



AP-3C ORION

AIR FORCE
OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

airforce.gov.au



AP-3C ORION

AIR FORCE
OPERATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

airforce.gov.au

OVERVIEW

The Royal Australian Air Force's (RAAF's) AP-3C Orions are operated by Edinburgh-based No. 92 Wing and its Squadrons. The AP-3C Orion whilst primarily a Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance aircraft, also has the capability to conduct Overland Intelligence and Surveillance and Reconnaissance (OISR), enabling the platform to support not only naval, but ground forces. Since 2003, both Number 10 and 11 Squadrons have been deployed to the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO), where today, 70% of their sorties are conducted overland in support of ground forces.

The AP-3C Orions' roles include: anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, maritime surveillance, Naval fleet support and search and survivor supply. In addition to its traditional maritime roles, the Orions' Overland Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities are now an essential component of coalition overland operations in the MEAO.

Recent upgrades to the AP-3C Orion mean the aircraft possesses advanced avionics and modern data management and communications suites. The aircraft is fitted with a variety of sensors, including: a digital multi-mode radar, electronic support measures, electro-optics detectors (infra-red and visual), magnetic anomaly detector, identification friend or foe systems, and acoustic sensors processing self deployed sonobuoys. The AP-3C Orion's

four Allison T56-A-14 turboprops enable it to travel at speeds of up to 750km an hour whilst providing enough economy to allow the platform to remain airborne for up to 13 hours.

AP-3C Orions are used to transmit real-time surveillance pictures, providing essential situational awareness to commanders on the ground. In addition to this Orions have also played an important role in detecting improvised explosive devices and protecting coalition ground forces in the Middle East.

The AP-3C Orion is an exceptionally versatile, and amongst the world's most capable Maritime Patrol aircraft.

PERSONNEL

Hundreds of personnel have deployed to the Middle East with the AP-3C Orions and they have been predominantly drawn from No. 92 Wing including Number 10 and 11 Squadrons. Each AP-3C operational crew is a team consisting of 2 Pilots; 2 Flight Engineers; 3 Air Combat Officers and 6 Airborne Electronics Analysts.

In addition to Aircrew, a range of other essential elements contribute to the sustainment of AP-3C Orion in the MEAO including Technicians, Medical, Administration, Logistics, Force Protection, Legal, Maintenance and Intelligence personnel. Many personnel have now completed up to five deployments to the Middle East.

WAR SERVICE HISTORY IN THE MEAO

The AP-3C Orions first deployed to the MEAO in January 2003, and since then have flown more than 1750 missions involving 16500 flying hours supporting Operations Bastille, Falconer, Catalyst and Slipper. During the past seven years Orion crews have conducted OISR tasks in Afghanistan and Iraq, maritime patrols of the Persian Gulf and North Arabian Sea and more recently, counter-piracy missions in vicinity of the Horn of Africa.

SPECIFICATIONS

MANUFACTURER	LOCKHEED MARTIN
ROLE	ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE (ASW), ANTI SURFACE VESSEL WARFARE (ASUV), NAVAL DIRECT SUPPORT, PEACETIME MARITIME SURVEILLANCE AND INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION (MSIC), SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR); AND OVERLAND INTELLIGENCE, SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE (OISR).
ENGINES	FOUR ALLISON T56-A-14 - 4,600 SHAFT HORSEPOWER EACH
AIRFRAME	LENGTH: 35.6M HEIGHT: 10.44M
WINGSPAN	30.8M
WEIGHT	61,200KG MAXIMUM
SPEED	750KM/H (405 KTS) MAXIMUM, 650KM/H (350 KTS) CRUISE AT 26,000 FT
ENDURANCE	UP TO 15HRS
ARMAMENT	UP TO SIX MK 46 TORPEDOES, UP TO SIX AGM 84 HARPOON AIR-TO-SURFACE MISSILES
ORDNANCE	ACOUSTIC SONOBUOYS, MARITIME MARKER DEVICES, AIR SEA RESCUE KIT (ASRK), AND SURVIVAL AID HELIBOXES