

Global Hawk to replace U-2 spy plane in 2015.

AirForceTimes

Dave Majumdar

The Global Hawk will finally replace the long-serving U-2 spy plane in 2015, according to a US Air Force official. “No U-2s in the Air Force in fiscal year ’15,” said Lt. Col. Rick Thomas, the Air Force’s Global Hawk functional manager, at the National Press Club. Thomas said he is confident that the RQ-4, as the Global Hawk is designated, will be able to match the capabilities currently provided by the U-2 as required by legislation. “That’s my job — to look at that legislation and say if we can do it or not,” he said.



One of the capabilities which the Global Hawk will have to integrate before it can replace the U-2 is to carry that aircraft’s Optical Bar Camera, which is an extremely high resolution wet film camera. The Air Force is studying ways to mount the massive camera onto the Global Hawk airframe, but substantial modifications will be required to the sensor and the airframe, Thomas said. “We’re looking at a cooperative effort with industry to look at a universal mount,” he said. Thomas said he didn’t know if the camera’s wet film would be retained — a digital model might be a possibility.

Legislation before Congress might add another monkey wrench into the Air Force’s plan to replace the U-2, however. The proposed legislation would require the Defence Department to certify sustainment costs for the Global Hawk are less than the U-2’s before the Air Force is allowed to retire the 1950s-era spy plane. According to the Air Force’s Total Ownership Cost database, the U-2 costs \$31,000 per flight hour while the RQ-4 sits at \$35,000.



Though the Hawk has had some teething problems, it failed its operational test due to poor reliability and mediocre sensor performance, it has come a long way, Thomas said. “The initial operational test and evaluation was a spot in time,” he said.

One problem that has been fixed is a problem with an onboard 25-volt electrical generator which would fail after only 170 hours of operations. Now that same component can function for over 6,000 hours, Thomas said. “That’s been solved”. However, Thomas said that the aircraft is coming down in its operations and maintenance costs. He estimated costs had already dropped by about 5 to 10 percent.

There is still work to be done before the aircraft will fully rectify the problems identified by the operational test report but one source said that the aircraft was still not as reliable as it was once hoped.

The source said that with time and money, the aircraft will get better, but it will never live up to what was originally promised. The source praised the aircraft's long endurance, but said the sensors are currently sub-par and "will continue to be well below par."

The sensors provide less range, less resolution and less collection capability than existing intelligence gathering aircraft, he said.

Don't audit life. Show up and make the most of it now.

Australian Forces Radio – Vietnam. (AFR)

AFR Vietnam was initially set up 'ad hock' in 1969 in the sand dunes at the far end of 110 Sig Sqn hill at Back Beach. The transmitter was scratched together in an old Sig shelter with make shift aerials strung up around the place. The music was begged and borrowed from other blokes at the camp and the station was on and off the air a few hours a day being run by blokes who had a bit of spare time between their other duties. Eventually, the RAAF took it over and allowed the Army blokes to get on with their "real" jobs.

As it wasn't set up until 1969 and then not officially, only blokes who served in Vietnam from November 1969 would have heard it and although it was an important source of news and views from back home, it is questionable whether most listened to it or stayed with the more professional American AFVN.

AFR finally closed its doors on the 14th February 1972. You can hear that it sounded like [HERE](#).

Paul "Tich" Tyson served in Vietnam in 1971- 72 with the 1 Aust Field Hospital and then, when that closed, with the 8th Field Ambulance at Vung Tau. For a large portion of this time, and because there was no Nui Dat (Nui Dat closed in November 1971) he spent most of his time at Vung Tau and surrounds. He says he knew Capt Nick Rowell very well. Nick was the CO of the Dental Attachment that was located at 8th Fd Amb and was a broadcaster on AFR who always drew the evening shift. Tich reckons he would open (or perhaps he would close) his broadcast by saying "This is Nick Rowell, soothing the savage beast"

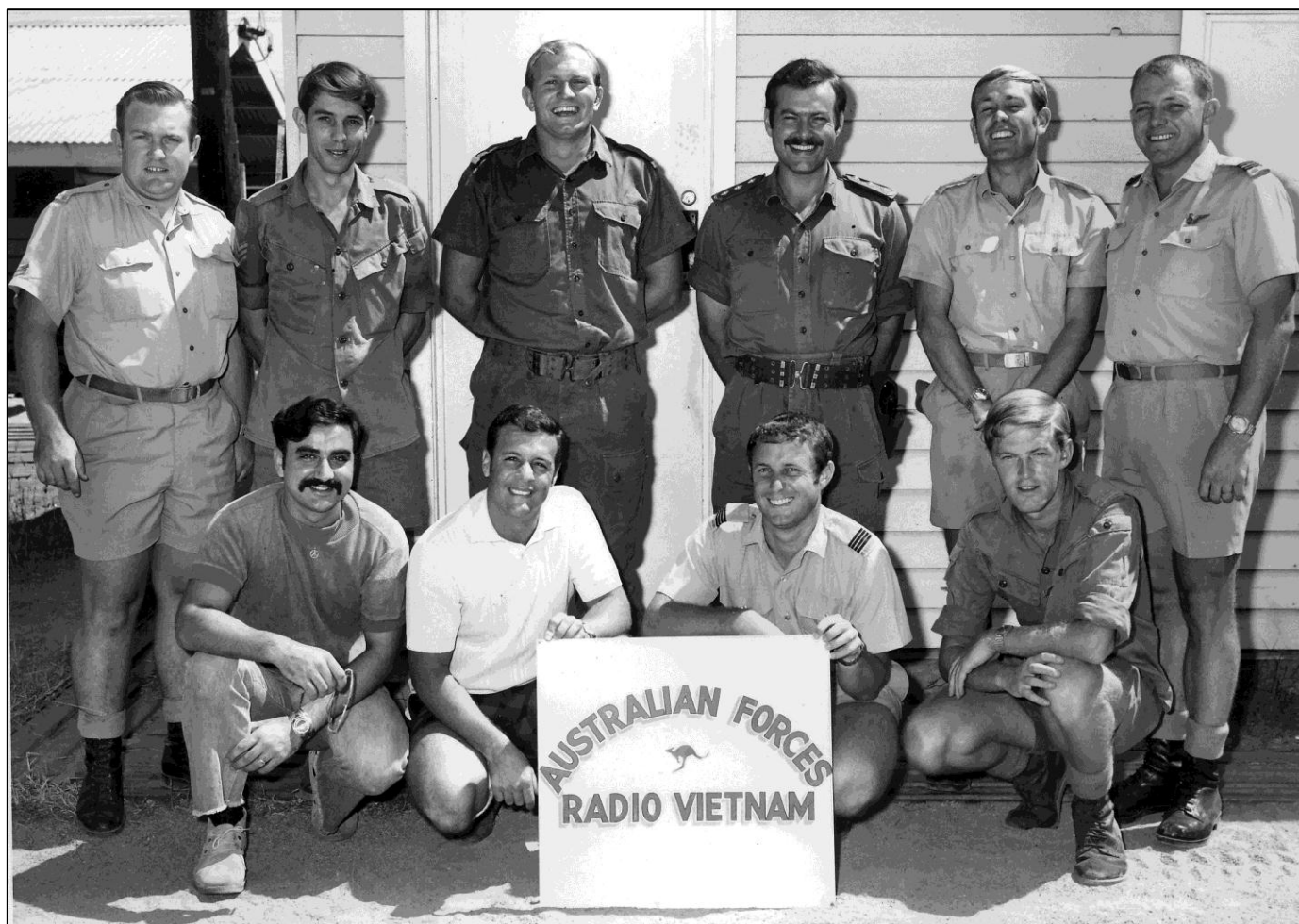


Back in the boozier at 8 Fd Ambo, the blokes would laugh and say "Nick you wanker!" Tich says he's not sure if that word was about in those days but it was certainly, 'words to that effect!' but never the less,

Nicholas John was a terrific bloke, a good dentist, and very passionate about his music. But!! As the AFR was situated on the Vung Tau airfield, someone had to go and pick him up after he had finished for the night – which was after the 10.00pm curfew. Someone would head off from Back Beach in the trusty Landy and Tich being the junior NCO and having a licence to drive the Landy, was nearly always given the job.

Nick says “at certain times it was difficult to have an escort in the vehicle or, as we used to say, somebody to ride 'Shotgun!' Often, my mates refused, or were too ‘smashed’, or were just too busy working”. So Tich would often set off to pick up Nick on his own. If the tactical situation escalated then he would pick up an escort from the Task Force gate. Tich says, “often they weren't keen to go either, which in hindsight was another worrying thing!”

The AFR Team 1971-72



Back Row, L-R: Not known, John Sahariv, Roger McDowell, Nick Rowell, Dave ??, Dave Foote.

Front row, L-R: Joe Zammit-Ross, Lee Bowers, Ian Smedley, Not known.

Traveling through the Vung Tau province after curfew was certainly uncomfortable. To get onto the airfield, you had to pass through the guards at the front gate which at times was a risky business especially if the 'guy behind the gun!' was flighty. Often Tich would arrive at the gate, well after curfew and the 'Yanks' would not be impressed. On the way back to Back Beach, Tich would often come across blokes staggering back to Back Beach from 'Down-town Vungers, all with a skin full. "We would pick them up, get them to lie on the floor of the Landy and sneak them back to camp past the MP's on the gate".

Tich remembers one night, on the trip back to camp, he was almost home when they came upon a bloke striding home, stepping over 44's in the dark, well after curfew. They stopped to offer him a lift and it turned out the bloke was one of Nick's Corporals from the Dental Unit, (no names, no pack drill but his first initial was Marty). Tich says he never asked Nick what punishment Marty received but says knowing Nick probably just a verbal barrage!!!

Tich says there is another story to Nick Rowell and his persona. The 9mm Pistol he always carried on his hip was a water pistol. Once, when we were in Saigon we had to catch the Wallaby back to Vungers. As we were about to board, the Loady made the following announcement: "Everyone please ensure that their weapons are in the unloaded condition. For those Dentist's travelling with us today please ensure your 9mm Water pistol is unloaded!" Priceless.....

Tich says "AFR was a fantastic service, it was a huge morale booster for the blokes left behind in 1972. It received hundreds of music requests, going home acknowledgments etc".

A will is a dead giveaway.

Does pirating music hurt the industry.

Music News: Mike Schramm

Douglas C. Merrill (right) used to work for record label EMI as their digital president. He was forced out just a year later, but now he's sharing information from inside the company. And some of that information points to an interesting conclusion about music pirates, it seems they often end up being some of the music industry's best customers.



Speaking at a conference in Sydney, Merrill said that a profile they'd conducted of users of the LimeWire music sharing service portrayed them as some of the biggest spenders on iTunes. "That's not theft, that's try-before-you-buy marketing and we weren't even paying for it," Merrill said at the show, "so it makes sense to sue them??"

Of course, most record companies saw illegal downloading as purchases that just didn't happen, and thus lost revenue. But this conclusion hints that "pirates" aren't taking away from music sales -- they're just download music to fill out their already big purchased collections.



Read more about it [HERE](#)

Wivenhoe Dam

At the height of the Brisbane floods earlier this year, the Wivenhoe Dam, which was built after the disastrous floods of 1974 to stop all further floods, came perilously close to being 'chockers' which would have meant Brisbane would have been in real trouble.



If it hadn't stopped raining when it did, the dam would have filled and all future water would have gone straight over the spill-way and down the Brisbane River and the flood that did eventuate would have been much worse.

The photo above shows how close Brisbane came to being in real strife.

When you've seen one shopping centre, you've seen a mall.

The Tsumani in Japan.

Yu Muroga was doing his job making deliveries when the 11 March 2011 earthquake hit in Japan. Unaware, like many people in the area, of how far inland the Tsunami would travel, he continued to drive and do his job. The HD camera mounted on his dashboard captured not only the earthquake, but also the moment he and several other drivers were suddenly engulfed in the Tsunami. He escaped from the vehicle seconds before it was crushed by other debris and sunk underwater. His car and the camera have only recently been recovered by the police. The camera was heavily damaged but a video expert was able to retrieve this footage. The voice over is in Japanese but the video is chilling. See it [HERE](#)

Great Southern Railway Travel Concession.

It seems that some veterans have encountered confusion relating to the Great Southern Railway (GSR) Special Veterans Travel Concession when they have attempted to book tickets. The Special Veterans travel concession is available to:

- Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (T&PI) pensioners,
- Extreme Disablement Adjustment (EDA) pensioners,
- Intermediate Rate pensioners,
- Disability Pensioners on the Blind rate,
- Service Pensioners on the Blind rate and
- Disability Pensioners receiving Specific Disability listed under Section 27 of the Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986 such as suffering loss of a limb.

The Special Veteran travel concession provides either free rail travel in a Gold Service Sleeper Cabin (formerly known as First Class) over the **Commonwealth owned track only**. The "free" component includes a sleeping berth only and does not include any Gold Service meal charges, Fuel Price Surcharges or free rail travel in a Red Service Sleeper Cabin (formerly known as holiday Class) which includes a sleeping berth (if applicable) over the Commonwealth owned track only. Any and all meals must be purchased by the traveller.

Commonwealth owned tracks covered by the Special Veterans concession for travel on Great Southern Rail (GSR) services:

- the 'Indian Pacific' between Broken Hill and Adelaide;
- the 'Indian Pacific' between Adelaide and Kalgoorlie;



- the 'Overland' between Wolseley (SA/VIC border) and Adelaide; and
- the 'Ghan' to Adelaide to Alice Springs.

Although the section of track between Alice Springs and Darwin is not Commonwealth owned, from 1 October 2007 the Commonwealth Government extended the funding arrangements for Special Veterans to allow concession fares for travel on the 'Ghan' from Alice Springs to Darwin which now entitles you to free travel from Adelaide to Darwin.

Western Australian domiciled Special Veterans are entitled to free rail travel on the Indian Pacific service between Kalgoorlie and Perth where this travel is part of an interstate journey. This means, if you live in the WA you are entitled to free travel from Perth to Adelaide. This applies only to Special Veterans who live in the WA. All other travellers will need to pay for the Kalgoorlie to Perth leg.

It is important to note that there may be additional charges that will need to be paid by the traveller. Travel over the state owned track, for example travel from Sydney to Broken Hill, Wolseley to Melbourne, Kalgoorlie to Perth will incur additional charges.

A carer may accompany eligible pensioners and receive the same concession on the Commonwealth owned section of the track, subject to the presentation of a medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner. The carer may also use a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) to obtain a discount over State owned track. The carer does not have to be in receipt of a carer's pension or be related to the person travelling and the certificate is to be sent to GSR with payment. You may use the concession as many times as you wish and there are no restrictions on the amount of trips you can take each year. Other concessions may include a discount rate of up to 55% that is available to all PCC and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) holders for GSR travel.

For more information regarding these discounts or to book your trip you are best to contact GSR on 132 147 or refer to their website - <http://www.gsr.com.au> .

If you jump off a bridge in Paris , you are in Seine.

Cruise Ships.

Carnival Australia, incorporating P&O Cruises Australia, Princess Cruises and Cunard are giving serving and ex-service personnel \$250.00 onboard credit when taking a cruise on any of their vessels.

To obtain the credit, you need to send a copy of proof of your



service (Discharge Certificate, etc), when making your booking to Defence Benefits, PO Box 2006, North Sydney NSW 2059 or email defencebenefits@carnivalaustralia.com