



## DEFENCE MEDIA RELEASE

---

CPA - /05  
DRAFT

24 November 2005

### NAVY COMMEMORATES THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOKKER F27 AIRCRAFT

The Royal Australian Navy's Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) Flight crew celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Fokker F27 Friendship aircraft flight today, during a survey mission from Cairns Airport to RAAF Scherger, Weipa.

The first flight of the Fokker F27 prototype took place in the Netherlands on 24 Nov 1955. Today, the modified Fokker F27-500 aircraft operated by LADS is the last operational F27 in Australia. The LADS team marked the occasion by carrying 50 commemorative philatelic covers during the seven-hour survey flight over waters to the east of Torres Strait.

The commemorative covers, bearing a photograph of the Navy's F27-500 and 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary details, were postmarked prior to departure from Cairns earlier today, and signed by the pilot and the Commanding Officer of the LADS Flight, Lieutenant Commander Richard Ball, RAN on completion of the flight.

The commemorative covers were provided by South Australian Air Journal Editor and keen aviation historian, Mr Nigel Daw. "I'm absolutely wrapped that the Navy wanted to commemorate this event and their participation will ensure it is appropriately recorded" said Mr Daw.

#### **Background:**

The Laser Airborne Depth Sounder (LADS) Flight is part of Navy's Hydrographic Branch and entered service in October 1993. The LADS system uses a scanning laser to collect hydrographic survey data to a depth of 50 metres. The Royal Australian Navy is one of only two military organisations in the world to have this capability

The seven Navy personnel at LADS fly in teams of two and operate the laser survey system from the main cabin of the aircraft. Survey data is used in the compilation of nautical charts. The aircraft is piloted and maintained by Tenix LADS Corporation.

#### **Media Contact:**

Mr Mark Tanzer, PAO-NQ, Coordination and Public Affairs (07) 4771 1602 or 0407 467 235

---