



RUAG Australia: Keeping the ADF in the air

By Katherine Ziesing | RAAF Amberley | 23 May 2019

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What happens when a military is supporting a legacy aircraft headed up the bathtub curve? Refurbishment of parts, reduced flying hours and increased maintenance times are just the beginning.

RUAG Australia has been working on such aircraft alongside cutting edge technology for the better part of 20 years. Take, for example, their work on the Classic Hornet fleet. Worldwide, the fleet has demonstrated issues with under-carriage cracking and stress corrosion.

Thanks to fatigue management and overhaul techniques developed by RUAG in Australia, the RAAF has been able to keep the aircraft in the air longer and for less dollars. With special processes for materials, both applied in the workshop and in the hangar, the RAAF have seen the Classic Hornet fleet maintain their capability.

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The RUAG Amberley facility in Queensland also strips down numerous components on the Classic Hornet fleet, including flight controls, hydraulics and fuel components, as do the RUAG MRO facilities in Victoria at Bayswater for landing gear and actuator hydraulics and Airport West for APUs, ECS, and engine controls. They then rebuild these components to the point where you would have trouble spotting the difference between a new or refurbished part.

RUAG has also taken this approach to work on the RAN's Seahawk helicopters' gearboxes, which were corroding much faster than planned. A quote for the work from the OEM revealed it could have taken the better part of a year to come back to the customer and the price tag was close to a million dollars per unit. The solution from RUAG took three months at a fraction of the price.

Touring their RAAF Amberley facility, the high level of test and verification of the work being done on componentry is plain to see. RUAG developed many of the testing jigs themselves, certified to an appropriate level with both the customer and relevant OEM, with the small but highly skilled workforce boasting numerous ADF veterans.

The company has also leapt ahead at all its [five Australian sites](#) (<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/interviews/from-the-source-md-ruag-australia-john-teager>) thanks to winning a range of work packages on the F-35.

“The company has won work on 160 components to date, across 14 material types and 21 different special processes involved in their production,” Paul PingNam, RUAG Australia's Head of Programs, MRO said to ADM.

The company also holds international patents related to innovative additive repair technology, such as Supersonic Particle Deposition (SPD) (<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/defence/air/laser-tech-the-next-step-for-aircraft-repairs>) and Laser Additive Deposition (LAD)

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<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/defence/general/hornet-repaired-using-laser-additive-deposition>), both Additive Metal Technologies (AMT) or variations on what many know as 3D printing technologies. And, they have successfully exported a portable SPD technology (<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/general/ruag-australia-receives-first-order-for-mobile-supersonic-tech>) unit to the US Navy. RUAG Australia is being recognised (<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/news/victorian-awards-showcase-innovative-manufacturers>) more widely for its strong, precision manufacturing capabilities and material and [special process development](https://www.australiandefence.com.au/news/ruag-employee-wins-award-for-repair-tech) (<https://www.australiandefence.com.au/news/ruag-employee-wins-award-for-repair-tech>) pedigree.

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