-165.

Oceania

Australia

On 20 November it was announced that Indonesia had severed all its military ties and had suspended people smuggling co-operation with Australia. This happened in response to the conflict that has risen between the two countries over the tapping of the mobile phone of the Indonesian president, his family and his staff by the Australian intelligence service. On 28 November, the Australian Defence Minister made clear that despite the troubled relationship between the two countries, Australia's handover of a C-130H Hercules to Indonesia will go ahead. Australia originally intended to hand over the plane to the Indonesians at a ceremony at RAAF Williamtown in New South Wales by the end of November, but that ceremony had been postponed in light of revelations that Australia attempted to spy on the Indonesian president. The aircraft in question is probably A97-006 (4786). It was seen in November in full Indonesian Air Force colours, with Indonesian AF serial A-1330. See also the Indonesian updates section.

In total, nine surplus C-130s are to be handed over to Indonesia. Four of these will be donated free of charge, as agreed upon by Australia and Indonesia in a Memorandum of Understanding dated 2 July 2012. The other five will be bought – at bottom price. An agreement to that extent was signed on 29 July 2013. The Australian Air Force's C-130H fleet consisted of twelve aircraft, all of which were retired prematurely in order to cut costs, by 30 November 2012. One, A97-011 (4791), is put up for display in the RAAF Museum in Point Cook, near Melbourne.

Royal Australian Air Force (AF)

Australia's first C-27J Spartan tactical transport took to the sky for the first time on 19 December. It cleared the final assembly stage at Alenia Aermacchi's Caselle site in Turin, Italy, in November, after which the aircraft underwent equipment installation and functional tests in preparation for the test flight phase. The aircraft entered the final assembly stage in December 2012. A photo of it on the assembly line shows the aircraft's construction number, 4179, whereas its

military serial is A34-001. The aircraft is currently undergoing final checks in preparation for customer acceptance tests and procedures before its delivery early in 2014 to prime contractor L-3 Communications. The US company will make modifications to the aircraft from 2014 under the terms of a Foreign Military Sales deal signed in 2012. Two further examples are in the initial stages of final assembly at Caselle, and a fourth fuselage is in production at Capodichino. Australia has ordered ten Spartans to replace the Cariboo retired four years ago, with the first C-27J scheduled to arrive in Australia in early 2015. They are to be operated by the re-forming 35SQ at RAAF Richmond. A34-001 is painted dark green, whereas the bottom of the fuselage is grey. 35 Squadron's Kangaroo-badge is depicted on the tail. It has been allocated a temporary Italian registration, I-EASC.

Royal Australian Navy (WN)

In Scramble 412 we reported that the first MH-60R for the Royal Australian Navy made its first flight, on 30 June. N48-001 subsequently underwent a flight-test programme. On 10 December 2013, the RAN accepted its first two MH-60R submarine hunter helicopters. One of those was N48-001, the other one was N48-002. The hand-over took place at the Lockheed-Martin facility at Owego (NY). These two helicopters are due to leave Owego on delivery to NAS Jacksonville (FL), where the Royal Australian Navy's 725 Squadron is being established to act as the training squadron. Australian personnel are undergoing training with the US Navy in Florida and the first seven helicopters will begin returning to Australia in October 2014. Meanwhile, Raytheon Integrated Defense Systems has been awarded a maximum \$42,589,944 firm-fixed-price contract for the manufacture and delivery of airborne low frequency sonar helicopter dipping sonar systems. The Australians will ultimately have a fleet of 24 MH-60R helicopters by 2017.

Credits

Morné Booij-Liewes, Ian Carroll, Steve Chadwick, Larry Eavery, Michael Flebbe, Julian Griffith-Jones, Joris Heeren, Václav Kudela, Alexander Lutz, Andy Marden, Daniele Mattiuzzo, Bram Risseeuw, Jos Stevens, Tom Svendsen

Abbreviations

AF = Air Force	GV = Government
AG = Agricultural Aviation	JF = Joint Forces
AR = Army	NY = Navy
CG = Coast Guard	PO = Police
DF = Defence Forces	SV = Survey



This is the 106th E-model, VFA-106 is the fleet replacement squadron that trains the Hornet jocks. They are nominally based at Oceana (VA) but keep a detachment at El Centro (CA). (7 October 2013, Dick Wels)