



F-35 Lightning II Program

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FIRST REFUEL FOR RAAF KC-30A REFUELLER TO F-35A

Edwards Air Force Base -- 25 Sept 2015 – The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) completed the first fuel transfer with the air refuelling boom from a RAAF KC-30A Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) to a US Air Force (USAF) F-35A Joint Strike Fighter at Edwards Air Force Base in California. A total of 59 contacts were conducted of which five contacts transferred 43,200 pounds of fuel during the four hour sortie on 25 September 2015.

Chief of the Air Force, Air Marshal Leo Davies AO CSC, described the trial as a significant step in the development of the KC-30A's capability. "Our KC-30A is an essential force multiplier. Mid-air refuelling is critical to ensuring global reach for our aircraft, our people and our equipment," Air Marshal Davies said. "Refuelling between the KC-30A and F-35A is an important step towards the KC-30A's achievement of Final Operational Capability (FOC) and represents continued progress in the development of the F-35A. This achievement is significant because the future of Australia's air combat capability is reliant on the successful partnership between these two aircraft and our ability to be interoperable with our international partners."



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The KC-30A has two refuelling systems – the hose-and-drogue and Advanced Refuelling Boom System (ARBS). The two different refuelling systems allow RAAF to support a wide range of coalition aircraft on Operation OKRA where a KC-30A is currently deployed to support combat operations against Daesh in Iraq and Syria.

The five KC-30As are based at RAAF Base Amberley (QLD) and Air Force will receive an additional two in 2018. A single KC-30A can carry a fuel load of more than 100 tonnes and remain 1800 kilometres from its home base with 50 tonnes of fuel available for offload, for four hours. Australia has committed to 72 F-35As for RAAF Bases Williamtown and Tindal, with the first aircraft arriving in late 2018. The F-35A will replace the ageing F/A-18A/B Hornet with a 5th-generation networked fighter aircraft.