



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

HEADQUARTERS, SURVEILLANCE AND RESPONSE GROUP

RAAF Base Williamtown, Williamtown NSW 2314

10 Squadron

- No. 10 General Reconnaissance Squadron was formed at RAAF Base Point Cook on 1 July 1939 with the intention to operate Short Sunderland flying boats.
- The first 10 Squadron members were in Britain for conversion to the Sunderland when Prime Minister Churchill declared war on Germany following the invasion of Poland.. Australia quickly followed, entering into the war. Those RAAF members already in Britain were ordered to remain in the UK and nearly 200 more were sent soon after to bring the squadron up to full strength and supplement the war effort.
- The first sorties flown by 10 Squadron involved the ferrying of spare aircraft parts as well as VIP transport. As the war escalated, the squadron watched on as the merchant shipping losses to U-Boat wolf packs increased to immense levels. The Australians strove to achieve operational status as soon possible and achieved this on the 01 Feb 1940.
- No. 10 Sqn served in World War II for six years, mainly out of Pembroke Dock and Mt Batten, where they experienced constant air raids, in addition to extreme winter weather. The squadron played a significant role in the Battle for the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay offensive, being the only squadron to serve continuously throughout WW2.
- 3200 sorties were flown, totalling nearly 43,000 operational hours during World War II. 10 Sqn achieved an excellent sortie success rate largely due to the tireless efforts of the maintenance personnel.
- Initially 10 Squadron's primary role was allied and merchant shipping escort, to provide protection from U-Boats and enemy aircraft. On many occasions during these patrols the Sunderland crews were locked in air-to-air combat with enemy aircraft, including fighters.
- Anti-submarine patrols became the focus in 1943, during which countless attacks were conducted against U-boats. Six were sunk, but at the cost of seven aircraft. Due to the crippling number of merchant shipping losses and Allied air casualties, 117 search and rescue sorties were flown throughout the war. Sometimes this involved alighting on the open ocean during high sea states and marginal weather to pick up survivors.
- Squadron records show that 161 10 Sqn personnel lost their lives during WW II. These were the result of air to air combat, weather, aircraft malfunctions and German bombing raids. Others just never returned from sorties over the North Atlantic, sadly marked as having no known grave.
- 10 Squadron disbanded on the 26 October 1945 to be reformed in Townsville on 17 March 1949 as a general reconnaissance squadron. The crew were equipped with the Lincoln aircraft that remained in service until 1961 at which time it was replaced by the Neptune, flying in support of the Vietnam conflict and Malayan emergency.
- In 1978 10 Squadron were equipped with the P-3C Orion which saw service in the initial deployment to the Middle East but was replaced in 2003 after by the updated AP-3C.
- 10 Squadron continues to conduct operations in the Middle East and whilst they are different to the tasks conducted by the Sunderland crews, the Squadron continues to perform well and achieve a high rate of sorties. 10 Squadron's motto is "Strike First".

11 Squadron

- When it was formed in 1939, 11 Squadron was equipped with two Seagull aircraft and two ex-Qantas Empire Flying Boats. The Squadron began a comprehensive coast-watching program, investigated the establishment of advanced bases and endeavoured to extend reconnaissance and intelligence in the area.
- In March 1941, 11 Squadron received its first PBY Catalina. During the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942, 11 Squadron Catalinas carried out extensive reconnaissance missions, supplying valuable intelligence on enemy activities.
- No 11 Squadron disbanded in February 1946, but reformed in July 1948. The Squadron again disbanded in 1950, re-activating the same year at RAAF Amberley in Queensland, and moving shortly afterwards to RAAF Pearce, Western Australia, equipped with two Avro Lincoln Mk 30 aircraft.
- 11 Squadron began the transition to P2V-5 Neptune aircraft in late 1952, and returned to RAAF Richmond in 1954, operating from this location for 14 years before moving to its present location at RAAF Base Edinburgh in June 1968. The Squadron also changed over to Lockheed P-3B Orion aircraft during this time, and these aircraft were in service until the arrival of the P-3C Orions in late 1984 to early 1985.
- Throughout the 1980s, maritime warfare training continued, and the Squadron celebrated its 50th anniversary in September 1989. During the Gulf War in 1990-1991, No 11 Squadron participated in the training of RAN forces deployed to the Persian Gulf in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. No 11 Squadron also supported the deployment of ADF Forces to East Timor by providing surveillance as part of Operation Warden in 1999.
- No 11 Squadron has received public recognition for its Search and Survivor Supply (SASS) role. The Squadron has been involved in many rescues, saving lives in situations ranging from local boating accidents to major national emergencies. Such rescues include the Great Southern Ocean rescues of Tony Bullimore, Isabelle Autisier and Thierry Dubois.
- No 11 Squadron returned to Squadron maintenance in 1998 after a 20-year break. The Unit is now fully deployable with integrated aircrew, maintenance and logistic support elements.
- From 2001 through to the present, 11 Squadron has been involved in Operation Resolute (previously known as Relex) which provides surveillance of Australia's northern coastal approaches to detect and intercept illegal entry vessels.
- The Squadron continues to protect the security of Australia's coastline and territorial waters by conducting surveillance, participating in military exercises all over the world and maintaining a SASS role. The Squadron also conducts patrols for South Pacific countries and patrols from RMAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia, to the South China Sea and Indian Oceans.
- In 2003, the squadron deployed to the Middle East for Operation SLIPPER, initially enforcing UN sanctions against Iraq and contributing to the International Coalition against Terrorism; subsequently, as part of Operation FALCONER, the squadron supported offensive operations against Iraq.
- In mid 2004, the squadron completed transition to the new AP-3C aircraft which, while retaining the same airframe and engines, provides significantly improved sensors, navigation systems and communications equipment.
- The combination of well-trained crews and the updated systems on the AP-3C, supported by a professional and dedicated maintenance force, provide arguably the best maritime patrol and response capability in the world. 11 Squadron's motto is "Shepherd or Destroy".