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From Egyptology to Air Force: Sass's Bold Career Shift

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Corporal Danielle Sass, once an Egyptology scholar, now thrives as a Royal Australian Air Force loadmaster on the C-27J Spartan, embracing a dynamic career change.

Corporal Danielle Sass, a former Egyptology scholar, has made a remarkable transition to a high-octane role as a loadmaster in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) with No. 35 Squadron at RAAF Base Amberley, as reported by Defence Australia on July 30, 2025. Before enlisting in early 2023 as a direct-entry loadmaster on the C-27J Spartan aircraft, Sass dedicated over a decade to studying ancient Egyptian religion, specializing in

demonology, at Macquarie University. She earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Research, both focused on Egypt and the Near East, and was a PhD candidate, contributing to the Macquarie University Theban Tombs project with six weeks of excavation work at Dra' Abu el Naga in Luxor, Egypt.

Sass's shift from academia to the RAAF was driven by a desire for adventure and stability, which she felt were elusive in academic research. Influenced by a family member with RAAF experience and a friend serving as a loadmaster at No. 37 Squadron, she withdrew from her PhD to pursue a military career. "She needed a significant change and prioritized happiness, which led her to the Air Force," Sass told Defence Australia, expressing gratitude for her new path. Now a fully qualified loadmaster, she handles cargo, passengers, and mission logistics on the C-27J Spartan, a versatile aircraft designed for tactical airlift and humanitarian missions, capable of operating from small, unsurfaced airstrips, per the RAAF website.

The C-27J, operated by No. 35 Squadron since 2015, supports operations like disaster relief, as seen in recent Coober Pedy flood supply missions, according to Defense Brief. Sass embraces the role's challenges, noting that "every day brings new learning opportunities," as shared with Mirage News. Her story highlights the ADF's appeal for those seeking purposeful careers, with the opposition praising such recruitment efforts for bolstering defense readiness, per The Australian. Sass's journey from ancient tombs to modern aircraft underscores the value of adaptability and determination in serving Australia's security needs.