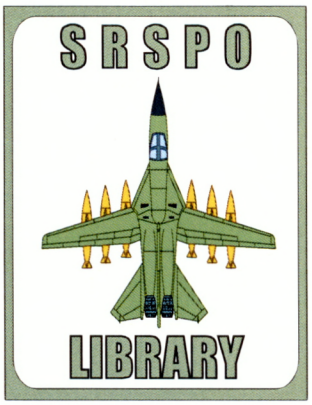

SRSPO TDL No: TDL332

Category No: GEN016

F-111 UNIT HISTORY
Vol 4

1991 to 2000

The Binder contains:

1991 to 2000
SQN, SRLMSQN and SRSPO History as compiled by CM.

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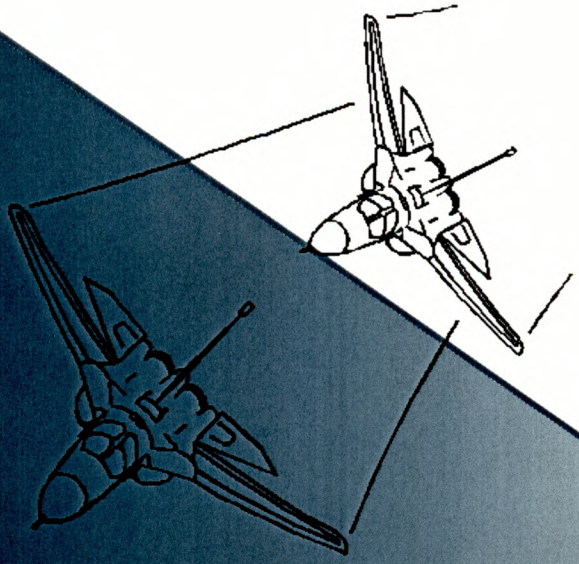
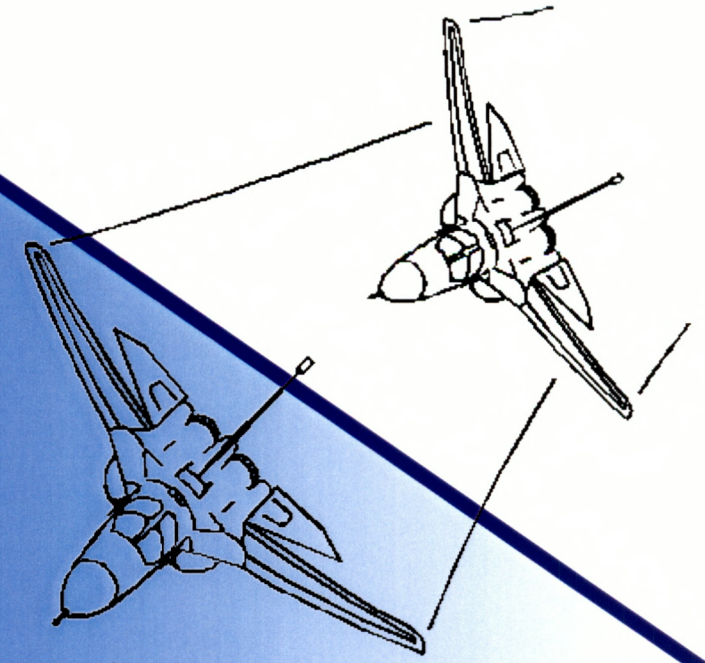


SRLMSQN & F-111 HISTORY

NEWS PAPER CUTTINGS AND ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO MEMBERS WITHIN SRLMSQN

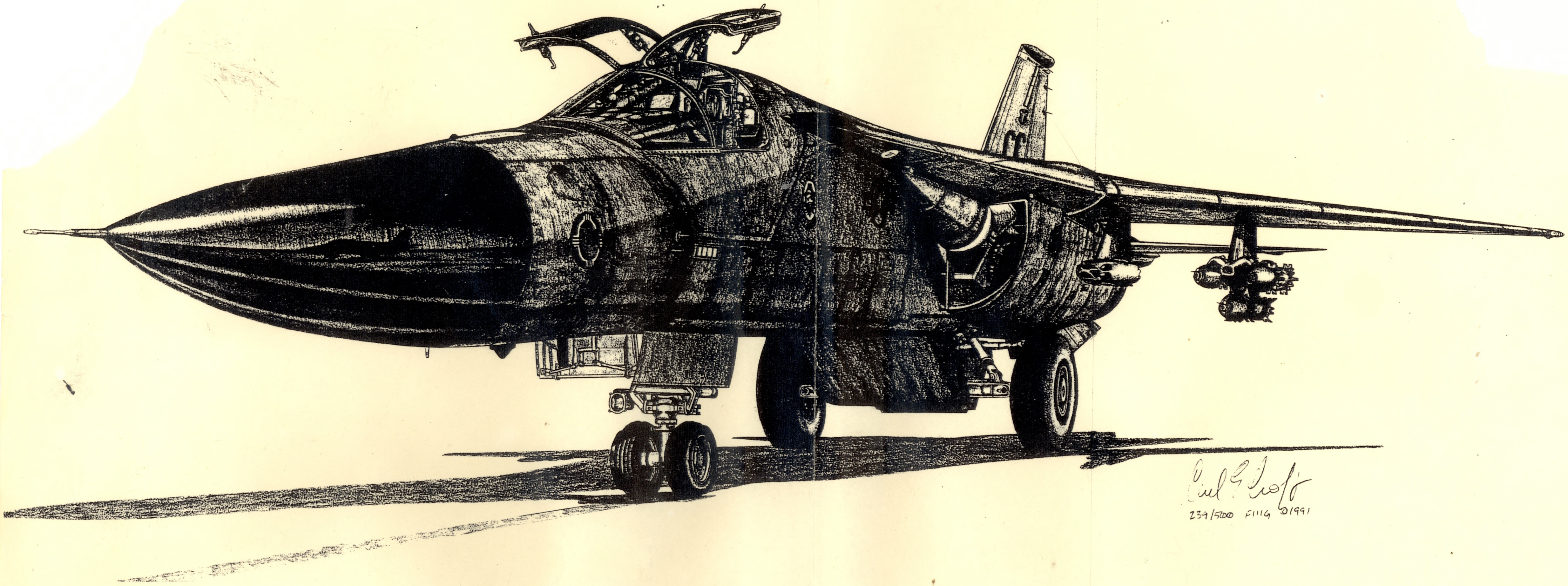
AN SRLMSQN PERSPECTIVE



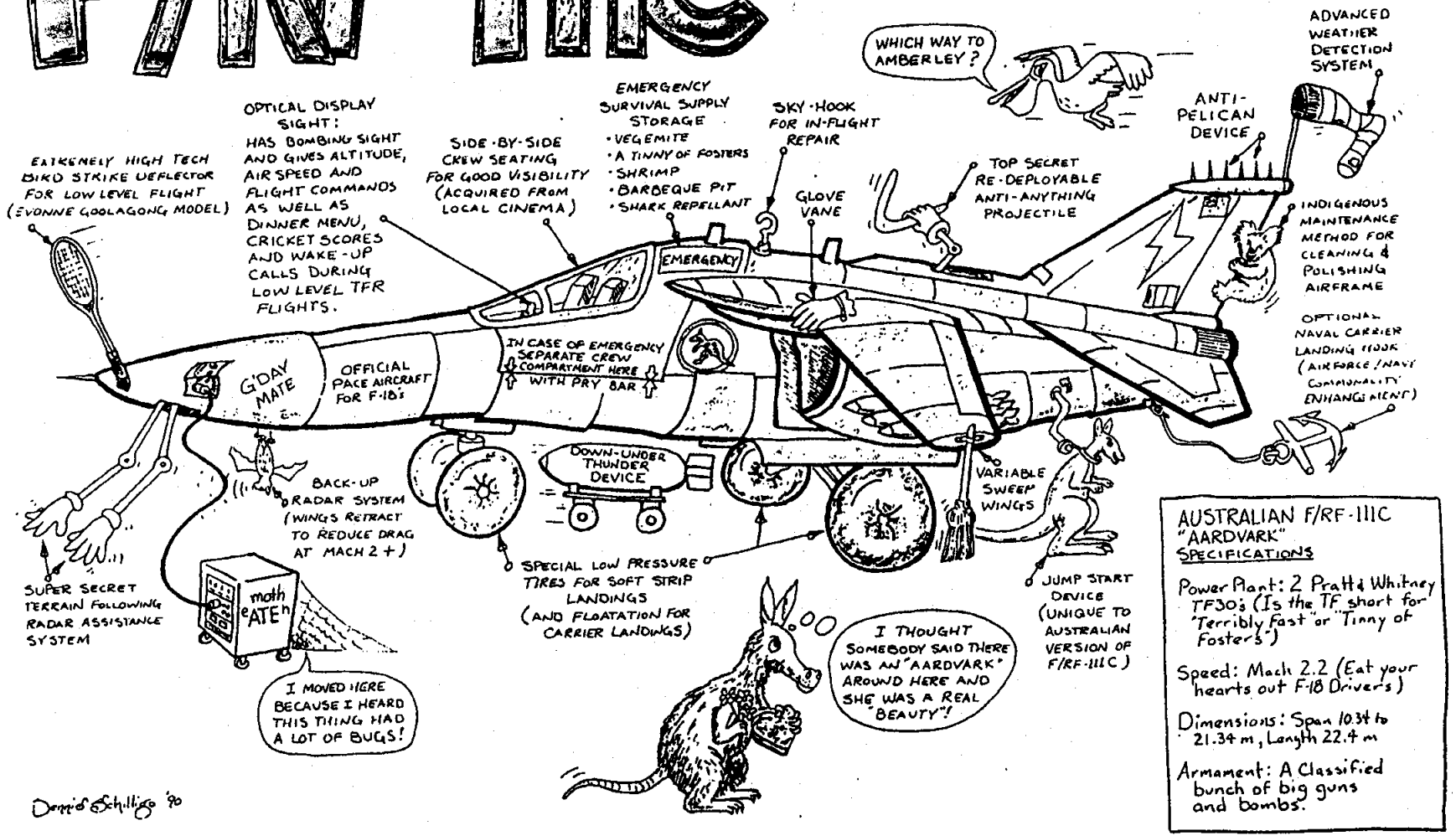
1991

NEWS PAPER CUTTINGS AND
ARTICLES OF INTEREST for
the year 1991

AN SRLMSQN PERSPECTIVE


239/5000 F111G ©1991

F/RF-111C "Aussievark"



Dennis Schilling '90

AUSTRALIAN F/RF-111C "AARDVARK" SPECIFICATIONS

Power Plant: 2 Pratt & Whitney TF30s (Is the TF short for "Terribly Fast" or "Tinny of Fosters")

Speed: Mach 2.2 (Eat your hearts out F-18 Drivers)

Dimensions: Span 10.34 to 21.34 m, Length 22.4 m

Armament: A Classified bunch of big guns and bombs.

STRIKE

RAAF Amberley's Own Newspaper

VOL.2 NO.31 | WEDNESDAY JANUARY 23, 1991 | Priceless | Telephone : (07) 280 2627

Contract maintenance for F111

FROM April this year, F111 aircraft will be handed over to civilian tradesmen working at No 3 Aircraft Depot to clean and repair the aircraft's fuselage fuel tanks.

Technicians employed under a multimillion dollar contract awarded to one of Australia's largest aerospace organisations, Hawker de Havilland, will remove major components of the aircraft allowing access to the internal tanks. Other workers will then take on the job of removing the sealant, cleaning and repairing the tanks, and applying new sealant.

Initially, 55 civilian workers will be employed increasing to 83 later. The October 1993 planned cease date carries with it an option for the RAAF to extend the contract for up to five years. Over 800 applicants competed for the 83 jobs ranging from aircraft technicians to general hands.

The deseal/reseal work is necessary due to the corrosive effect of water progressively breaking down the sealant and leaking fuel from the aircraft.

To permit the F111 to carry its 16 tonnes of fuel needed for long range flights every available cavity in the fuselage and wings becomes a fuel tank. Each sealed and plumbed tank supplies fuel to the two TF-30 engines that power the F111.

Previously, the deseal/reseal work had to be carried out at the Air Logistics Centre in Sacremento, California requiring each F111 to be ferried to the United States. Carrying out the work at Amberley expects to save millions of dollars in the long term.

Contractor maintenance is not new to the F111. Depot level maintenance and other major work on the United States Air Force F111s is the responsibility of the Air Logistics Centre manned predominantly by a civilian labour force.

A large proportion of ex-RAAF members make up the technical side of the workforce. The Site Manager for Hawker de Havilland is Michael Gleeson, an ex-RAAF Squadron Leader engineer, and the Support Services Manager is Barry McGrath, an ex-RAAF administrative officer.

Liaison Officer, Flight Lieutenant Julie Bastin, said that the employment of so many ex-RAAF personnel would reduce the training required -- especially for the aircraft technicians. "Many of the technicians have previous F111 experience at the Depot and will need only update training to become proficient," she said.

Hawker de Havilland will also be involved in the Avionics Update Programme for the F111. Through the prime contractor, Rockwell Australia, the company will be responsible for installing electronic components during the course of the project.

❑ *John Armstrong*

F-111 refitters start special reseal training

AVIATION group Hawker De Havilland will this week start training its first intake of local recruits to deseal and reseal 17 F-111 fuselage tanks at Amberley.

Hawker has won the multi-million maintenance contract scheduled to start on April 8. Much of the work will be performed by people with no previous experience.

The aerospace company will also convert the aircraft analog equipment to digital readout.

Hawker's facility manager Mike Gleeson said yesterday progressive intakes were continuing for what should amount to more than 80 jobs when Hawker is fully operational.

"Everything is progressing according to plan," Mr Gleeson said.

The work on the fighter bomber tanks should extend their life for 10 years. Hawker is hoping to secure additional RAAF contracts that would prolong the period of employment for its workers beyond the 1993 deadline.

Hawker was swamped by more than 800 calls when positions for the project were advertised in January this year.

The West Moreton Regional Development Corporation, which strongly supports the Hawker contract, believes that there can be additional spin-offs by local companies bidding to supply back-up services and necessary goods.

Corporation manager Ken Thackeray said there will be a need for local engineering services as well as basic supplies.

He has urged any company which believes it could help meet Hawkers needs to contact the company supply officer and register their interest "as soon as possible".

The contract to supply the temporary buildings to be used by the Hawker administration has gone to a Rocklea company, Portacom Portable Buildings.

Mr Gleeson said construction of the buildings was ahead of schedule.

— PETER GARDINER

13/2/91.

MILITARY

• **USAF TO RETIRE F-111s:** The US Air Force will retire most of its F-111 fleet by the mid 1990s.

The tactical aircraft will be progressively retired due to the diminishing threat of East-West conflict, despite the fact that there remains no firm replacement for the F-111. Such is the apparent confusion over the retirement decision, that the Pentagon recently sought details from General Dynamics about how much it would cost to reopen the F-111 production line, which has been closed now for over 15 years. Defense officials have acknowledged, however, that this was more a cost exercise rather than a serious option.

Under the planned retirement schedule, all F-111As and Ds will be retired as soon as possible. The F-111Es will remain in USAF service for some time, though they will only be based in the United States and will not be upgraded through the Avionics Modernisation Program (AMP). The EF-111A Ravens, which performed so impeccably in the Gulf, will be allocated to the Nebraska Air National Guard to remain in US service and will undergo the AMP. Only the F-111F force will remain in long term, front line service. This is the only variant with the Pave Tack laser designator system and with the AMP updates will remain in service until about 2010.

Meanwhile, it has been announced that because of the reduced threat of conflict in Europe, all F-111Fs will be withdrawn from Heyford and Lakenheath AFBs in southern England by 1994. The US deployment will be replaced by F-15Es.

Timetable set for F-111 pull-out

The USA will begin withdrawing its standing force of F-111 dual-capable bombers from the UK next year in response to the diminished threat to Europe and the Bush Administration's desire to cut costs.

Around 50 F-15Es will replace the departing F-111 force from 1992. The F-15Es, initially lacking their nuclear tactical air-to-surface missile (TASM) armament, will be based at Lakenheath, eastern England.

TASM was to have arrived in the UK for the F-15E in mid-1995, but this date has been pushed back due to technical difficulties with the 400 km-range missile.

There are about 160 F-111s based in the UK — F-111E and EF-111A aircraft at Upper Heyford, southern England, and F-111Fs at Lakenheath. The last will leave in 1994, by which time the F-15E deployment will be complete.

UK

BY NICK COOK

LONDON

The force structure changes which brought about the withdrawal mean USAF will have to depend on a drastically reduced F-111 force, F-15Es and F-117 Stealth Fighters, for tactical strike into the next century.

The cancellation of the US Navy's A-12 attack aircraft last month denied USAF a follow-on to the F-111 in the foreseeable future. The plan was to adapt the A-12 for the role.

Informed sources said while the F-111 replacement programme was not dead, the air force was not in a hurry.

In a bizarre move last week, the Pentagon asked General Dynamics how much it would cost to re-open the F-111 line, which has been closed for over 15 years. Officials acknowledge this is more a cost exercise than a serious option, but is indicative of USAF confusion over an F-111 successor. The most likely replacement is the aircraft emerging from the US Navy's new AX programme, which has surfaced to plug the gap left by the A-12's cancellation.

Of the existing F-111 force, F-111As and F-111Ds are to be retired as soon as possible, the EF-111A Ravens will go to the Nebraska Air National Guard, and the F-111Es will remain in service in the USA — probably at Cannon AFB, New Mexico — although they will not be upgraded through the Avionics Modernisation Programme (AMP).

The AMP will be completed on the EF-111As and the F-111Fs, according to industry officials. With avionics and structural improvements, the F-111F (the only variant to carry the Pave Tack laser designator) may serve until 2010.

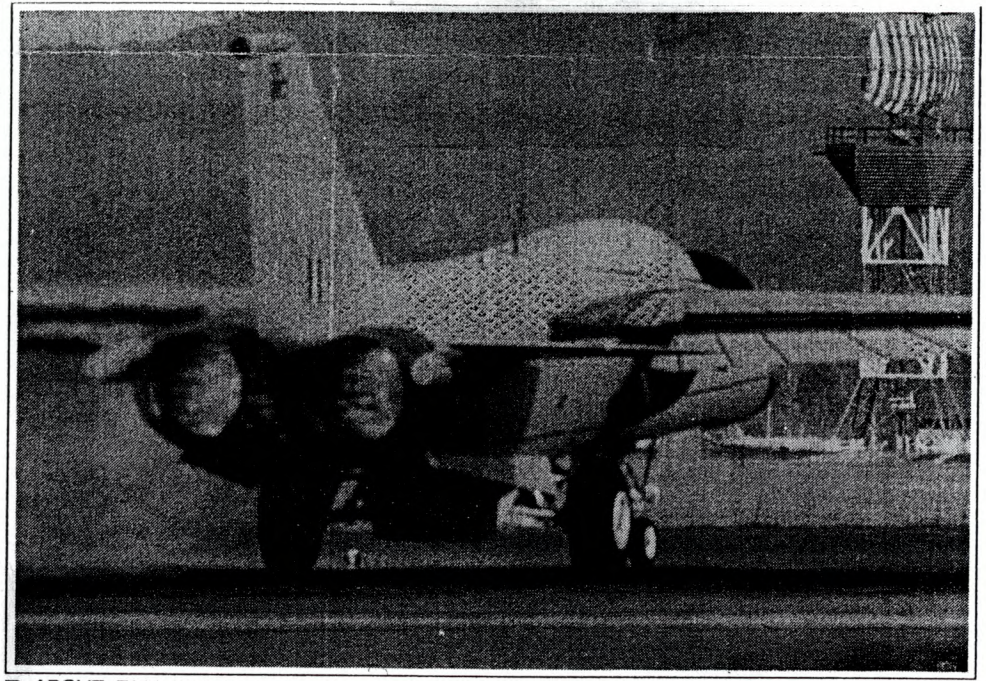
A programme to install digital flight controls in the F-111E/F, some Gs and the EF-111A will continue, the officials said.

■ British Aerospace, which has a lucrative servicing contract for UK-based F-111s, said it 'anticipated' the withdrawal of the aircraft and has already replaced much of the shortfall with civil work. The company's Bristol division is half-way through a 100 million contract signed with USAF in 1988.

JANE'S DEFENCE WEEKLY 16 FEBRUARY 1991

VOL.2 NO.46 STRIKE NEWSPAPER. WEDNESDAY MAY 8, 1991 Priceless Telephone: (07) 2802627

Prototype F111 off to the US



ABOVE: F111 A8-132 thunders down the runway for take off on a test flight before leaving for the US on Saturday. The grey paint denotes its status as a prototype test aircraft for the Avionics Update Program.

F111 aircraft A8-132 leaves this Saturday on an 8000 nautical mile flight to the United States to be extensively modified with the latest high technology avionics equipment at the Rockwell International facility at Palmdale, California.

The aircraft is the first of twenty-three F111s to undergo modernisation under a project called the 'Avionics Update Program'. The remaining aircraft will be modified in Australia using modification kits following acceptance flight testing of the prototype aircraft in the United States.

The multimillion dollar project involves the removal of analogue avionics equipment which is fast becoming difficult to repair, and replacing the obsolete devices with the latest computerised or 'digital' equipment. Dials and switches will be replaced with multi-function video displays linked to the aircraft's flight control, navigation, communications and weapons systems.

A complete cockpit redesign incorporates ergonomic features that allow 'heads up' flying by the aircrew. Aircraft performance data and systems information appear on the video displays just below eye level. Operating a sophisticated aircraft such as the F111, especially low-level at high speed requires fast access to information on aircraft and target position, weapons status and communications. The new configuration will allow the crew to view detailed information instantaneously.

The avionics update increases the reliability of F111 systems markedly. Added to that, the advantages of an ergonomically designed cockpit combined with the accuracy of 'digital' equipment is expected to enhance crew performance and the strike capability of the F111.

Following modification work, functional flight testing at the Palmdale facility will confirm the safety of the equipment for flight and its in-flight operation. A flight test team comprising Wing Commander Bob Downing (RAAF Program Director), Squadron Leader Mal Hurman (Flight Test Director) and the flight test crew, Squadron Leader Mark Skidmore and Flight Lieutenant Chris Miller will represent RAAF interests in the project. A RAAF maintenance team detachment will launch and recover the aircraft and rectify any 'non-AUP' problems.

Performance flight testing will be carried out at Sacremento, California when the new systems will be subjected to rigorous flight tests to confirm that specifications have been met. Some development work, especially in the software support function, may be necessary during this phase of the test and evaluation phase.

The aircraft and personnel will be overseas for at least two years. Families will accompany the personnel on posting, first to Palmdale and then to Sacremento.

Modification of the remaining aircraft will begin in Australia before the return of A8-132.

❑ *John Armstrong*

US trip for lucky eleven

ELEVEN Amberley personnel have been selected to spend up to two years in the United States as part of the maintenance support team for the F-111 Avionics Update Programme.

The support personnel will be working with the prototype F-111 (A8-132) which has been in the States since May this year.

The multi-million dollar F-111 update programme involves the removal of analogue avionics equipment, which is fast becoming difficult to repair, and replacing the obsolete devices with the latest computerised or 'digital' equipment.

All of the RAAF's twenty-three F-111s will eventually be updated under the avionics programme. The prototype F-111 currently in the States is the only one that will be updated overseas. The remainder will be modified in Australia before the return of A8-132.

Competition for the limited places on the maintenance support team has been fierce -- which isn't surprising seeing personnel will enjoy up to two years overseas.

The lucky eleven are -- WOFF P. Boer (WOENG, 3AD); SGT J.P. Daley (AFFITT2, 6SQN); CPL G.P. StClair (AFFITT2, 3AD); CPL R.C. Tester (ENGFITT2, 1SQN); CPL T.G. McCormack (ARMFITT2, 3AD); SGT K.J. Schaumberg (ARMFITT2, 3AD); FSGT S.B. Goyne (AVSYSTECH2, 1SQN); CPL P.W. Pluis (ELECFITT2, 482SQN); CPL N.S. Staines (INSTFITT2, 482SQN); SGT S.A. Rochford (INSTFITT2, 482SQN); CPL M.R. Devlin (RADTECHA2, 6SQN).

❑ ***JOEL PALMER***

❑ *ABOVE: PICTURED in front of an F-111 are the maintenance support team who are bound for the United States in 1992 to assist with the Avionics Update Programme. Absent from the picture were CPLs McCormack and Tester.*