

**THE PRIVATE AIR  
MARSHAL**



Official photograph of Air Vice-Marshal George Jones, August 1949

# THE PRIVATE AIR MARSHAL

A Biography of  
Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC

Peter Helson



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*To*  
*Mary Gerardine Gallo*  
*1 October 1959 – 24 December 2002*

## *Preface*

This book has been published by the Air Power Development Centre as part of its commitment to Air Force history and to promoting a greater understanding of the evolution of the RAAF and the role of air power.

Every effort has been made to ensure the correct spelling of people's names and placenames; however, given the time period since many of these events took place, it has not been possible to double-check every name mentioned herein. Further compounding the problem is the fact that some names are misspelt in official records of the period, such as Unit History Sheets. In addition, there are often several spelling variants for placenames.

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## *Imperial/Metric Conversion Table*

|                       |                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 inch (in)           | 25.4 millimetres (mm)           |
| 1 foot (ft)           | 30.5 centimetres (cm)           |
| 1 yard (yd)           | 0.914 metres (m)                |
| 1 nautical mile (nm)  | 1852 metres                     |
| 1 pound (lb)          | 0.454 kilograms (kg)            |
| 1 ton                 | 1.02 tonne (t)                  |
| 1 mile per hour (mph) | 1.61 kilometres per hour (km/h) |
| 1 knot (kt)           | 1 nautical mile per hour        |
| 1 pound (£)           | 2 dollars (\$)                  |
| 1 shilling (1/-)      | 10 cents (10c)                  |

## *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AAA   | Anti-aircraft Artillery                      |
| ACM   | Air Chief Marshal                            |
| ACSEA | Air Command, South-East Asia                 |
| AAF   | Allied Air Forces                            |
| ADC   | Aide-de-Camp                                 |
| ADFA  | Australian Defence Force Academy             |
| AFC   | Australian Flying Corps                      |
| AFCO  | Air Force Confidential Order                 |
| AIF   | Australian Imperial Force                    |
| ALP   | Australian Labor Party                       |
| AMF   | Australian Military Forces                   |
| AMP   | Air Member for Personnel                     |
| AO    | Officer of the Order of Australia            |
| AOC   | Air Officer Commanding                       |
| ARDU  | Aircraft Research and Development Unit       |
| AWM   | Australian War Memorial                      |
| CAC   | Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation            |
| CAS   | Chief of the Air Staff                       |
| CB    | Companion of the Order of the Bath           |
| CBE   | Commander of the Order of the British Empire |
| CGS   | Chief of the General Staff                   |
| CNS   | Chief of the Naval Staff                     |
| CO    | Commanding Officer                           |
| COSC  | Chiefs of Staff Committee                    |
| CTs   | Communist Terrorists                         |
| DCAS  | Deputy Chief of the Air Staff                |
| DFC   | Distinguished Flying Cross                   |
| DSO   | Distinguished Service Order                  |
| EATS  | Empire Air Training Scheme                   |
| FEAF  | Far East Air Force                           |
| FLTLT | Flight Lieutenant                            |
| ft    | foot/feet [distance]                         |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| HMAT  | His Majesty's Australian Transport  |
| hp    | horsepower  |
| HQ    | Headquarters  |
| KBE   | Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire                             |
| KCMG  | Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George                       |
| lb    | pound [weight]  |
| LRMP  | Long-Range Maritime Patrol  |
| mph   | miles per hour  |
| MRA   | Moral Re-Armament Movement  |
| MSM   | Meritorious Service Medal   |
| NAA   | National Archives of Australia  |
| NCO   | Non-commissioned Officer  |
| NEI   | Netherlands East Indies   |
| NLA   | National Library of Australia   |
| OBE   | Officer of the Order of the British Empire                                      |
| OC    | Officer Commanding  |
| POL   | Petrol, Oils and Lubricants   |
| PTSD  | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder  |
| RAAF  | Royal Australian Air Force  |
| RAF   | Royal Air Force   |
| RAN   | Royal Australian Navy   |
| RFC   | Royal Flying Corps  |
| RN    | Royal Navy  |
| RNAS  | Royal Naval Air Service   |
| RNZAF | Royal New Zealand Air Force   |
| RSL   | Returned Services League of Australia / Returned & Services League of Australia |
| SWPA  | South-West Pacific Area   |
| UFO   | Unidentified Flying Object  |
| USAAF | United States Army Air Forces   |
| USAF  | United States Air Force   |
| WAAAF | Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force  |
| VC    | Victoria Cross  |





# *Introduction*

*He was a very complex man, full of contradictions. He was on the board of Ansett Transport Industries and yet he stood for Federal Parliament for the Australian Labor Party.<sup>1</sup>*

George Jones served as Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) of the RAAF for nearly 10 years—between May 1942 and January 1952. This was the longest continuous period for any person holding the CAS position and yet so little appears to be known about Jones and his time in office.<sup>2</sup> Jones did not have a bragging personality. Instead, he was quiet and introspective by nature and was not one to boast about his achievements. He made an attempt at telling his own story in a very brief autobiography, titled *From Private to Air Marshal*.<sup>3</sup> This book is disappointing in its content in that it leaves out more than it tells. One might have expected that a person who served in the RAAF for over 30 years and lived beyond the age of 90 to be more forthcoming. The intention of this biography is to tell Jones' life (especially his time as CAS) in much greater detail.

George Jones was a very complex man who led a long and interesting life. In order to put his time as CAS into perspective, this biography looks at his early life and his service during World War I. Experiences and events during this time helped develop his personality. Jones did not come from a distinguished family or social background. He was born into a working-class family in rural Victoria in 1896. His initial formal education was at the local state school and when he completed his time there he moved to Melbourne to work as a motor mechanic.

Like so many young men at the outbreak of World War I in 1914 he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force because he expected military service would provide excitement and an opportunity to travel to other parts of the world. After participating in the Gallipoli campaign, Jones decided that he was unsuited to land

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs Rosemary Ruddell of Glen Waverly, Vic., discussing her grandfather, Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC, interview 16 June 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams served as CAS for the longest time but his term in the position was broken into three periods—October 1922 to December 1922; February 1925 to December 1932 and June 1934 to February 1939. Jones' time in the position was unbroken.

<sup>3</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988.

warfare. His interest in machinery led him to join the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), where he initially served as an air mechanic before successfully completing pilot training. By the end of the war Jones had reached the rank of Captain, had destroyed seven German aircraft in air-to-air combat and had been awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). The war, however, had also left its mark on Jones because as a result of his combat experiences he suffered from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Jones had problems relating to other people throughout most of his life and it is likely that this partially resulted from the PTSD.

Jones returned to Australia after the war and resumed his employment in a motor vehicle workshop. In 1921 he joined the RAAF and remained in the Service until 1952. Jones had a steady career progression in the RAAF and in the 1920s and 1930s he worked in a series of administrative and maintenance supervisory positions. In addition, he attended the Royal Air Force (RAF) Staff College in 1929. By the outbreak of World War II, Jones had built up a distinguished enough career but he lacked experience in an operational environment. It could be argued, however, that Jones was not unique in this regard because at that time few RAAF officers had gained any sort of operational experience.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war Jones occupied the position of Director of Training. In this position he played a major role in the establishment and conduct of the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS). Jones possessed good administrative skills, which allowed him to build up the huge training structure within Australia that was necessary to support the scheme. EATS was one of the RAAF's great achievements during the war.

Elements outside the RAAF were to make a huge impact on Jones' career. The Australian Government had become disenchanted with the RAAF's high command during the late 1930s and, in 1940, an RAF officer (Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett) was seconded from Britain to head the Service. During Burnett's time as CAS, the Government changed from a Conservative to a Labor ministry in late 1941. The new Government, led by John Curtin, was content to follow its predecessor when it came to command of the Air Force and was keen to gain the services of another RAF officer to head the RAAF when Burnett's term as CAS concluded.

When the attempts to appoint an RAF officer failed, the Government was forced to select an RAAF officer as CAS. Many of the Service's senior officers had been selected for operational positions, while others (such as Air Marshal Richard Williams) were out of favour with the Government. In a surprise move,

Jones was appointed and promoted from Wing Commander (temporary Group Captain, acting Air Commodore) to acting Air Vice-Marshal. It has been claimed, incorrectly, that his appointment as CAS was a mistake. Nevertheless, nobody was more surprised with the appointment than Jones himself, as he expected Air Vice-Marshal William Bostock would be made CAS. Bostock was instead appointed as the Chief of Staff to the Commander Allied Air Forces.

After the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Government handed over control of Australia's armed forces to the Commander of the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA), General Douglas MacArthur. All Australian-based elements of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and the Australian Army were placed under MacArthur's command. Things were different for the RAAF. Shortly after the change of Government, the Minister for Air (Arthur Drakeford) and the Secretary of the Department of Air (Melville Langslow) devised a plan to reorganise the RAAF into an operational arm (RAAF Command headed by Bostock) and an administrative arm (under the control of Jones). One reason for the division was that it allowed the Government to place RAAF units under the control of the Allied Air Forces (AAF), so that they could participate in combat operations, while at the same time maintaining some Australian control over the Service. Drakeford and Langslow did not consider the personalities of the two officers and their plan, while seemingly well-intentioned, was to lay the foundations for a feud that developed between Jones and Bostock. The feud overshadowed the RAAF's achievements in the SWPA, and the lack of overall command for the RAAF allowed the US commanders to use the Service in any manner they pleased.

Jones was given responsibility for the RAAF's administrative functions but he found himself in continual conflict with Bostock, who believed that he should have been given the administrative functions necessary to command the Service's operational units. In retaining all administrative functions, Jones allowed the Government to keep some control over the RAAF. However, Jones' actions only fuelled the destructive animosity.

Jones' appointment as CAS was initially to be a temporary measure because the Government was still keen to gain the services of an experienced RAF officer who would be appointed to a position of overall command of the RAAF. This became a more important issue as the relationship between Jones and Bostock worsened. There were a few failed attempts to appoint an RAF officer and it is interesting to note the influence that MacArthur had over Curtin in this matter. The Government's failure to resolve the situation does not reflect well on Curtin's reputation as Australia's wartime Prime Minister, in that he allowed a conflict

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between the two senior officers of one of Australia's Defence Services to continue at the time of the country's greatest national security crisis. The Government could have solved the command problem by promoting either Jones or Bostock but this was opposed on every occasion that it was discussed by the politicians. It was not until 1947, when the war was over and the RAAF was a fraction of its wartime size, that Jones was promoted to Air Marshal.

Jones' achievements as the wartime CAS are often overshadowed by his relationship with Bostock. It says a great deal about his strength of character that he was able to achieve so much in the face of continual aggression from Bostock, in an environment dominated by MacArthur, and with only very little support from an inexperienced Government. One of Jones' biggest tasks during the war was to obtain adequate numbers of aircraft for his Service. It was here that he ran into serious problems because of worldwide demands for combat aircraft and by the initial inability of US and British industry to meet those demands. Jones also faced political problems when it came to securing aircraft for the RAAF because the British and US Governments each believed the other was responsible for the RAAF's aircraft allocations. Jones finally took matters into his own hands and travelled to the US and Britain in December 1944 to negotiate a satisfactory aircraft supply agreement. As a result of his efforts, the RAAF acquired its own heavy bomber capability and gained a significant number of fighter aircraft.

At the end of the war, Jones oversaw the demobilisation of the RAAF. This was a task almost as difficult as building the Service up during the wartime years. Jones distanced himself from the day-to-day demobilisation activities and devoted his time to planning the postwar Service. He was, however, closely involved with one of the most controversial aspects of the demobilisation process—the retirement of a number of senior officers, including Williams, Bostock and Goble. It is acknowledged that some of the reasons Jones provided to justify some of the retirements might be seen as unprofessional, but we may also ask the question, what employment could be provided for a number of very senior officers in the postwar RAAF?

Jones' greatest postwar achievement was developing the future plan for the RAAF. Plan 'D', as it was known, formed the basis for the structure of the RAAF for the subsequent 20 years. It was the result of a good deal of intellectual work on Jones' part. To equip the reformed Service, Jones started the processes for the acquisition of new and advanced (for the time) aircraft. Jones was also keen to develop an education regime for RAAF personnel and, during the postwar years, he was responsible for the establishment of the RAAF College at Point Cook. This was to

be the RAAF's equivalent of the RAN College at Jervis Bay or the Royal Military College at Duntroon and was to provide officer cadets with a university education. He also set up the RAAF Staff College, which was also located at Point Cook. This was a significant move for the RAAF because it meant that officers no longer had to attend the RAF Staff College in Britain in order to further their Service education. The third education initiative that occurred under Jones' oversight was the RAAF apprentice scheme, which provided technical education for non-commissioned personnel.

During the postwar period, RAAF units and personnel were engaged as part of coalition forces in conflicts and other incidents, such as the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War. Jones again had no operational control over these units. Instead they were part of larger formations, which were under the command of US or British officers. Jones' role was to raise the units and send them to the theatre of operations, as well as to provide advice to the Government on the operations in which the units were engaged. Australian participation in the postwar conflicts has already been covered in numerous secondary sources.<sup>4</sup>

In December 1949, the Australian Government changed as the Liberal Party, headed by R.G. Menzies, was voted into office. Like previous Governments, Menzies and his colleagues were dissatisfied with the RAAF's high command (and Jones in particular) and once again the British Government was approached for the secondment of a suitable RAF officer to be appointed CAS. Although the British were initially opposed to the idea, they eventually offered Air Marshal Sir Donald Hardman, an officer who quite capably filled the position. The Government could not find another position, either within the RAAF or in the Federal bureaucracy, into which they could place Jones. The only alternative was to place him in retirement after he had handed over the CAS position to Hardman. Thus ended an eventful career, in which Jones rose through the RAAF (and its predecessor, the AFC) from Air Mechanic Second Class to Air Marshal.

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<sup>4</sup> For example: Alan Stephens, *Going Solo: The Royal Australian Air Force 1946–1971*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995; Steve Eather, *Odd Jobs: RAAF Operations in Japan, the Berlin Airlift, Korea and Malta 1946–1960*, RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Vic., 1996; Peter Edwards with Gregory Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1965*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1992; John Mordike (ed.), *The Post-War Years 1945–1954 – The Proceedings of the 1996 RAAF History Conference Held in Canberra on 25 October 1996*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1997; David Wilson, *Lion Over Korea: 77 Fighter Squadron RAAF 1950–53*, Banner Books, Belconnen, 1994; and Robert J. O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950–53 – Volume 1: Strategy and Diplomacy*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981.

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Following his retirement, Jones followed various interests and even stood for Federal Parliament. Apart from a few years with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, he could not gain permanent employment.

## *Four Gold Sovereigns and a Bicycle*

The town of Rushworth is in rural Victoria, 163 kilometres north of Melbourne. It is not situated on any major road and to reach it a visitor would have to turn off the Hume Highway at Violet Town and drive west for about 40 minutes along a country road, passing through the town of Murchison on the way.

Rushworth grew during the Australian gold rush era in the 1850s. Local folklore has it that the town was named by the residents talking about how the gold rush affected their part of the country—'the *rush* was *worth* while'. Gold mining began around Rushworth and the neighbouring town of Whroo (pronounced 'roo') in 1853. The goldfield developed into an important mining area, yielding significant quantities of alluvial and reef gold during the second half of the 19th century. The town then expanded as a result of land selection legislation and the subsequent growth of farming. By the 1870s, Rushworth was well established and described as:

a small and compact postal township in the control of the Waranga Road Board, 97 miles [156 kilometres] North from Melbourne, is surrounded with small towns to the East and West, which makes it, as it were, the centre of a thriving agricultural and pastoral district. Pop. 399. Geological formation; upper Silurian.<sup>1</sup>

The other major industry that added to the town's prosperity was timber-getting in the surrounding ironbark forests.<sup>2</sup>

Today, the native trees around Rushworth and Whroo are considered to be the world's largest forest of ironbark, covering an area of 24 300 hectares. In the past, this timber was an asset to the town's early inhabitants, as it was first used by miners for their buildings and supports and shafts in their mines, as well as for fires for cooking and heating. Later, it was used as the main building material for the slab and paling huts that were the main form of dwelling and business premises in the early days of the town. The ironbark forest provided employment for timber cutters and transport operators for many years, as the timber was used also for electricity and telegraph poles, railway sleepers, road markers, fence posts and firewood at various places around Victoria.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rushworth Museum, caption on a survey map, County of Rodney, Victoria, 1874.

<sup>2</sup> 'Rushworth', <http://www.cnl.com.au/users/cline/rwthbody.htm>, accessed 7 June 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Waranga Tourism Association, Rushworth tourist leaflet, 1998.

Despite its small size, Rushworth produced at least two Australians who became notable through their military service. Frank Hubert McNamara was born there in April 1894. He served with No 1 Squadron Australian Flying Corps (AFC) during the World War I and was awarded the Victoria Cross for a courageous rescue of a fellow AFC officer in Palestine on 20 March 1917.<sup>4</sup> Another identity who also gained fame in the Defence Services was Sir George Jones.

There is no memorial to Sir George Jones in Rushworth. In fact, there is little acknowledgment of him in any form in his home town. The Rushworth School has an honour board listing ex-students who served in World War I, and Jones is listed among them, as is F.H. McNamara, VC. There is war memorial in the town's main street and Jones' name also appears there.

### **George Jones**

George Jones had two birthdays. He was born in a house located on the Tait-Hamilton Road, Gobarup, in Victoria, on 18 October 1896.<sup>5</sup> However, his family did not register the birth for about five weeks and so, officially, his date of birth is registered as 22 November 1896 and the place of birth as Moora Road, Rushworth.<sup>6</sup> As was the custom at the time, the October birthdate was written in the front of the Jones' family Bible. The two birthdays caused mild confusion for some people. Very late in his life, Jones was talking with the RAAF's Principal Air Chaplain, who asked which of the dates was the correct birthday, October or November? Jones replied with a shocked expression on his face, 'How could you, a padre, ask me such a question? If it's in the bible, it must be true!' He added, with a grin, that for many years he had two birthday celebrations—one with his family in October and one with the RAAF in November.<sup>7</sup>

The house in which George Jones was born no longer exists and the site where it was located is now in the middle of a farming paddock. Gobarup is a farming

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<sup>4</sup> Lionel Wigmore, *They Dared Mightily*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1986, pp. 92–94.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell of Glen Waverly, Vic., 16 June 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Register Schedule A: BIRTHS in the District of Rushworth in the Colony of Victoria, 1896. Interestingly, when Jones enlisted in the Australian Air Force in March 1921, he gave his date of birth as 18 October 1896. One can speculate that birth certificates were not checked by the recruitment personnel. DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'.  
<sup>7</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'Sir George Jones, Funeral Service', transcribed by Peter Helson, 6 May 2002.



district about 14 kilometres west of Rushworth. At the end of the 19th century the Gobarup district was divided up into a large number of very small land holdings and farms. Farming, at the time, in that part of the world was difficult, due to poor soil and low rainfall, and people who failed as farmers at Gobarup usually left the land and pursued other employment.<sup>8</sup> George Jones' father, Henry Jones, was one such person.

Henry Jones was born in Bendigo, Victoria, on 12 May 1854, and his wife was Jane Jones (nee Smith), also of Bendigo, who was born on 7 October 1854.<sup>9</sup> The Births Register shows Henry Jones' occupation to be 'farmer'. He was, however, a miner who took up farming at Gobarup. Like some of his contemporaries, he found the size of his land too small and the soil and rainfall inadequate to allow the farm to be profitable. To improve Henry's opportunities as a farmer, the Jones family moved to a larger parcel of land but this also turned out to be of poor quality and unsuitable for farming. Henry then returned to mining, initially in his spare time and then full-time, at Redcastle, near Heathcote, south-west of Rushworth. Henry Jones died at the age of 43 in January 1897, as a result of a fall down a mine shaft. He was buried at Colbinabbin Cemetery.<sup>10</sup>

George was the youngest of 10 children, eight of whom lived beyond the age of five years. The oldest of the Jones' children, Henry Jr, was 19 years old when George was born. George's older brothers were already in the workforce when their father died and, together with the other immediate family members, they attempted to keep the farm operating until the onset of a drought in 1902 led to its sale and the family moved into the town of Rushworth.<sup>11</sup>

We can only piece together a few details of Jones' childhood and are thus forced to rely on drafts and the published version of his autobiography to fill in the gaps.<sup>12</sup> His religion and that of his family was Methodist. His initial education was at a public primary school at Gobarup, three miles (4.8 kilometres) from the family farm. Jones walked to school each day, although he notes that on some occasions, because he was not considered to be a robust child, he was able to persuade his sisters to carry him to school! One assumes the sisters must have been incredibly

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Anderson of Rushworth, Vic., 13 June 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Register Schedule A: BIRTHS in the District of Rushworth in the Colony of Victoria, 1896.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

<sup>11</sup> D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', in *Over the Front*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1992, p. 98.

<sup>12</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, chap. 1.

robust to be able to carry their young brother three miles each day. After his family moved into a house in Rushworth, George Jones attended Rushworth State School, finishing his education there in 1910 at the age of 14 and graduating with a Certificate of Merit—the highest qualification awarded at the small country school. From what we know of Jones' later life, we can assume that he found the classroom lessons difficult and it is a sign of his determination, even at this early age, that he completed school to the highest grade available to him.

For simple financial reasons there could be no question of him undertaking further education at that time—such as attending another school outside Rushworth. His fatherless family was extremely poor and every family member entered the workforce as soon as possible to bring in extra income.

In his spare time, outside school hours, George Jones managed to find ways to keep himself occupied. He had a part-time job working for the local butcher, delivering meat to the residents of Whroo.<sup>13</sup> He was one of the original members of the local Boy Scout Troop that was formed in Rushworth in 1910.<sup>14</sup> Jones enjoyed his time with the Scouts and writes how time with organisation taught him values such as loyalty, self-respect, consideration for others and self-reliance—values he retained for the rest of his life. Later in life he became a prominent member of the Victorian branch of the BP League of Old Scouts. After leaving school, Jones took up an apprenticeship, as a carpenter, with E.W. Armstrong of Moora Road, Rushworth.<sup>15</sup>

As an apprentice, Jones learned building skills that would help him with a hobby later in life. More importantly, he learned to operate machinery, including steam engines and circular saws. He soon found his real interest lay in machinery rather than carpentry so he accepted an offer, from his brother Sam, to work for a motor repair business that Sam jointly owned in Brunswick Street, Melbourne. In 1912, George Jones moved to Melbourne with his worldly wealth—four gold sovereigns and his bicycle. He and one of his sisters, Daisy, shared accommodation in Fitzroy, close to Sam's workshop. Most of George's wage of 30 shillings per week was spent on board.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Joyce Hammond, *The Golden Years of Rushworth and Whroo*, J.G. Hammond, Rushworth, Vic., 1981, p. 147.

<sup>14</sup> David John Shewan, *Rushworth Centenary Souvenir: 100 Years, 1853–1953*, Rushworth Centenary Committee, Rushworth, Vic., 1953, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> Harley W. Forster, *Waranga 1865–1965*, F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, Vic., 1965, p. 122.

<sup>16</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 6. Family members remember Sam Jones to have been a tall man, who was married but had no children and died at a young age. Daisy Jones' occupation was unknown. She later lived in the Melbourne suburb of Camberwell. Interview with Mr Bob

Jones soon became a competent motor mechanic but had several disagreements with his brother's business partner, Frank Levy. Levy was a domineering man who constantly criticised Jones' work. Jones took exception, noting that at the age of 16 it was difficult to be diplomatic.<sup>17</sup> After some open disagreements between the two men, Jones quit his job and took up employment with another motor workshop.<sup>18</sup> Jones now worked for A.G. Healing's, assembling motorcycles on a higher wage of 35 shillings per week. He then returned to work as a mechanic, this time employed by Bevan Brothers, in Malvern. In his spare time, to help him advance in his chosen trade, he started to study fitting and turning at the Melbourne Working Men's College. Unfortunately, the outbreak of what became known as the Great War, World War I, interrupted this course of study.<sup>19</sup>

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Jones of Airport West, Vic., 11 July 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 6. This document is an early draft of Jones' published autobiography, *From Private to Air Marshal*. It contains some information that was not included in the final published version.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

<sup>19</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'.



## *Bloody Wars and Quick Promotion*

By 1914, George Jones was no stranger to military service. As a young Australian male living in a pre–World War I urban environment he became subject to the contemporary compulsory military service regime and was required to undertake part-time basic training. Before 1914, his service comprised two years as a senior cadet and then, at the age of 17½, he served for a year as a member of a militia unit—the 29th (Port Phillip) Light Horse.<sup>1</sup> In units such as these, Jones and hundreds of other young men around Australia, attended parades on Saturday afternoons where they practised military drill and received instruction in firearms handling.<sup>2</sup> It was appropriate that Jones would join a Light Horse unit, as mounted soldiery was a family tradition—Jones’ maternal grandfather had ridden with the Horse Guards in Britain and had, on at least one occasion, been part of an escort for Queen Victoria.<sup>3</sup>

Jones supported the compulsory military service regime because it meant that, at the outbreak of the war, many men already knew how to shoot, ride and live under Army conditions. In Jones’ opinion, these men formed the backbone of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in 1914, so that the soldiers who invaded Gallipoli in April 1915 were not as entirely untrained as they could have been.<sup>4</sup>

These amateur soldiers were an important feature of Australia’s defence as the world situation worsened during 1914. On 3 August of that year, the Australian Government, aware of the threat of a war between the major powers and worried by the possibility of an invasion or raid by either German or Japanese forces,<sup>5</sup> called out the militia (as well as members of rifle clubs). Jones was part of this

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad, 5 June 1915; Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, pp. 6–7; and Office of Air Force History, George Jones file – ‘Air Marshal Sir George Jones KBE, CB, DFC’.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> D. Martin, ‘The Apprentice Air Marshal’, in *Over the Front*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1992, p. 98.

<sup>4</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, ‘From Private to Air Marshal’, p. 8. Jones concluded this observation with the comment it was leadership and communication that failed at Gallipoli.

<sup>5</sup> There was still some speculation in Australia at that time, as to which side the Japanese would join in the forthcoming war and some politicians and government officials expected Japan to ally itself with Germany. However, when hostilities broke out, Japan sided with Britain.

mobilisation, and was sent with his militia unit to Portsea, on the eastern side of the entry to Port Phillip Bay. The unit had the task of repelling a German attack (should it occur) on Port Phillip Heads. Jones' only action during the deployment was to arrest the Sorrento postmaster at bayonet point. The unfortunate postmaster was walking with a friend on a path above the ocean beach one evening when he encountered Jones who had been posted to sentry duty at St Paul's Hill.<sup>6</sup>

After the outbreak of war, the senior members of the 29th Light Horse, like so many other eager young Australian men, immediately enlisted in the AIF. Jones and the unit's younger members gave the volunteers a send-off party at a café in Bourke Street, Melbourne, where they drank to 'bloody wars and quick promotions'.<sup>7</sup> For some of them, the wish was granted. One wonders, in hindsight, how often Jones and the other survivors from the 29th Light Horse regretted that toast!

## **Enlistment**

Jones himself did not have to wait long to find out about the horrors of early 20th century warfare. Following the example of his older colleagues, he decided to enlist in the AIF in May 1915.<sup>8</sup> In the following month the decision came to fruition and on 5 June 1915, he was found to be medically fit for active service. The rest of Jones' induction was completed on 21 June 1915, when he took the oath, swearing he would 'well and truly serve the Sovereign Lord King in the Australian Imperial Force'.<sup>9</sup>

The attestation papers described George Jones as a motor mechanic, a natural born British subject aged 18 years and 8 months, and a Methodist. His physical characteristics are interesting, because it is the first such description we have of him: he was 5 feet, 7½ inches (171 cm) tall; his chest measurement was 33 inches (84 cm) and expanded to 36 inches (91 cm). He was of fresh complexion with hazel eyes and dark brown hair, and he had four moles on his face—one on his right cheek, two on the left cheek and one on the right side of the nose. Unfortunately

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<sup>6</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p.7.

<sup>7</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'The Today Show – Sir George Jones interview on TV'; transcribed by Peter Helson, December 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'. Two of his older brothers enlisted in the 1st AIF, although Jones makes no mention of them in his autobiography, nor in any other documents made available to the author.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

we cannot gain a complete picture of Jones, as his weight is shown as 10 pounds!—perhaps, it was meant to read 10 stone (63.5 kg). He was inducted into the AIF with the Service Number 1074.<sup>10</sup>

Things now moved quickly for the young recruit and two days later, on 23 June 1915, Jones marched into the training depot at Seymour, north of Melbourne. Jones and his fellow soldiers in training lived a very basic lifestyle. The new recruits undertook basic military training, such as physical training (PT), drill and route marches.<sup>11</sup> They lived in Bell tents—10 men per tent—and the food at the camp consisted of stewed meat, bread and jam, with tea or coffee for breakfast.<sup>12</sup> As a man who enjoyed simple food, Jones most likely would have found these meals bearable. During the time at Seymour the recruits received the exciting news they were waiting for:

We'd only a few weeks training when news came of the sensational Gallipoli landing, and word flashed around the Seymour camp that reinforcements were needed urgently.<sup>13</sup>

Jones, who was seeking action and excitement and had the perception that it would be provided at Gallipoli, quickly volunteered. He was soon back in Melbourne, and embarked aboard the transport ship *Kyarra* with the 9th Light Horse reinforcements. In this unit Jones found himself in the company of tough older men, in their mid-30s, who promptly relieved him of his valuable possessions:

They grabbed a silver brandy flask which I was promptly explaining was a gift from my former employers. A happy oaf was unable to screw the top off it, so he smashed it and threw it into the scuppers.<sup>14</sup>

Actions such as this set the tone as the older men undertook Jones' military education. As we shall see, Jones learned their style of military behaviour quickly. When the ship arrived in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), all shore leave for the

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 8. The Australian Army still maintains a large base in the vicinity of Seymour at Puckapunyal.

<sup>13</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

soldiers was forbidden. Ignoring the ban, Jones and a few of his comrades climbed through a porthole and explored the city.<sup>15</sup>

The ship sailed on to Suez, and the 9th Light Horse, after disembarking, boarded trains to carry them to the Heliopolis race course, where their horses awaited them in the care of Egyptian grooms. Outside the training regime, Jones used his spare time to take in the tourist attractions of Cairo and Heliopolis including the Pyramids and the Sphinx.<sup>16</sup>

Jones was under the impression that the Australian troops were held in some sort of awe in Cairo, because of the ‘Battle of the Wazza.’<sup>17</sup> Even though the ‘Battle’ had been fought a few months prior to his arrival, Jones became involved in a few violent scenes himself. On one occasion he broke up a fight between two Egyptian women. One termagant held the other by the hair as she beat her opponent’s head into a stone wall. Jones got no thanks for his intervention, neither from the belligerents nor the spectators, as he had interrupted the latter group’s entertainment!<sup>18</sup> On another occasion, George Jones and fellow Light Horse trooper, Herbert Potter, managed to evade a group of hostile Egyptians in the El Muski district, north-east of Cairo.<sup>19</sup>

## **Gallipoli**<sup>20</sup>

Jones and his comrades were finally given the opportunity to see the action at Gallipoli for which they had so eagerly volunteered, many months earlier:

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> K. Fewster, ‘The Wazza Riots, 1915’, in *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 4, April 1984, pp. 47–53. The ‘Battle’ was the name given to two riots that broke out in the Wazza district of Cairo in 1915—the first in early April and the second in late July. The riots were the result of several problems being experienced by Cairo-based Australian and New Zealand soldiers, including: being frequently robbed by the Egyptians; being sold vile tasting, poor quality alcohol; and contracting sexually transmitted diseases from prostitutes working in the brothels located in that part of Cairo; together with the troops desire to demonstrate their general contempt for the Egyptians and their dissatisfaction with the authoritarian Army lifestyle.

<sup>18</sup> Jones papers, ‘War Experience from 1915 to 1918’.

<sup>19</sup> Jones papers, file titled ‘Congratulatory Messages for Air Vice Marshal Jones CBE, DFC on Appointment to Chief of Air Staff on 5.5.42’, letter to George Jones from Herbert Potter of Patho West, Vic., 10 May 1942.

<sup>20</sup> Accounts of the Gallipoli campaign have appeared in numerous histories of World War I. It would serve no purpose to retell this story. Rather, certain incidents have been selected because they impacted on George Jones’ life.



Then came September when a thousand of us poured into the Cunard liner 'Franconia' and sailed for Lemnos Island, where we trans-shipped to a horrible little tub of a steamer, grandiloquently called the 'Sicilian Prince'.<sup>21</sup>

The ship arrived off Gallipoli but the troops were kept aboard until midnight when they were taken ashore by barge. They then were marched to Rhododendron Ridge on the front line. Jones contradicts himself several times in his descriptions of life at Gallipoli, especially in regard to the level of hostilities. He noted his new accommodation arrangements as 'here I was introduced to my home for the next three months. It was a hole in the ground.' It was in this hole that George Jones would spend his 19th birthday. He shared the hole with another soldier named Bill Baker, whom Jones noted weighed 13 stone (82.5 kg). During the final four months of the campaign, Jones claimed that there was no heavy fighting at Gallipoli. Instead, the conflict was maintained by snipers on both sides taking shots at their enemy while Australian troop movements were confined to scouting and patrols.<sup>22</sup>

Light Horse personnel were among those sent out on nocturnal scouting and raiding patrols from Rhododendron Ridge, and they frequently encountered their Turkish counterparts in combat. Jones participated in these patrols and later noted that 'we captured the only Turk I saw taken on Rhododendron Ridge, having had some disagreement with his own people, the capture was not difficult.' Gradually the life in the hole on the Ridge settled into a routine and despite his earlier claim about the absence of heavy fighting, Jones claimed 'Stand-to every morning and evening led to a swap of rifle fire and grenades along the whole front'.<sup>23</sup>

The discomfort and danger, which impacted on all aspects of life for the troops at Gallipoli, has been well documented. Nevertheless, it should be noted that Gallipoli was unique among the World War I battlefields because there was no safe rear area. Even in a rest area dugout or swimming in the sea, a soldier could still be killed by enemy fire.<sup>24</sup> One Australian officer wrote that the ANZAC troops lived entirely underground and the slightest movement on their part immediately brought fire from Turkish snipers, whose trenches were, in some places, only three metres away and well fortified with sandbags.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>22</sup> C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918, Volume II, The Story of ANZAC from 4 May 1915 to The Evacuation*, Angus and Robertson Ltd, Sydney, NSW, 1924, p. 811.

<sup>23</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>24</sup> Nigel Steel and Peter Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, Macmillan, London, 1994, p. 334.

<sup>25</sup> George F. and Edmée M. Langley, *Sand, Sweat and Camels*, Lowden Publishing Co., Kilmore,

Another officer made a comment that sums up how the battlefield was for Jones and hundreds of other Australians: 'Our deprivations were hard when compared to other theatres of war'. For the first time for many of them, the troops were separated from familiar surroundings. There were no homes to go to, no women, no pubs, no canteens and no places of entertainment—'nothing to take our mind off the dead all around us'. The food was monotonous and it was impossible to vary it. Bully beef together with the lack of green vegetables did little to assist the troops, either mentally or physically. There was a rum ration that was doled out at long intervals, which was too infrequent to break the routine of milkless tea and the uninspiring food.<sup>26</sup>

Jones' experience of the discomforts and danger was no different to that endured by other soldiers:

We fought on Bully Beef ... and hard army biscuits, with the occasional luxury of watery boiled rice and pieces of doughy bread.<sup>27</sup>

Even worse than the poor and inadequate food was the continual shortage of water. There were few wells at Gallipoli, so the troops were dependent on a supply shipped over from Egypt,<sup>28</sup> which was strictly rationed and Jones commented:

The two-pints a day water ration for each man meant that nobody wasted it on washing. As a result, we all became infected with lice, and a favourite pastime was to sit about in sunny places, picking the lice out of a singlet. My partner in the hole, Bill Baker devoted long, patient hours to this occupation.<sup>29</sup>

The greatest curse to the troops, however, was the flies—'worse than the Turks'.<sup>30</sup> During the summer months there was no respite from the swarms of the pests, which bred on the dead bodies, in the primitive latrines and on any other garbage that happened to litter the battlefield. The combination of the poor food and flies, bodies and garbage, resulted in the outbreak and spread of the debilitating

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Vic., 1976, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Langley, *Sand, Sweat and Camels*, p. 17.

<sup>27</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>28</sup> Steel and Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, pp. 308–309.

<sup>29</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>30</sup> Langley, *Sand, Sweat and Camels*, p. 17.

disease of dysentery, which affected almost everyone who set foot on the Gallipoli Peninsula.<sup>31</sup>

Apart from the morning and evening exchanges of fire, life in the trenches was miserable, uncomfortable and boring. In addition to the combat patrols, Jones had the occasional opportunity to leave his accommodation and go the rear areas because he was trusted with the task of bringing up the rum issue.<sup>32</sup> As a result of his Methodist upbringing, George Jones, throughout his life, was never a heavy drinker and, in this instance, was the person most trusted to deliver the ration in its entirety to the troops, without having sampled any himself.

To add to the soldier's misery, there was the claustrophobic confinement of semi-underground living. For the men in dugouts or trenches, the only views of the outside world were to look up at the sky, or to use a primitive periscope to look at the enemy positions and, as Jones noted, 'troops were in the habit of bobbing their heads up to look over the trenches at enemy activity'. This was a risky practice at the best of times because of Turkish sniper fire. As winter set in and the first snow fell in early November 1915, the practice became even more hazardous as the soldier's heads became highlighted against the white background, thus presenting a better target and leading to tragic consequences. Bill Baker did not realise that snow made a perfect background for the enemy and on 28 November he looked out from the hole and had the top of his head shot off by a Turkish machine-gunner.<sup>33</sup>

The death of his friend had a marked effect on Jones. This was the first recorded instance of combat trauma that he witnessed<sup>34</sup> and, given his comments about moving Baker's heavy body, it would appear he suffered from some form of operational stress as a result of the incident, a condition that remained with him for the rest of his life:

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<sup>31</sup> Steel and Hart, *Defeat at Gallipoli*, p. 315.

<sup>32</sup> Jones papers, 'My Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and England'.

<sup>33</sup> Jones papers, 'My Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and England' and 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 10. The Australian War Memorial Roll of Honour records show Trooper William Albert Baker (age 35) of the 9th Australian Light Horse to have been killed in action on 28 November 1915, [http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll\\_of\\_honour/person.asp?p=580158](http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/roll_of_honour/person.asp?p=580158), accessed 3 August 2009.

<sup>34</sup> It is not recorded whether Jones witnessed members of his raiding patrols being killed or injured. Nor is it mentioned whether he or any of his comrades killed enemy soldiers during these nocturnal activities.

Another young fellow (whose name I forget) and I had to carry him towards the beach, up and down hills in the snow and the mud. When he rolled off the stretcher, we laughed hysterically and rolled him back on again. It indicates the state of our mind at the time.<sup>35</sup>

We should now consider why Jones was affected by his experiences at Gallipoli.

### **Operational Stress**

Operational stress is a term which encompasses an array of effects caused by the stresses of military operations and refers to the temporary or lasting psychological upset causing a marked reduction in an individual's ability to function effectively. Forms of operational stress include battle fatigue, battle shock, and critical incident stress. In the past, other terms were used to describe operational stress, including shell shock, war neurosis, neuropsychiatric and combat exhaustion. In more recent times, forms of operational stress have been identified as transient stress response, acute stress disorder and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Operational stress may be a normal reaction to a very abnormal situation. It does not constitute a psychiatric illness, although it may become one, in the form of depression, anxiety or psychosis. The source of the stress, the operational environment, includes elements such as actual combat, humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, exposure to displaced persons camps, massacre sites and major accidents. Stress in these environments can arise from acute sources, including combat or dealing with bodies, or from chronic sources such as stress that arises after a prolonged separation from family or living in isolated areas with the same people for long periods.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the above, other elements add to the likelihood of a person suffering from operational stress. The environment in which the operation is being conducted is always a source of stress. Mental and physical exhaustion may be caused by darkness, cold, wet weather, wind, noise, heat or excessive exposure to the sun. Troops may suffer anxiety before combat, from contemplating the forthcoming action and imagining the worst case scenarios (such as the strength of the enemy or the possibility of being killed or injured). In addition, sustained or unexpected

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<sup>35</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>36</sup> Surgeon General Australian Defence Force, Australian Defence Force Publication 714—Operational Stress Management, Defence Publishing and Visual Communications, Canberra, 1997, pp. 1-1 and 1-2.

bombardment or attack, or observing comrades being killed or injured, can have a devastating effect on the mind.<sup>37</sup>

Jones encountered many of these unfavourable elements. He was away from home, living in a confined space with another soldier, whom he saw being killed. Unfortunately, the discomforts of Gallipoli and Baker's death were only the start. As we shall see in later chapters, Jones encountered other incidents of trauma and, as a result, was to suffer from this stress for most of his life. The stress caused, inter alia, headaches and nightmares. At first he thought the headaches he suffered at the end of World War I were the result of too much alcohol consumed during victory celebrations but later in life he determined there was a more realistic solution:

I'm quite certain they were due to long recurring periods of exposure to terror. This is a serious conclusion reached after reading some of the findings of modern psychology. There is a firm scientific basis for this belief.<sup>38</sup>

### **Evacuation from Gallipoli**

A short time after the incident with Baker, Jones himself was taken sick, suffering from yellow jaundice and dysentery at the same time, 'a most unpleasant combination',<sup>39</sup> and on 1 December 1915, he was moved to a casualty clearing station on the beach while he tried to recover.<sup>40</sup> Jaundice takes the form of a yellowness of the skin and eyes caused by an excess of bile pigment. While not a disease itself, jaundice is a symptom of a number of different diseases and disorders of the liver, gall bladder and blood.<sup>41</sup> The jaundice stayed with him for a long time and as a result of the effects of it on his skin he acquired the nickname 'Yellow Jones' in his early days with the RAAF.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 2-4 and 2-5.

<sup>38</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>39</sup> Jones papers, 'My Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and England'.

<sup>40</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>41</sup> Benjamin F. Miller and Claire Brackman Keane, *Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine and Nursing*, WB Saunders Company, Philadelphia, PA, 1973, p. 505.

<sup>42</sup> In the discussion following presentation of a paper titled 'RAAF Operational Commanders', by Dr Alan Stephens at the 1993 RAAF History Conference, Wing Commander R.M. Hanstein commented 'as a young officer we had a nickname for him of Yellow Jones'. See Alan Stephens (ed.), *The RAAF in the Southwest Pacific Area 1942–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1993 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 14 October 1993*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra,

While Jones and his comrades were enduring the hardships of combat, the Allied commanders were having second thoughts about the possibilities of success at Gallipoli. Their view of the strategic situation was that the fighting had developed into a stalemate, with 14 Turkish divisions lined up against a similar number of Allied divisions along the tiny peninsula while, in some circles, the expedition was beginning to be recognised as a failure. In Britain there had been calls from the Dardanelles Committee of the War Council for the evacuation of the Allied troops from the area. By November 1915 these calls had become overwhelming.

In response, Lord Kitchener (the British Minister for War) conducted a personal on-site inspection and was persuaded by the local Allied commander, General Sir Charles Monro, that evacuation was inevitable.<sup>43</sup> Kitchener, accompanied by General Birdwood, made an inspection tour of the ANZAC trenches. Jones, who observed the tour, was most impressed by their uniforms and even more in awe of 'the great array of ribbons that they wore.'<sup>44</sup> Kitchener became convinced of the futility of continuing the campaign and the decision was made to evacuate the peninsula. While Jones commented frivolously, 'They didn't consult me about this—I was just a humble trooper at the time,'<sup>45</sup> he was very eager to leave the miserable place. By 10 December 1915 it became clear to Jones and his comrades that something important was about to begin:

We were issued with 150 rounds of extra ammunition. Then, after setting booby traps, on the night of December 12, we were marched to the beach to embark on a small troop ship standing a few miles offshore. When dawn broke I could just see the outline of the Gallipoli Peninsula receding in the distance. Never have I been more relieved than I was that day.<sup>46</sup>

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1993, p. 49. Mr Tom Russell advised that he suspected the nickname 'Yellow Jones' came from a medical condition, not from any lack of courage; interview with Mr Tom Russell of Miranda, NSW, 9 December 1999. Sir Richard Kingsland also mentioned the nickname and advised that Jones had a sallow complexion; interview with Sir Richard Kingsland of Campbell, ACT, 12 December 1999.

<sup>43</sup> John Keegan, *The First World War*, Hutchinson, London, 1998, pp. 267–268.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* Bad memories of Gallipoli remained with Jones for the rest of his life. Late in his life he was asked to accompany a party of veterans on a tour of the Gallipoli Peninsula. He refused, angrily claiming that he never wanted to see the place again. Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 16 June 2000; and interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton of Beaumaris, Vic., 24 April 2001.

## *From Camels to Camels*

After the evacuation from Gallipoli the Light Horse units moved straight from their sea transport back to their horse lines in Egypt. The troopers happily handed in their infantry packs and were reissued with their riding equipment.<sup>1</sup> George Jones, was again part of a mounted Light Horse unit as the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, together with the 9th, 10th and 11th Regiments returned to their horses at the Heliopolis racecourse and ‘mounted drill and manoeuvres shattered the solemn stillness of the desert again.’<sup>2</sup>

This stay in Egypt was to be another unpleasant time for Jones as he again suffered from a couple of health problems. First, on 8 January 1916, he found himself in No 2 Auxiliary Hospital in Heliopolis, for a week, with another bout of jaundice. The second illness was about a month later, on 28 February, when he was admitted to No 1 Auxiliary Hospital in Cairo with influenza.<sup>3</sup> He was discharged on 12 March and sent to the Ras El Tin convalescent depot at Alexandria.<sup>4</sup> Six weeks later he was still very sick and was given the opportunity to return to Australia. He refused as a matter of principal, because he actually thought the medical people suspected he was malingering.<sup>5</sup> Jones was fit enough to be discharged from Ras El Tin on 22 March 1916. He now had to find some form of gainful employment and this quest led him to work with some of the most difficult animals he was ever to encounter.

### **The Imperial Camel Corps**

Camels became a practical form of transport for the British Army campaigning in the Middle East during World War I. The British Army formed the first companies of the Imperial Camel Corps (ICC) and, to train soldiers to handle these unfriendly animals, the disused camel riding school at Abbassia, near Cairo, was reactivated in

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<sup>1</sup> H.S. Gullett, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VII, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914–1918*, University of Queensland Press in association with the Australian War Memorial, St Lucia, Qld, 1984, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Jones papers, ‘War Experience from 1915 to 1918.’

<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Form Letter H.M. W. 41504 to Mrs J. Jones, signed by Captain J.M. Lean, Base Records Office, AIF, Melbourne, 9 March 1916.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>5</sup> Jones papers, ‘War Experience from 1915 to 1918.’

January 1916. This initiative was motivated by a decision to send a small number of companies of camel-mounted troops against the Senussi tribesmen, in the western desert.<sup>6</sup> Before the campaign could begin, the Army needed soldiers capable of handling camels. In order to build up numbers of appropriately trained personnel in the newly formed Corps, four companies of troops from the 1st and 2nd Australian Infantry Divisions were sent to the Abbassia school.<sup>7</sup>

Most Australian troops in the Middle East were keen to proceed to the fighting in France and were reluctant to do anything that would impede their chance to fulfil this desire, including joining the Imperial Camel Corps. To overcome the shortage of volunteers, battalion commanders found a way of selecting personnel for the Corps, by discarding ‘a number whose association with the infantry was not looked upon as satisfactory’ from the ranks of their own units. Thus, the soldiers assigned to the camel units usually lacked enthusiasm. To add to their unhappy situation, they found the camels to be strange, difficult and sometimes dangerous animals to manage.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike some of the other personnel, Jones was neither ‘press-ganged’ nor coerced into the Camel Corps. He volunteered at a time when service with the unit seemed to be a better option than his present posting. Having become separated from the Light Horse, he was sent to a ‘details’ camp at Tel-el-Kebir on 18 April 1916.<sup>9</sup> It was an inhospitable site, located in the desert between Cairo and the Suez Canal and was subject to all manner of climatic extremes—it was unbearably hot during the day, freezing cold at night and subject to dust storms. Boredom was a real problem and to overcome it Jones started to attend an NCO training course.<sup>10</sup> After three months, he was heartily sick of the place and when he had a chance to move to

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<sup>6</sup> On 14 November 1915, the Senussi tribesmen in Italian Libya rose up in a revolt against the Allies. The Senussi were supported by the Turks and British troops were sent to fight them, but the tribesmen, using the desert as their hiding place, continued as a cause of aggravation to the Allies. The revolt, which continued into the following year, was a cunning piece of Turkish planning as it tied down 30 000 Allied troops (and the materiel necessary to support them), who could have been deployed to another part of the campaign. See Martin Gilbert, *First World War*, Harper Collins, London, 1995, pp. 210 and 236.

<sup>7</sup> Gullett, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VII, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914–1918*, p. 211.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>10</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 11.



the Camel Corps he grasped it.<sup>11</sup> Jones joined his new unit on 15 July 1916 and 10 days later he was sent to Abbassia for training with 13 Squadron, Imperial Camel Corps.<sup>12</sup>

Jones was one of the many soldiers who found the camel a difficult beast to manage. His personal mount was a particularly ugly animal, which was forever attacking him, 'from either end'. Finally, the camel succeeded in publicly embarrassing him while 13 Squadron was on parade. The camel threw Jones and left the parade at full gallop, with Jones still hanging on to the reins and bouncing off the parade ground's surface at every fourth step.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, his camel handling abilities must have made an impression because within two months of joining the Camel Corps` he was made a Temporary Corporal.<sup>14</sup>

### **Jones Joins the Australian Flying Corps**

A chance meeting with an old friend gave Jones an opportunity to bid farewell to his vicious camel. While at Abbassia, Jones met, 'Nugget' Balfour in a canteen.<sup>15</sup> Balfour used to visit Samuel Jones' motor repair shop in Fitzroy before the war and he and George had become friends. Now Balfour himself was working as a mechanic, with 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps (AFC).<sup>16</sup> During the unexpected reunion, Balfour asked Jones, 'Why don't you get into the Australian Flying Corps, like me?'<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>12</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>13</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'Sir George Jones, Funeral Service', transcribed by Peter Helson on 6 May 2002.

<sup>14</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>15</sup> 1st Class Air Mechanic (1/AM) Albert 'Nugget' Balfour enlisted on 17 August 1915 and joined 1 Squadron, AFC with the original contingent in January 1916. He was wounded in the leg by sniper fire at a Bedouin village near Mejdal, Palestine in December 1917 but survived the war and returned to Australia in March 1919. Mark Lax (ed.), *One Airman's War: Aircraft Mechanic Joe Bull's Personal Diaries 1916–1919*, Banner Books, Maryborough, Qld, 1997, p. 89 and 163.

<sup>16</sup> No 1 Squadron left Melbourne in March 1916 for Service in the Middle East. On arrival in Egypt in April, the Squadron was placed under the command of the British who re-numbered it 67 Squadron. The Australians who continued to refer to themselves as 1 Squadron in all but official paperwork resented the renumbering. As a partial compromise the unit was referred to as No 67 (Australian) Squadron for most of 1917 and early 1918. Finally, the unit was officially renumbered No 1 Squadron, AFC on 6 February 1918. See Lax, *One Airman's War*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> M. Ryan, 'The bush kid who reached for the sky', in *Sunday Press*, 20 January 1985, p. 21.

The conversation with Balfour was to be a turning point in George Jones' life. His interest in aviation was sufficiently aroused so that when, a few months later, invitations to apply to join the AFC were published in Routine Orders, he immediately applied. His application was forwarded through the Commanding Officer of the Imperial Camel Corps, Colonel N.M. Smith, VC. After receiving the application, Smith conducted an informal trade test to gauge Jones' mechanical ability. He asked Jones' advice on problems he was experiencing with his car. Jones provided answers, hoping that he succeeded in convincing the Colonel he knew as much about motor vehicles as he did about camels.<sup>18</sup> Not surprisingly, Jones' knowledge of motor vehicles was greater than his knowledge of camels and Smith approved the application. Jones' decision raised questions among his Camel Corps colleagues, who queried why he would want to transfer when it would be accompanied by the loss of a Corporal's rank and his pay would return to the rank level of a Private. Jones, however, did not find anything especially exalting about being a Corporal.<sup>19</sup>

However, we can look at Jones' decision more logically than a just a desire to change Corps. It seems reasonable that, as a motor mechanic with a considerable interest in machinery and internal combustion engines, he would be attracted to the AFC, as it was a Corps that predominately depended on technology and mechanisation to carry out its business. He had spent several years working with engines and, as a result, was the type of person that the embryonic air forces world-wide were recruiting into their ranks. Working with aircraft and aircraft engines would expand his knowledge and expertise and would benefit him when it came to postwar employment. There is also another issue to consider. As a Light Horse trooper, Jones had seen land warfare close up at Gallipoli and it had no appeal to him. There was none of the glamour that he and his fellow troopers were looking forward to before they left Melbourne. Instead he had witnessed the unproductive trench warfare stalemate at Gallipoli; the discomfort of living in a trench; climatic extremes; having his body continually bitten by lice; and the trauma of close-up death, which would trouble him for the rest of his life. He may well have had the idea that service with the AFC, on airfields away from the front lines, would remove him from the horror and grief of land warfare but would still allow him to contribute to the war effort, using his natural and acquired skills and abilities to their best value. In all, Jones made a sensible decision.

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<sup>18</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

Regardless of the opinions of his comrades Jones transferred from the Camel Corps to the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) – Australian Wing on 26 October 1916.<sup>20</sup> His first posting was the following day when he was attached to 67 (Australian) Squadron to undertake a trade test. At that time, 67 Squadron was commanded by Major T.F. Rutledge<sup>21</sup> and was based at Kantara—a town alongside the Suez Canal. Jones' capabilities and skills were demonstrated in the trade test and in early December he was posted to the unit (better known as No 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps), as a 2nd Class Air Mechanic (2/AM).<sup>22</sup> In the Squadron he undertook maintenance work on B.E.2 and Martinsyde aircraft.<sup>23</sup>

It was during his short time with 67 Squadron that Jones first met Richard Williams. The latter was an officer with a somewhat puritanical disposition—he 'took his profession very seriously, he was a non-drinker, non-smoker, and non-swearer.'<sup>24</sup> Jones' use of profane language while working on an aircraft did not mark an auspicious beginning to their acquaintance:

I was helping to install an engine in a BE2e, and working at night by electric light. For some time sandflies had been getting in my eyes, and I finally called them 'bloody bastards'. I had no idea there was an audience. Williams, standing close by, reprimanded me so severely it seemed I would be expelled from the Flying Corps. He was at that time much more narrow in his views than he later became, but I heard on good authority he was thinking hard whether it would not be a good thing to get rid of me.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Statement of Service. On that same day Jones was struck off strength with the Imperial Camel Corps and reverted to his permanent rank of Trooper.

<sup>21</sup> Lax, *One Airman's War*, p. 49. Captain Richard Williams was at this time commander of 'C' Flight, 1 Squadron. Rutledge was posted back to the UK on 22 May 1917 and Williams was promoted to Major and appointed Commanding Officer.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>23</sup> Jones papers, 'My Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and England'.

<sup>24</sup> Roger Hunt, *Australian Air Aces*, Horwitz Publications, Sydney, NSW, 1962, p. 65; and D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', in *Over the Front*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1992, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'. One wonders, however, how Williams expected a young motor mechanic from 'the bush' to speak when he was being harassed by insects.

Shortly after Jones was transferred to another unit—No 68 Squadron (later to become 2 Squadron, AFC). He suspected the sandflies incident ‘led to my transfer to No 2; he [Williams] probably didn’t want my kind in his squadron.’<sup>26</sup>

Jones’ new unit was formed at Kantara, Egypt on 20 September 1916. The majority of its personnel were drawn from Australian units in the region—No 67 Squadron and the AIF’s Light Horse Regiments, and a few others were sent from Melbourne. The Squadron Commanding Officer was Captain (later Major) Oswald ‘Toby’ Watt, who, at this point in time, was the most experienced Australian combat pilot, having flown with the French *Service d’Aviation Militaire* since the outbreak of the war.<sup>27</sup> When the Squadron was formed it was without pilots or observers and was sent from Kantara to the UK for training. The aircrew were selected from squadron personnel during the training process.<sup>28</sup>

On Saturday 13 January 1917, 68 Squadron embarked from Alexandria aboard a cattle ship, the *Kingstonian*, which formed part of a convoy destined for Marseilles, France.<sup>29</sup> Accommodation on the voyage was very uncomfortable, as squadron personnel slept in the ship’s cattle stalls. The ship docked in Valetta Harbour, Malta, where personnel were allowed ashore and Jones and his colleagues were taken on a tour of the island’s historical sites.<sup>30</sup> Things were different when the ship reached Marseilles and shore visits were not permitted. Jones and some of the more adventurous squadron members climbed down a rope over the stern and went into the city. Unimpressed with Marseilles, Jones returned to the ship. When challenged by a guard on the gangway, he said that he had gone down to retrieve his hat which had fallen overboard.<sup>31</sup> As it turned out, this was to be costly adventure, as his Statement of Service records the crime of ‘Absent Without Leave’ in Marseilles on 25 January 1917.<sup>32</sup> Jones commented that most personnel managed to return to

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<sup>26</sup> ‘They served with the AFC: From Gallipoli’s trenches to CAS’, in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987. p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> John Bennett, *Highest Traditions: The History of No 2 Squadron*, RAAF, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995, pp. 10–12. Watt had previously commanded ‘B’ Flight of 67 Squadron.

<sup>28</sup> Sir Richard Williams, *These are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> Jones papers, ‘War Experience from 1915 to 1918’.

<sup>31</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Statement of Service and Casualty Form – Active Service.

the ship without being missed but, 'the next morning on parade when asked if we had been ashore, some of us were silly enough to admit it'.<sup>33</sup> Watt fined him and his adventurous colleagues 14 days pay.<sup>34</sup> The following day, squadron personnel officially disembarked at Marseilles and then departed on a miserable three-day rail trip across France during the middle of winter, 1916–1917—one of the coldest on record. The Australians, straight from the desert, were completely unprepared for such cold. They had not been issued with overcoats and some were still dressed in the shorts and shirts that had been their daily outfit at Katana. They travelled in unheated railway boxcars without windows and with straw on the floors to sleep on. It was a horrible journey, with little to eat or drink, as the food and water provided for the men had frozen solid. For Jones, a high point of the trip 'came when the train stopped in a viaduct. On the road below, a French woman with a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread in a basket was persuaded to sell us the lot. We hauled the basket up with a rope, our boot laces joined together'.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of this small refreshment, the inclement weather continued. John Bennett, quoting a squadron member, writes that the night of 27–28 January 1917 was the coldest for 80 years and two British Army soldiers, accompanying the Australian unit, froze to death while on sentry duty.<sup>36</sup>

Things were not much better at the end of the rail journey. At the port of Le Havre, Squadron personnel received their first hot meal since arriving in France and were billeted in tents, which offered little protection against the freezing conditions. From Le Havre they embarked aboard a steam ferry, the *Donegal*, bound for Southampton and Jones wasted no time in climbing down into the engine room to sleep beside the boilers for warmth.<sup>37</sup> In all, the trip from Marseilles to the UK took five days and the AFC personnel disembarked at Southampton on 30 January 1917. Their arrival was part of the establishment of dedicated Australian flying units in the European theatre of the war as Nos 68, 69 and 71 (Australian) Squadrons, RFC all arrived in the UK during the winter of 1916–1917. They were all untrained, unequipped and incompletely formed at the time of their arrival. However, all three

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<sup>33</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Statement of Service. Initially, the punishment was 28 days pay and the recalcitrant personnel must have been grateful when the fine was reduced to 14 days pay after the Squadron reached the UK. See Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>36</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 13.

units soon were strengthened by the attachment, from 67 Squadron, of experienced air and ground crew.<sup>38</sup>

Of the Australian units, Nos 68 and 71 Squadrons were designated as fighter squadrons, while 69 Squadron was formed for aerial reconnaissance. The units were then separated from each other, and 68 Squadron was based at Harlaxton, three kilometres south-west of Grantham in Lincolnshire.<sup>39</sup> Their training for combat now began.

### **Flying Training**

The training regime for the three Australian units was similar. It lasted for eight months and was conducted to familiarise air and ground crew with each aircraft type they would find themselves flying or maintaining in France.

No 68 Squadron began training for its role as a combat unit serving at the front. What this entailed was that those personnel selected to become pilots were taught to fly, while for the ground crew it meant adapting their technical expertise, usually gained before their Army service, to the world of aviation.<sup>40</sup>

By 1917 the RFC's training had become quite specialised. Gone was the practice, common during the early days of the war, of sending aircrew to France and expecting them to pick up combat techniques while flying over the front lines. Instead, squadron personnel learned about the construction of their machine guns, shooting from the air, compass navigation, aerial observation, aerial photography, and artillery spotting. In addition, aircrew received lectures from experienced pilots on a regular basis on contemporary conditions on the Western Front and on the latest trends in air combat.<sup>41</sup>

During its time in training, 2 Squadron flew Horace Farman biplanes and, as a 2nd Class Air Mechanic, Jones was placed in charge of the Gnome engine of one

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<sup>38</sup> F.M. Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War 1914–1918*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1984, p. 175.

<sup>39</sup> John Rawlings, *Fighter Squadrons of the RAF and Their Aircraft*, Crecy Books, Cornwall, UK, 1993, p. 170.

<sup>40</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, pp. 175–176.

of these aircraft.<sup>42</sup> His mechanical skills were quickly recognised and instead of looking after just one engine, Jones was put in charge of a workshop truck and given the job of manufacturing small parts for the squadron's Farman's Gnome engines.<sup>43</sup> By the beginning of April 1917, he had been promoted to 1st Class Air Mechanic (1/AM).<sup>44</sup>

It was not all work for George Jones at Harlaxton. While there, he made friends with an airman from Brisbane, Ray Bould, and the two of them spent a lot of their spare time together:

We spent all our time in Nottingham, cycling the twenty miles [32 kilometres] from Grantham, often meeting two girls we were friendly with. Occasionally we went to London, which I thought was the most glamorous place in the world. On those occasions we stayed in comfortable huts at Aldwych, in the Strand, near where Australia House now stands.<sup>45</sup>

The life of an air mechanic was not enough for Jones. He said in a newspaper interview in the mid 1980s, 'When I saw other ground crew applying for pilot training, I applied too.'<sup>46</sup> Perhaps this is an oversimplification of contemporary events. In his autobiography, he writes that he thought a great deal about pilot training and even then submitted his application at the very last moment. Jones was certainly clever enough when it came to mechanical engineering and he enjoyed his time away from work but it would appear, however, in this instance he was a little shy when it came to promoting his own abilities. Major Watt questioned Jones as to why he had not applied earlier. Jones, mindful of the fact that pilots were automatically commissioned as officers and perhaps aware of the associated social and class implications, confessed, 'I understood one had to be recommended

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<sup>42</sup> The Horace Farman was an aircraft design that was the result of a collaboration of the two Farman brothers, Henry and Maurice. In 1915 the brothers (both established aircraft constructors) pooled their efforts and built an aircraft type that used the best aspects of their existing types. Keith Isaacs, *Military Aircraft of Australia 1909–1918*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1971, p. 25.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 13; Stanley Brogden, 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones: The Early Years', in *Aircraft*, October 1984, p. 40; and National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Australian aviators in World War I oral history project, c. 1975, transcribed by Peter Helson, December 2001.

<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Statement of Service. Date of promotion is shown as 1 April 1917.

<sup>45</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'

<sup>46</sup> M. Ryan, 'The bush kid who reached for the sky', in *Sunday Press*, 20 January 1985, p. 21.

by at least a Colonel, in order to stand a chance.<sup>47</sup> Watt, unimpressed with Jones' answer, replied:

'Do you know what I do with such applications?' He pointed to his wastepaper basket, 'I put them in there,' he said.<sup>48</sup>

Jones' application was successful<sup>49</sup> and, on 6 July 1917, he marched out of 2 Squadron to the Staff Officer for Aviation in London. Now, he became part of an established regime for AFC trainee pilots, whereby after passing medical examinations, they were sent on a six week course at either No 1 School of Military Aeronautics at Reading, or No 2 School of Military Aeronautics at Oxford. Jones was sent to the latter, where as part of the training regime at Queen's College, he attended lectures on the theory of flight, aerial navigation, aero engines and aircraft construction. He also undertook practical subjects, which included aircraft engines, rigging, Morse code (Jones was able to receive and send 10 words per minute<sup>50</sup>), artillery spotting, bombing, compass and map reading.<sup>51</sup> Aircrew trainees also received few lessons in fighter tactics, such as the methods of approach, and attack on two-seater and single-seat aircraft. Despite the effort expended on this training, Jones found that, in combat conditions, the instruction given in England was not always correct, particularly the instruction on how to attack German two-seaters, which was proved to be entirely wrong. In the case of the two-seat aircraft, the students were told to attack from under the tail section.<sup>52</sup> As we shall see, when Jones tried

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<sup>47</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Jones' success with his application may relate to the high rate of attrition the Allies were experiencing with aircrew at the time. During World War I the RFC lost 9378 aircrew, a figure which may seem insignificant when compared with the losses experienced in land combat. When we consider, however, the newness of the Service and the small numbers of personnel involved in combat, this number is as horrific as the losses on the Western Front. At a unit level, some squadron casualty rates reached 98 per cent for an extended period, while the average for all squadrons during the war was 50 per cent. The life expectancy for a new pilot flying operations over the Western Front was three weeks. Mike Hayes, *Angry Skies: Recollections of Australian Combat Fliers*, ABC Books, Sydney, NSW, 2003, p. 84. Even as late as October 1918, Jones (then a Flight Commander) lost five pilots from his flight in one week.

<sup>50</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'.

<sup>51</sup> Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, p. 430.

<sup>52</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.



that approach in combat, it was very unsuccessful and he received return fire from the German gunner.

In 1917, in order to gain his wings, a student pilot needed to have accumulated 20 hours solo flying, to have undertaken a landing without power from 8000 feet and to have qualified in bombing and aerial photography tests, as well as the required technical subjects.<sup>53</sup> In addition, there was another side to a pilot's life. Jones was to become accustomed to, 'various other subjects essential for an air force officer'.<sup>54</sup> 'I learned to play tennis and to go punting on the river and generally to live like a gentleman.'<sup>55</sup> 'Learning to behave like a "gentleman" was a totally new way of life for me.'<sup>56</sup> No doubt, the boy from rural Victoria enjoyed the new lifestyle. From now on, when he visited London he was able to stay at the Royal Automobile Club in Pall Mall instead of the huts in the Strand.<sup>57</sup>

On 31 August 1917, three months after leaving Harlaxton, Jones commenced flying training at the RFC base at Tadcaster in Yorkshire. His first flight was in a Curtiss JN-4 'Jenny' and he was accompanied on the 10-minute flight by an RFC officer, Captain C. Woolvern.<sup>58</sup> His only comment on the flight was that it involved two landings.<sup>59</sup>

During September, Jones continued his flying training and ran up five flights in the Curtiss—accumulating one hour and five minutes flying time.<sup>60</sup> Towards the end of the month, he flew a de Havilland D.H.6 and in the relatively short time of six days had one hour and 35 minutes flying time on the type. George Jones seems to have had some natural skills when it came to flying as he flew his first solo flight with only 110 minutes of dual flying—the average time for most pilots was four hours.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', p. 99.

<sup>54</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 14. Another officer on the same training course was Lieutenant E.F. Pflaum who made further appearances in George Jones' life.

<sup>55</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of The Today Show, Mike Hamilton reporter, transcribed by Peter Helson, 11 December 2000.

<sup>56</sup> 'They served with the AFC: From Gallipoli's trenches to CAS', in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987, p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>58</sup> D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', p. 99.

<sup>59</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* On each flight in the Jenny, another officer accompanied him. Jones added that his first five flights were recorded as right-hand circuits, followed by two left and then another 11 to the right.

<sup>61</sup> 'They served with the AFC: From Gallipoli's trenches to CAS', in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987, p. 4.

Jones made his first solo flights in a D.H.6 and his confidence as a pilot increased. On one of these early flights he writes that he attempted some 'mild aerobatics'. The flying instructor was unimpressed and told him, 'You were lucky you didn't kill yourself!'<sup>62</sup> All told, Jones ran up two hours and 10 minutes on the D.H.6<sup>63</sup> and by the time he left Tadcaster on 30 September 1917, he claimed total flying time of five hours and five minutes (including two hours and 10 minutes solo).<sup>64</sup>

His next posting was 24 days with 61 Squadron, which was based at South Carlton, near Lincoln. Flying training was conducted there with Royal Aircraft Factory B.E.2e and R.E.8 aircraft.<sup>65</sup> Operational squadrons on the Western Front at this time used both these types, so the training for some pilots was a bit more realistic. The R.E.8 was, as the prefix implies, a reconnaissance aircraft, while the primary role of the B.E.2e was that of a two-seat observation and photo reconnaissance aircraft with a secondary role of day and night bomber. The examples used at South Carlton had been fitted with dual controls and were used as trainers.<sup>66</sup> Jones found both types easy to fly<sup>67</sup> and while at South Carlton gained 20 hours flying time on the B.E.2e and five hours on the R.E.8.<sup>68</sup>

Flying from this base seems to have been directed more towards combat operations, as Jones writes that he flew solo photographic and bombing training sorties. He notes the fact that, while these were training flights, exciting things happened:

I went up to 6,000 feet early one morning, and after a while a cloud drifted over the aerodrome below. So I gauged my position and dived down through

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<sup>62</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 15.

<sup>63</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Officers Record Form. p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 15.

<sup>65</sup> B.E. initially stood for Blériot Experimental as the French aviator Louis Blériot was credited with the development of a 'tractor' type aircraft (i.e. the aircraft with the engine and airscrew at the front, pulling the aircraft through the air). The abbreviation was later taken to mean British Experimental. R.E. stood for Reconnaissance Experimental. C.G. Grey (ed.), *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1919: A reprint of the 1919 Edition of All the World's Aircraft*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, Devon, UK, 1969, p. 35a.

<sup>66</sup> Peter Cooksley, BE2 in Action, Squadron/Signal Publications, Carrollton, TX, 1992, p. 33.

<sup>67</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 15.

<sup>68</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'. This form records George Jones accumulated the following flying time on different aircraft types: D.H.6 – 2 hours 10 minutes; B.E. – 20 hours; R.E.8 – 5 hours; Avro – 3 hours; Sopwith Scout – 2 hours; Bristol Scout – 2 hours 30 minutes; and the Sopwith Camel 22 hours.

a cloud to suffer a horrible shock. A paddock was coming straight up to hit me. I got the plane up again and flew round Lincoln for an hour or so trying to find the aerodrome. In one moment of panic I saw the spire of the Lincoln Cathedral flash past my wingtip. Finally, I got down at Waddington aerodrome, just south of Lincoln, my first horrifying experience of being caught in a fog.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, Jones must have felt some pride when he left 61 Squadron with five hours dual and 24 hours solo flying recorded in his log book.

George Jones then found himself back in the company of his fellow countrymen, with 71 Squadron at Castle Bromwich near Birmingham. He marched into this unit on 25 October 1917.<sup>70</sup> The squadron was training pilots to fly Avro 504Ks, Sopwith Pups and Camels. Jones was attached to an Australian instructor named Geere who was 'a very old identity in the Australian Flying Corps'.<sup>71</sup> During their flights together Geere would not allow Jones to use the highly balanced and very sensitive rudder on the Avro 504K. Therefore, without experience in the use of this control, Jones' first solo flight in an Avro (serial number B3178) was not without incident. When Geere sent Jones up for a 25-minute flight, the student, unfamiliar with the rudder, was disoriented by the aircraft's zigzag take-off.<sup>72</sup> Jones 'became somewhat flustered, and at about 100 feet, accidentally pressed the thumb switch on the top of the control lever'.<sup>73</sup> The rotary engine died because the switch was the magneto cut-out. The engine came back to life when Jones released the switch. He quickly recovered the situation and youthful exuberance took over. He completed the flight successfully and finished it off with a few good loops before landing. Geere's only comment was, 'Well, my boy, you've got more guts than skill'.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>70</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Record of Service in the Field.

<sup>71</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton. The Australian War Memorial nominal rolls at <http://www.awm.gov.au/research/people/?Name=geere&ServiceNumber=&Unit=&Conflict=All+conflicts> (accessed 3 August 2009) show the only person with the name Geere to have served in the AFC is Lieutenant Arthur Edward Geere, who was with 1 Squadron, AFC in 1916.

<sup>72</sup> D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', p. 100.

<sup>73</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>74</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 16; Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'; and D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', p.100.

Unfortunately, this was not to be Jones' final training incident. At the fighter training school at Ternhill in Shropshire, he was ordered to perform a loop in a Camel, even though he had not received instruction in this particular manoeuvre on that aircraft type. This was a difficult manoeuvre for an experienced pilot to perform in a Camel. As a result of his inexperience, Jones handled the controls too violently and tore the kingpost off an aileron while making a bad landing. (The kingpost carried the wires, which controlled the aileron and with it missing the aileron was unusable.) Rightly or wrongly, the instructor blamed him for the damage:<sup>75</sup>

My instructor accused me of causing the damage through the landing, which I thought very unfair. He had given me no instruction on how to loop this particular aeroplane, which required the application of hard left rudder before reaching the top of the loop. This looping of a plane is no mere stunt: it's an integral part of fighter training.<sup>76</sup>

In preparation for operational flying, Jones accrued somewhere between 20 and 30 hours in Sopwith Camels prior to being posted to a unit in France. He considered the Camel to be a tricky but delightful aircraft to fly. He found that, while it was not very fast, it was very manoeuvrable. One problem Jones encountered with the aircraft was that, because of the gyroscopic action (due to the rotation of the engine), it was necessary to conduct a right-hand turn by giving the aircraft slight right rudder at the start but then, the moment the turn commenced, he had to switch over to left rudder in order to keep the nose from dropping and putting the aircraft into a spinning nose dive. Of the many aircraft Jones piloted during his long Service career, the Camel and its successor, the Snipe, were the only aircraft he encountered with these peculiarities.<sup>77</sup>

Jones also ran into a bit of trouble while with this training unit. There was a practice amongst the trainee pilots at Ternhill to 'borrow' aircraft to fly to Birmingham for weekends. Jones participated in this practice but was struck by bad luck when, approaching Birmingham, it became too dark for him to read his map. Realising that he would not reach Birmingham in daylight he attempted a landing in a paddock. Unfortunately, he overshot the desired landing ground, his aircraft jumped a hedge

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<sup>75</sup> 'They served with the AFC: From Gallipoli's trenches to CAS', in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987, p. 4.

<sup>76</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>77</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

and turned upside down in a ploughed field. He was not injured and made his way to the nearest residence:

From a nearby farm house I rang Ternhill to report what had happened and arranged for a guard of soldiers to be placed on the aeroplane. I felt free then to go off to Birmingham by bus.

Returning to Ternhill on Monday morning, I expected plenty of trouble, so I was astonished when Colonel Cooper, the C.O. and Captain Latch, the Adjutant had nothing but smiles and sympathy.<sup>78</sup>

Sometime later Jones established the reason for the sympathy. It turned out that the two officers had been engaged in a pleasure trip of their own. They had gone to Birmingham with some women, using an RFC car without permission and unfortunately had been caught in transit by the Provost Marshal. Their explanation for the excursion was simple—they were on their way to investigate Jones' accident!<sup>79</sup>

The next big event for George Jones was the successful completion of the training regime. On his recorded 21st birthday he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Flying Corps.<sup>80</sup> However, he was not sent straight into combat with an Australian squadron. Instead, he remained in England for a couple of months before departing for France.

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<sup>78</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918.'

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Jones papers, 'My Service in Egypt, Gallipoli and England.'



# *I Instantly Lost Interest in the Fighting*

## **No 4 Squadron Australian Flying Corps**

The unit in which Jones would spend most of the remainder of World War I had been formed, on the other side of the world, while he was making his way to Britain. The fourth AFC Squadron (initially known as 71 Squadron, RFC) with Captain A. Lang as its Commanding Officer, was formed at Point Cook, Victoria. It was mobilised on 10 January 1917 and embarked aboard the RMS *Omrah* at Port Melbourne. Squadron personnel received training and instruction, in the form of lectures on aeronautical subjects, throughout the voyage to the UK. The ship arrived at Plymouth on 27 March 1917 and the Squadron's personnel marched into No 6 Camp, Perham Downs on the same day. Seven days later, on 2 April, the unit proceeded to Castle Bromwich airfield, near Birmingham, where it became attached to 25 Wing, RFC. No 71 Squadron would continue to be part of the Wing for the remainder of its time in the UK.<sup>1</sup>

Between May and October 1917, No 71 Squadron received its equipment, which allowed personnel to become engaged in various training regimes. The unit's motor vehicles were received on 20 May. More important to Squadron personnel was the arrival of the first two Avro aircraft on 3 June. The Squadron then began basic flying training, which continued until 15 October, when it started to receive mobilisation equipment and Sopwith Camel aircraft.<sup>2</sup>

On 18 December, the squadron, now under the command of Major W.A. McClaghry<sup>3</sup> and with its full complement of 24 Camels, was finally deployed to France. In January 1918 the unit's title changed to No 4 Squadron, AFC, and the first combat missions were flown. Sopwith Camels flew their first offensive patrols

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> The family name was 'McCloughry', and this is shown in some records (e.g. his original 'Attestation Paper' on enlistment in 1915 and the citation for the award of his DFC in 1919). However, Wilfred Ashton McCloughry changed the spelling of his surname to 'McClaghry' to avoid confusion with his brother, Edgar James McCloughry, who also was an AFC pilot and joined 4 Squadron in mid-1918. In turn, Edgar later changed his surname to 'Kingston-McCloughry'. Both, subsequently, joined the RAF—Wilfred in August 1919 and Edgar in December 1922.

from Bruay on 9 January 1918.<sup>4</sup> During the remainder of the month, when weather permitted, the squadron's main flying activities—apart from training—were escort flights and offensive patrols. A look at the squadron's War Diary reveals the nature of the activities undertaken—on 9 January, four Camels flew escort flights while another four flew an hour and half long offensive patrol. The following day, three offensive patrols—each of four aircraft—were flown.<sup>5</sup> The first German aircraft destroyed in combat by a 4 Squadron aircraft occurred on 24 January when Captain Arthur O'Hara-Wood shot down a D.F.W. two-seater.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, back in the UK, George Jones was posted to 71 Squadron, RFC, at Castle Bromwich on 1 November 1917 to fly Avro 504Ks as well as Sopwith Pups and Camels. He did not travel to France with the squadron's initial deployment because he was still to complete his training. Instead he was sent to the RFC School of Aerial Gunnery at Turnberry in Scotland in December 1917, where, on completing the course of instruction, he passed all examinations for the Lewis and Vickers guns.<sup>7</sup> He was now ready to be posted to France.

A group of new pilots joined 4 Squadron, in France, during January 1918, about six weeks after the unit's initial deployment. Included in their number was Lieutenant George Jones (he was promoted on the 16th of that month). As might be expected, Jones' first flights in France were training ones, to make him familiar with the landmarks on the front between Arras and Armentières, which was the area where 4 Squadron flew the majority of its offensive patrols.<sup>8</sup>

From an examination of the squadron's records, it is noted that Jones had been allocated Camel serial number B2531 and it is the aircraft he flew for the majority of operations during his first few months with the unit. Insofar as aircraft 'ownership' was concerned, he noted that pilots had their own aircraft with its own team of dedicated mechanics, whom he praised (perhaps because he had experience in that area and understood the work they undertook):

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> '4 Squadron', in *Wings*, December 1991, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'

<sup>8</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'; and typed note, 'With No 4 Squadron Australian Flying Corps in France, Belgium and Germany'.



We each had our own machine and it was looked after by personal mechanics who were Bill and Harry and Fred and who would be waiting on whichever paddock we called our aerodrome to see us land. Many of them had a vicarious interest in our performance. Many were adept at getting men out of cockpits in ways, which would minimise aggravation of the injuries.

They were never taught this: they learnt it from experience and they taught each other.

No orders could ever have been enforced to make them do what they did. They would work overnight to get a plane airworthy by dawn under makeshift conditions to be sure their pilot would not miss out on the 'show'.

Perhaps we never gave them the credit they earned, but they were beyond question tradesmen of knowledge and skill, which was close to diploma level in civilian terminology.<sup>9</sup>

Jones flew his first offensive patrol in 'his Camel' on 6 February 1918. The 40-minute flight was led by Captain N.L. Petschler<sup>10</sup> and was flown by four aircraft. The flight was uneventful, apart from the aircraft encountering cloud at 2500 feet.

Jones' time in France started in winter and as the flying was done at altitudes between 10 000 and 18 000 feet, in the open cockpits of the contemporary aircraft, the cold was intense. He found wearing the flying clothes of the day—silk gloves beneath leather gauntlets, fur-lined flying helmets, goggles and fleecy-lined thigh boots—did not provide a great deal of warmth. A consequence of this discomfort he noted was, 'the cold often made us indifferent to the dangers of impending combat.'<sup>11</sup>

George Jones would have to wait a further 10 days before encountering a German aircraft in the air. On 16 February he was part of an escort flight (led by Captain Petschler) for an R.E.8 reconnaissance aircraft. A German two-seater (the type was not specified) was sighted over Vitry. The RFC aircraft dived towards it but the German pilot managed to elude them before they were within range. Five days later Jones was on an offensive patrol near Lille, with three other aircraft, when he became engaged in combat. The 4 Squadron War Diary notes Lieutenants Courtney, Jones, Adams and Couston on offensive patrol attacked six Albatros

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<sup>9</sup> Jones papers, 'Looking Back on the Flying Corps Days'.

<sup>10</sup> The 4 Squadron War Diary records his name as 'Petchler'; however, other records (including his original 'Attestation Paper' on enlistment) clearly show the correct spelling of his name to be 'Petschler'.

<sup>11</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

Scouts near Lille. Jones shot down one, which broke up in the air and crashed. Adams shot down another Albatros, which fell out of control and crashed near Haubourdin.<sup>12</sup>

In the notes he compiled at the end of World War I, Jones described his first air-to-air combat:

Huns were scarce, and I had only seen one or two from a distance until early one morning four of us met four Albatross [sic] Scouts flying at about 12,000 ft. They were about 1,000 ft above us, and therefore had an advantage, but as our leader was eager for a fight, he immediately commenced to attack. The leading E.A. [enemy aircraft] dived on him, and he was forced to spiral downwards to avoid the bullets. I followed this Hun, firing continually and finally getting so close, that I narrowly escaped colliding with him. His machine then dived vertically with the engine full on, and after falling about 2,000 ft, one wing broke away and floated down separately. A few seconds later another of the enemy attacked me from above and behind. I did not know he was there until the rattle of his machine gun reminded me that I might soon share the same fate of the Hun whom I had just fought.<sup>13</sup>

Jones had picked up a few skills during his flying training because he added:

We had been taught at the Training Squadrons, that the best thing to do in a case such as this was a climbing turn. After about two circuits I was relieved of this E.A. by one of our machines, which attacked him from above. I did not see what happened after this, and never found out, as the pilot of this machine was taken prisoner. The leader of our formation met me on the way home, but the other two had disappeared. Later we found out that one of them had had a forced landing on our side of the lines, through engine trouble, and that he had succeeded in shooting down two of the Huns.<sup>14</sup>

In his autobiography Jones describes the combat with the Albatros more vividly, writing that he saw the leader diving on Courtney. He dived on the German, firing his machine guns continuously, and flew so close to him that the German aircraft filled the whole lens of his Aldis gunsight; 'I hit him, and I can see him clearly even now, slumped over his control lever'. The Albatros went into a vertical dive

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<sup>12</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>13</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*

with its engine full on, and then after falling about 1000 feet the right-hand lower wing broke off and floated down separately.<sup>15</sup> Later in life, he would claim that this was his most successful combat engagement,<sup>16</sup> even though he had destroyed an aircraft he considered to be inferior to his own. That is, when making a comparison between fighter aircraft, Jones found the Albatros to have a similar top speed to the Camel, but was nowhere near as manoeuvrable. It could not turn in the same circle and could not dive at high speed.<sup>17</sup>

Jones flew his first ground attack mission on 24 February. The 50-minute, two-aircraft raid (the other pilot was Petschler) fired 200 rounds of ammunition into trenches west of La Bassée from 2000 feet and dropped two 20-pound bombs on La Bassée.<sup>18</sup> One would suspect a raid such as this was carried out with the aim of harassing the Germans rather than causing real damage, as we should question the accuracy of strafing from 2000 feet from an aircraft, which itself, was subject to very active anti-aircraft fire. Another ground attack was flown on 26 February, when four Camels, led by Petschler, fired 700 rounds at the Métallurgique Works, La Bassée, Aubers and Pérenchies.

In between these missions the squadron continued its training routine with practice and gunnery flights each day when weather permitted. Offensive patrols were flown again during early March and many thousands of rounds were fired at ground targets, including transports on roads and moving troops.<sup>19</sup> Jones was involved in most of the unit's operational flying, and the only event out of the ordinary occurred on 15 March when he crashed Camel B2531 near Croiselles while on an offensive patrol.<sup>20</sup> This proved to be quite a hair-raising adventure in itself, as Jones would write shortly after the war:

Four of us had been flying at 17,000 ft for about 1¼ hours, when we saw a formation of six Pfalz Scouts some distance below us. We each singled out

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<sup>15</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, pp. 18–19.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Air Marshal J.W. Newham, AC (Retd) of Church Point, NSW, 27 January 2000. Jones recalled the story of his first air combat in a conversation with Air Marshal Newham during the late 1980s.

<sup>17</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Australian aviators in World War I oral history project, c. 1975, transcribed by Peter Helson, December 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

one of the enemy, and started to attack. I was getting on rather well with my opponent, and thought that I had a good chance of shooting him down, when suddenly my engine stopped. At that moment I was about 6 miles [9.6 kilometres] on the enemies' side of the lines, and about 6,000 ft high. It appeared that the engine had stopped through lack of petrol, so I turned on the tap of the emergency tank, but there must have been a block in the pipe, as the best I could get out of the engine was about half a dozen explosions, at intervals of a few seconds. Luck favoured me, for I should never have got across the lines had the engine stopped completely. As soon as the Hun discovered my inability to carry on with the fight, he came after me, and managed to shoot through one of my flying wires, and make a few holes through the wings.

If he had come closer, and continued firing, he could scarcely have failed to shoot me down, but for some reason, after firing about 200 rounds, he turned and went in the opposite direction.<sup>21</sup>

Jones continued to glide, losing as little height as possible, and finally crashed in a big shell hole about 600 metres on the Allied side of the lines. He had unfastened his seat belt before he landed, so that he would be able to exit from the Camel as quickly as possible, when it appeared likely he would crash in no-man's-land. He had no difficulty in crawling out from the aircraft and getting into a shell hole. After waiting there a few seconds to make sure that no-one was going to shoot at him, Jones crawled back to the Camel, and took out his Very pistol, intending to set the lot on fire if he had made a mistake and landed in the German lines.

Fortunately a group of British soldiers emerged from the trenches and shouted a warning:

'Get down, you're under fire.' I took no notice of them. After the recent happenings I could see no further danger in the present situation. I remember hearing my own voice say, 'Where are they? I can't see them.'<sup>22</sup>

The whole experience turned out to be quite traumatic for Jones. He was confused and suffering from shock. The sense of detachment he felt when back on the ground could well have been a result of him experiencing an acute stress disorder, such as post traumatic stress disorder again.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>22</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Colonel Anthony Cotton, Director of Psychology, Australian Defence Force, 19

The soldiers led Jones to their headquarters where he was given a stiff drink by the general who interviewed him. Overcome by the stress of the event, he then slept for the remainder of the day. That evening, squadron personnel recovered the Camel.<sup>24</sup>

This accident was another stressful combat episode that was to have a permanent effect on Jones. The horrible situation in which he was out of fuel and being chased, without the ability to retaliate, left its mark on him. His nerves were badly shaken and for several months afterwards, when he thought of the incident, his hands would tremble continuously. If he thought about it while having a meal, he could not hold his knife and fork. As soon as the Camel was repaired he immediately took it for a test flight. Unfortunately he was still troubled by the crash and instead of landing at 65 mph [105 km/h] he approached at 120 mph [193 km/h] and ran out of airfield. The aircraft overturned on landing and Jones found himself hanging upside down until squadron personnel dragged the fuselage off him.<sup>25</sup> Fortunately, Jones was able to recognise he had psychological problems and resolved to cure himself of them. In order to continue flying and maintain his mental stability, Jones turned his thinking towards the things he was doing wrong and how to mitigate them. His amateur psychology worked and he gained some form of self-control and continued to fly with the squadron.<sup>26</sup> It is a mark of Jones' determination that he was still able to continue flying and was able to undertake all manner of very difficult tasks during the rest of his life despite being haunted by the memories of his wartime experiences.<sup>27</sup>

### **The March 1918 Offensive**

The final German offensive of World War I began on 21 March 1918. The offensive was planned to bring victory to the German forces on the Western Front. The

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April 2002.

<sup>24</sup> The crash site was very close to the German lines and Jones was placed in considerable danger, being exposed to enemy fire. Yet a recovery crew were sent to the same site to retrieve the damaged aircraft. One assumes that they too were placed in a very hazardous situation as they moved the aircraft. It is possible that they undertook this work frequently with little recognition for the danger they faced. We can hope, after the recovery of the Camel, they too were given a stiff drink and were allowed to sleep for the remainder of the day.

<sup>25</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'; and National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

<sup>26</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Colonel Anthony Cotton, 19 April 2002.

major objectives were to drive the British forces from the Somme and the French forces from the Aisne, and to threaten Paris in a manner similar to the 1914 offensive. The situation was looking positive for the German forces at the start of the offensive. The scenario of a war on two fronts had come to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which put Russia out of the war and freed up large numbers of German troops who could be redeployed to the Western Front. To aid the redeployment, the German railway system had been developed during the previous two years to a point where these troops and their weapons, together with materiel captured in Russia, could be moved rapidly west to the new offensive.<sup>28</sup>

The German offensive had been anticipated by the Allied High Command and plans to counter it included operations by the RFC. As early as 20 January, the RFC field commander, Major General John Salmond, ordered an increase in the construction of landing fields as well as the forward deployment of trucks and trailers to facilitate a retreat. As a means to slow the offensive when it started, Salmond planned to use low-flying aircraft in concentrated attacks on the enemy's infantry and rear echelons as a means of relieving pressure on the Allied troops.

Initially, things did not go well for the Allies. Bombing raids by the RFC prior to the offensive failed to slow the German build-up and, surprisingly, British aerial reconnaissance did not detect any significant activity behind German lines on the evening of 20 March.<sup>29</sup> The Germans also had a natural advantage because the weather was bad for flying during the first two days of the offensive.

In the days immediately following the start of the offensive, the role of many RFC squadrons changed. As it was a matter of urgent necessity to check the German advance, the RFC Headquarters issued orders for all available aircraft to concentrate on direct assistance to troops on the ground. Fighter squadrons devoted their energies to machine-gunning and bombing the advancing German forces, a move which almost suspended the struggle for air superiority. During the eight days between 21 March and 28 March, RFC aircraft fired over one million rounds and dropped over 250 tons of bombs, mostly from low altitude.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Martin Gilbert, *First World War*, Harper Collins, London, 1995, p. 406.

<sup>29</sup> John H. Morrow, Jr, *The Great War in the Air: Military Aviation from 1909 to 1921*, Airlife, Shrewsbury, UK, 1993, p. 311.

<sup>30</sup> Alan Stephens and Brendan O'Loughlin (eds) *The Decisive Factor: Air Power Doctrine by Air Vice-Marshal H.N. Wrigley*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1990, pp. 75–76 and 99.

No 4 Squadron was one of the Allied units deployed to fly ground attack missions, when weather permitted. The Camels tended to operate in groups varying in size from four to 10 aircraft and Jones flew on every mission on the first couple of days. On a typical mission on 23 March, Jones (his second mission for the day) was part of a one hour and 15 minute offensive patrol of 10 Camels. During this flight he reported:

Dived with the Formation on village of Vaux. Saw parties of enemy Infantry and M.T. in village, on roads, and behind hill. Fired about 350 rounds into these troops from heights varying from 1,000 to 700 feet. Infantry scattered in all directions.<sup>31</sup>

Ground attack missions had become of considerable importance to the Allied war effort; as John Bennett notes, on earlier occasions strafing had been used effectively by 2 Squadron, AFC at Cambrai in 1917. Ground attack now turned out to be decisive in preventing a rout of the Allied armies during the March offensive. Later in 1918, when it was the Allies turn to advance, strafing would play a major role in harassing retreating German troops.<sup>32</sup>

The following day (24 March) Jones flew as part of a morning offensive patrol, during which contact was made with a German aircraft. Jones reported, 'Fired about 50 rounds at an enemy 2 seater over Vaux from range of 200 yards. Observe[d] no effect'. He then continued with an attack on German ground forces during which he, 'Fired about 200 rounds into billets around Vaux and also just East of Lens from a height of 3,000 feet'.<sup>33</sup>

The ground attack missions were not one-sided affairs and Jones found the Germans were prepared for air attacks and their anti-aircraft fire became stressful and 'the continuous rattle of their guns in reply to our shooting was very hard to stand'.<sup>34</sup>

Late on 24 March, Lieutenant George Jones was wounded in action. His account of this painful incident forms the introduction to his autobiography.<sup>35</sup> At the time,

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<sup>31</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>32</sup> John Bennett, *Highest Traditions: The History of No 2 Squadron, RAAF*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995, p. 90.

<sup>33</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>34</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>35</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 1–2. Cutlack writes that the AFC aircrew faced greater danger from German ground fire at this time and that German aircraft were not a great threat.

he was flying an escort and reconnaissance mission with fellow Squadron members Courtney, Cobby, Pflaum and Adams. Jones described the incident:

On the 24th March I was sent out in a formation acting as escort to two D.H.4 machines, engaged in photographic work. After they had finished their job, and had turned towards home, a single Albatross [sic] scout dived towards them, but was driven off by another pilot and myself, before it got within range. A few minutes later I turned aside to drop my bombs on a target which I had selected,<sup>36</sup> and had just started to regain my position in the formation, when I heard someone shooting at me. As there were no E.A. on my level, nor above me, it was evident that my assailant was attacking me from below. Before I had time to reply, or even make sure of the position of the enemy, a bullet struck me in the back.<sup>37</sup>

The bullet that hit Jones had been fired from a Pfalz scout.<sup>38</sup> In one account, he wrote the understatement, 'I instantly lost interest in the fighting.'<sup>39</sup> The pain and shock from the injury must have been horrific:

I remember yelling and pushing the control lever forward, and think I must have fallen about 2,000 ft before I could collect my senses sufficiently to think of controlling the machine. The bullet had ripped a big hole in my petrol tank and very soon the petrol was rushing through into the cockpit. Some got through the hole made by the bullet in my Sidcot suit,<sup>40</sup> and scalded my back rather badly.<sup>41</sup>

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Cutlack also notes that George Jones was wounded while returning from the last bombing attack on the evening of 24 March 1918. F.M. Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War 1914–1918*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1984, p. 235. The Squadron War Diary records that the mission took place between 1800 and 1850 hours.

<sup>36</sup> The target Jones had selected was a train, which he knew would be brining troops up to the area.

<sup>37</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>38</sup> E.J. Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, Bruce & Co, Melbourne, Vic., p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>40</sup> The Sidcot suit was a cold resistant flying suit invented during the winter of 1916–17 by the Queensland born aviator, Frederick Sidney Cotton. The suit was widely worn by civilian and military aviators up until the 1950s. John McCarthy, 'Cotton, Frederick Sidney (1894–1969)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Vic., 1996, pp. 198–199.

<sup>41</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.



The injury was a bullet wound in the right side of his back. It entered over the lumbar and exited through his left side. The wound was complicated by the fact that the bullet had first passed through the aircraft's petrol tank. Petrol had leaked from the tank and caused chemical burns to the skin on his back. Although in considerable pain and losing consciousness, he levelled out the Camel and at full throttle flew towards his home airfield. Fortunately for Jones, 'this time the emergency tank worked splendidly, and the engine took me home at 1350 revs.' It was nearly dark and he landed without crashing by sheer instinct, taxied to the hangar, stopped the aircraft and called to a startled mechanic to lift him out.<sup>42</sup>

Jones then embarked on a long path to recovery, which, like his flying training, involved a lot of moving around. On the day of the injury, he was taken to the 6th Casualty Clearing Station. Three days later he was transferred to the 24th Hospital Train. He was then admitted to the 8th Red Cross Hospital on 28 March. Jones remained there until 5 April when he was sent back to Britain and to The London Hospital in Mile End Road.<sup>43</sup> Two days after his arrival in hospital, his friend Jack Wright was carried in on a stretcher, also suffering from a gunshot wound.<sup>44</sup>

On 8 April 1918, the Base Records Office at Victoria Barracks, Melbourne, sent George Jones' mother a letter, which gave her no detail of her son's condition, other than that he had been 'reported wounded':

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<sup>42</sup> 'They served with the AFC: From Gallipoli's trenches to CAS', in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Army Form B 103, Casualty Form – Active Service.

<sup>44</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

B.R. Form No. 9.

**AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**

**BASE RECORDS OFFICE**

**VICTORIA BARRACKS,**

MELBOURNE, 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1918

Dear Madam,

I now beg to advise you that Lieutenant G. Jones has been reported wounded.

His postal address will be:-

Lieutenant G. Jones,  
4th Squadron, Australian Flying Corps,  
Australian Imperial Force,  
Abroad

In the absence of further reports it is to be assumed that satisfactory progress is being maintained, but anything later received will be promptly transmitted, it being clearly understood that if no further advice is forwarded this department has no information to supply.

Yours faithfully,  
J. M. LEAN, Major  
*Officer in Charge, Base Records.*

Replica of letter to George Jones' mother – 8 April 1918<sup>45</sup>

Perhaps her worries and concern were aggravated when a few days later she received, from the same source, some details of her son's injuries:

I now beg to advise you that Lieut. G. Jones, has been admitted to 8th Red Cross Hospital, La Touquet, France, 28/3/18, suffering from gunshot wounds chest, back, burns, severe.<sup>46</sup>

No doubt, Mrs Jones spent a worrying three weeks until she received a further letter dated 2 May, advising that her son was reported 'convalescent'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: B.R. Form No. 9, 8 April 1918

<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: B.R. Form No. 9, 11 April 1918.

<sup>47</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: B.R. Form No. 9, 2 May 1918.

A medical board, conducted on 15 April, found Jones would probably be incapacitated for a further two months and recommended he receive 'further treatment at convalescent home for one month.'<sup>48</sup> The next part of his recovery took place outside hospitals. On 17 April, Jones and Jack Wright arrived at Cobham Hall in Kent, which was being used as a convalescent home for Australian Service members. An initial medical examination at this site found that Jones' wounds were 'about healed and no disability'. The medical report also noted that the patient was 'a little pale.'<sup>49</sup> The stay at Cobham Hall was short as a further medical examination on 25 April, found that the wounds were 'quite healed' and that Jones was fit for convalescence leave.<sup>50</sup>

The three weeks leave was taken up staying with families in other parts of England; 'lots of English people offered us hospitality and Jack and I stayed with families in Surrey and Cornwall with varying degrees of enjoyment.'<sup>51</sup> Jones found that it was sometimes difficult for him to fit in with some of the English households, 'especially where the head of the family insisted on everything being done strictly in accordance with their ideas of conventional behaviour.'<sup>52</sup> Jones provides us with a few examples:

One such person was Sir Walter Napier of Farnham: when I left a door open once he called out 'Do you live in tents in Australia?' He was a retired public servant and a thorough autocrat. But looking back, I recall being quite capable of being irritatingly uncouth in an edgy moment.

The Bazely family of Penzance, which ran a number of small ships and stores, were much more to our liking. Bazely was a down to earth Cornishman, generous and likeable.<sup>53</sup>

Jones was fortunate that he was given sufficient time to recover from the bullet injury but this tranquil time had to come to an end. The only positive aspect was that he was not sent straight back to the combat unit. An RAF Medical Board at

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<sup>48</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Royal Air Force F.S. Form 47: Rough Notes of Medical Officers in reporting the proceedings of a Medical Board, signed by Major F. Muecke, RAMC.

<sup>49</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Army Form I. 1237, Medical Case Sheet.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918.'

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

Hampstead on 14 May recommended that he be given six weeks light duty and nine weeks home service, which took the form of work with the AFC Training Wing.<sup>54</sup> He was instructed to report to 1 Training Wing at Tetbury in Gloucestershire and was then posted to No 8 Training Squadron, an AFC training unit.<sup>55</sup>

Jones spent a short time with 8 Squadron as an instructor. The unit was equipped with 19 aircraft (eight Avros, six Camels and five Sopwith Scouts).<sup>56</sup> At the time Jones was with the unit, students received instruction in basic flying and navigation as well as formation flying and air-to-ground gunnery instruction. As an instructor, Jones flew photographic flights and accumulated 40 hours in Avro 504s. In his spare time, he furthered his education by completing an I.C.S. Machine Drawing and Designing Course.<sup>57</sup>

However, a month and a half later, on 25 July 1918, he was sent to rejoin 4 Squadron at Reclinghem in France. Major W.A. McClaughry requested that Jones and Jack Wright return to the unit. Jones commented, 'It was flattering to think that he needed us so badly.'<sup>58</sup>

## **Return to France**

On his arrival at the new base, Jones found the squadron had become very active:

At this time there was a large amount of flying being done by almost all the Pilots. Besides ordinary O.P.s [offensive patrols] and large formations known as Sweeps, all the more promising Pilots were encouraged to do voluntary patrols in pairs. These patrols always took place early in the morning, the machines leaving the ground before daylight, usually with a special object in view. Some would go after balloons, others would bomb trains, and several were very successful in attacking 2-seaters.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Officers Record Form.

<sup>55</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Record of Service in the Field.

<sup>56</sup> AWM4 8/11/2/ Part 2 – Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries, 1914–18 War, Flying Corps, 8th Training Squadron, Australian Flying Corps – June 1918.

<sup>57</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'

<sup>58</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'

<sup>59</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'

George Jones took to the air on 26 July on a 25-minute practice flight. Two days later he was in combat again as part of an early morning, five-aircraft, offensive patrol, which took off at 0515 hours. The aircraft dropped eight 25-pound bombs on Estaires from 7000 feet. In the evening of that same day, he flew the same Camel as part of a two-aircraft special mission (the other pilot was Captain E.J. McCloughry, DFC—the Commanding Officer’s brother).<sup>60</sup> During this flight two bombs were dropped from 2000 feet on Bac St Maur, which started a small fire, and 250 rounds were fired on motor transport on the Estaires-Merville road. Jones flew offensive patrols for the rest of the month. On 31 July, he was part of a six-aircraft special mission. The squadron’s War Diary records that on this mission at least 30 German aircraft were sighted between La Bassée and Forêt Nieppe and, ‘Lieut. Jones attacked 2 Fokker Biplanes firing about 120 rounds without visible effect.’<sup>61</sup>

The German Army attacked again and broke through the Allied lines, near Amiens, in August 1918. Once again, the offensive kept 4 Squadron continually busy in the ground attack role. ‘Day after day we attacked transports, and along the front line we kept machine gunning and bombing German reinforcements.’ Flying these missions was dangerous because the AFC pilots faced the hazards of ground fire as well as enemy aircraft. ‘Squirring in the cockpit became a habit during the two weeks this blitz lasted. Bullet holes ripping along the wings of my plane often distracted me as Archie got his range.’<sup>62</sup>

### **The Airfield Raids**

The next major events in which Jones took part were the big raids on German airfields at Haubourdin and Lomme. On 16 August, 4 Squadron participated in what was described as, ‘up to that time the largest and most comprehensive bomb raid carried out by British machines in France.’<sup>63</sup> The planned raiding force comprised 80 aircraft from four squadrons—88 Squadron, RAF with Bristol Fighters; 92 Squadron, RAF and 2 Squadron, AFC, both flying S.E.5as (2 Squadron provided 19 S.E.5as for the raid); and 4 Squadron, AFC. Aircraft from the two Australian units each carried four 25-pound Cooper bombs.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Edgar James McCloughry later changed his surname to ‘Kingston-McCloughry’.

<sup>61</sup> Office of Air Force History, Unit War Diary, No 4 Squadron, AFC.

<sup>62</sup> Jones papers, ‘War Experience from 1915 to 1918’. ‘Archie’ was a contemporary term for anti-aircraft fire.

<sup>63</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 25.

<sup>64</sup> *ibid.*, p.26.

Quite obviously, an attack on a German air base by a massed formation of 80 aircraft was intended to be a very clear demonstration of Allied air power. Such raids could have been flown against other targets, but where better to show air strength than on that part of the enemy who would appreciate it most?

The four squadrons comprising the Allied force, each flying in a V formation, rendezvoused at predetermined heights over Reclinghem. Captain Cobby led the 19 aircraft of 4 Squadron across the lines at 7000 feet. The other squadrons followed, each flying at intervals 1000 feet higher than its predecessor. Cobby was a little apprehensive about taking such a large number of aircraft, in one formation, across enemy territory. Even the most indifferent shooting by German anti-aircraft gunners, he reasoned, was sure to bring down some of the Allied aircraft.<sup>65</sup>

As the raid started each of 4 Squadron's aircraft dropped four 25-pound bombs and fired off all machine-gun ammunition on various targets around the airfield.<sup>66</sup> Nearby trains, horse-drawn transport and staff cars were attacked as targets of opportunity by aircraft waiting their turn to attack the airfield.<sup>67</sup>

In Jones' opinion, the raid caused considerable damage:

Pilots carrying phosphorus bombs caused the most damage. At Harbourdin [sic] two sheds full of machines, and two two-seaters standing on the aerodrome, were burnt, and much damage was done to military buildings in the vicinity. One enemy machine, which attempted to leave the ground when the raid commenced, hit a tree and crashed badly. When the Germans working at the place attempted to run away, they were chased and a few killed by machine gun fire. The rest took refuge in a hospital building.<sup>68</sup>

The attack was a great success and the following day the second raid by the wing took place at Lomme airfield. This time 18 Camels from 4 Squadron participated in the raid and dropped 60 bombs from an average height of 150 feet. In addition, 6950 rounds of ammunition were fired into hangars and other targets from 150 feet.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> A.H. Cobby, *High Adventure*, Kookaburra Technical Publications, Dandenong, Vic., 1981, p. 87.

<sup>66</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 77.

<sup>67</sup> Sal Sidoti, *Airbase Operability: A Study in Airbase Survivability and Post-Attack Recovery*, 2nd Edition, Aerospace Centre, Canberra, 2001, p. 11.

<sup>68</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>69</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM4, Roll 133, Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries, 1914–18 War, Flying Corps, No 4 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps.

Three hangars were seen to be burning furiously. A few days after the raid, a German prisoner, who witnessed it, confirmed the destruction of 17 Fokker biplanes.<sup>70</sup>

Jones noted that at Lomme:

a row of hangars believed to be full of Fokker biplanes was set on fire, and this raid was just as successful as the one on the previous day had been, excepting that No 4 Squadron lost one Pilot. It is thought, that, after diving on one of the Forts on the outskirts of Lille, he must have climbed steeply away, thus presenting a good target to the enemy machine gunners on the ground.<sup>71</sup>

Jones' contribution to the raid was noted in the squadron War Diary, which records:

Lieut. G. Jones      Dropped 4/25lb Cooper Bombs on hangars. Two burst in a hangar which was already burning. Fired 200 rounds at hangars, buildings and men on aerodrome from 300 feet.<sup>72</sup>

The attacks were both successful, not only in the immediate destruction they caused but also in their long-term results. At first there was a strong aerial response from the German air force, but by the end of August, the success of the two attacks combined with ongoing German combat losses forced them to move the majority of their airfields to sites east of Lille, thus reducing their ability to contribute to the land battle.<sup>73</sup>

There was no other action of this scale during August 1918 and 4 Squadron spent the remainder of the month flying ground attack missions at the rate of one or two per day.

On the morning of 16 September, Jones and a few of his comrades were involved in another successful air-to-air combat, this time in the vicinity of Frelinghien:

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<sup>70</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences.'

<sup>72</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM4, Roll 133, Australian Imperial Force Unit War Diaries, 1914–18 War, Flying Corps, No 4 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps.

<sup>73</sup> Sidoti, *Airbase Operability*, p. 11.

During an early morning patrol, 3 of us found ourselves cut off from our own side of the lines by an enemy formation consisting of 10 Fokker biplanes, and 5 triplanes. For a few seconds they seemed to be firing at us from all directions, but, thanks to the ease with which a Camel can be manoeuvred, we got nothing worse than a few holes through our wings, and were lucky enough to shoot down one each of the enemy.<sup>74</sup>

This was Jones' third aerial victory and his second Fokker D VII.

Jones' next air combat victory (and his final in a Camel) came early in the morning on 24 September 1918, when he shot down a Halberstadt C aircraft near Lens.<sup>75</sup> Jones and Thornton, another pilot from C Flight, took off in darkness on that September morning, for a pre-dawn interception of a two-seater observation aircraft, 'which had annoyed the infantry on a particular part of the front, at the same hour each morning'.<sup>76</sup> As the Australians flew towards the front lines in half-light they found a two-seat aircraft and flew in for the attack. As they approached, Jones identified the other aircraft as an RFC Armstrong Whitworth and turned away. Thornton pressed on with the attack and 'Both aircraft were last seen firing tracer bullets at each other'.<sup>77</sup> Jones continued to fly along the lines until the German aircraft arrived at the usual time. He attacked from the German side of the line, cutting off the enemy aircraft's escape route. Jones followed the procedure from training school and attacked the Halberstadt under its tail section. This proved to be unsuccessful as he had a stoppage in one of his Vickers guns. The Halberstadt's pilot put on left rudder and turned slightly so that the German gunner fired down on Jones. The Australian was forced to turn away and break off the attack. Jones corrected his gun's stoppage and resumed the attack, this time from above and in front:

The first burst of fire got the Observer, and, as his gun was no longer to be feared, I approached very close from behind their machine, firing about 200 rounds into the Pilot's seat. The enemy then dived vertically with engine full on, striking the ground in the middle of a thick clump of trees.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>75</sup> Christopher Shores, Norman Franks & Russell Guest, *Above the Trenches: A Complete Record of the Fighter Aces and Units of the British Empire Air Forces 1915–1920*, Grub Street, London, 1990, pp. 215–216.

<sup>76</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>77</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>78</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.



At this point, Jones' Camel was becoming low in fuel and he was attracting a considerable amount of anti-aircraft fire. He turned back to the Allied side of the lines at full speed unaware that his own aircraft had been damaged. He was quite disturbed when he discovered the extent of damage. 'On landing I was shaken to see bullet holes clean through the main spars of each lower wing of my aircraft.'<sup>79</sup>

### **Anti-Aircraft Artillery**

Allied pilots, particularly those involved in ground attack missions, ran the gauntlet of German anti-aircraft fire. Everything from rifles and machine guns to specialised weapons, such as early versions of the 88 mm anti-aircraft gun (which gained fame as a dual purpose anti-aircraft/anti-tank gun during World War II) was directed at them. Anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) was nicknamed 'flaming onions' ('because they seemed to come up in a string'<sup>80</sup>) or 'Archie'. Jones noted that the Archie was always 'fairly intense, but after long experience we almost came to disregard it.'<sup>81</sup> Such complacency, however, brought its own danger:

When flying straight for some time on one occasion, I quite forgot this was a dangerous thing to do. When a shell burst a few feet above me, a splinter smashed heavily through the air intake pipe in the cockpit, a few inches from my head. Another struck me in the shin. Neither damage to the aeroplane nor my shin were very serious, but it was a lesson to me.<sup>82</sup>

On 1 October 1918, Nos 2 and 4 Squadrons, AFC, with Nos 88 and 103 Squadrons, RAF moved to Serny (although Jones referred to the base as 'Cerny'). From here, the units' function would be to support the Allied Fifth Army, which had been recently reconstituted and deployed on the northern flank. Jones described some of the more interesting work with which his unit became involved, which was to locate and destroy German two-seat aircraft that were used for artillery spotting. Technology had developed sufficiently to enable the presence of some German aircraft to be detected from their radio transmissions and to allow Allied fighters to be despatched to intercept them.

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<sup>79</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.*

## *The Private Air Marshal*

The Squadron moved to Cerny [sic], and the work known as 'Wireless interception' began. The wireless station situated at the aerodrome could give us the exact location of an enemy machine sending out messages, and in many cases, I have found their information very accurate. On one occasion I failed to shoot down a two-seater, through the glass of my Aldis sight becoming fogged, owing to a leak in the tube.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences.'

# *La Guerre Est Fini!*

## **The Sopwith Snipe**

As the war progressed, the weapons used to fight it improved. This was particularly noticeable in the air war, where aircraft were developed to undertake specified roles, which have remained part of aerospace power doctrine up to the present day. Aircraft were developed to the extent that the technology and industry of the day allowed, so that, during the second half of 1918, a few Allied fighter units began to be equipped with a very advanced type—the Sopwith Snipe.<sup>1</sup> The initial unit to receive the Snipe was 43 Squadron, RAF, which flew its first operational sortie with this aircraft on 23 September 1918.<sup>2</sup> In the middle of October that year, 4 Squadron, AFC, still based at Serny, started to replace its Camels with Snipes. Jones, whose operational flying with Camels now totalled 165 hours, was eager to try the new aircraft and, like other squadron personnel, he spent a few hours learning to fly the Snipe and then he and his comrades started high altitude patrols. The training and patrols proved to be a successful initiative because a few weeks later the Squadron moved to Ennetières and found itself able to engage the new fighters in combat with large numbers of German aircraft.<sup>3</sup>

Jones was full of praise for the new aircraft, stating that 4 Squadron was ‘one of the few squadrons which enjoyed superiority over the Fokker D 7.’<sup>4</sup> When comparing the two Sopwith fighters, Jones found the Snipe to be equally as manoeuvrable as the Camel, about 10 miles per hour [16 km/h] faster and with a better rate of

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<sup>1</sup> In mid 1917, the Sopwith company began design work on a replacement for the Camel. The new aircraft, named Snipe, was, for its day, a large and powerful machine. It was fitted with a Bentley rotary engine, similar to that used in later versions of the Camel. This engine was the BR2, which produced 230 hp and gave the aircraft a top speed of 121 mph. It was armed with two Vickers .303 machine guns. The Snipe was fitted with very advanced features for its day, such as oxygen and electrical heating, as well as navigation lights for night flying. The Snipe had a wingspan of 31 feet 1 inch (9.47 metres), a length of 19 feet 10 inches (6.05 metres) and a height of 8 feet 3 inches (2.51 metres). Its service ceiling was 19 000 feet and it had a flying endurance of three hours. Peter Cooksley, *Sopwith Fighters in Action*, Squadron/Signal Publications, Carrollton, TX, 1991, pp. 40–42.

<sup>2</sup> Cooksley, *Sopwith Fighters in Action*, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, ‘World War I Experiences.’

<sup>4</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, ‘War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918; 7th Course, RAF Staff College, Andover, p. 1.

climb.<sup>5</sup> During his remaining time in Europe, Jones would accumulate 70 hours of operational flying on the Snipe.<sup>6</sup>

### **Final Wartime Operations**

The Allied armies began another offensive on the Western Front in the latter part of 1918. The offensive included the use of air power to support ground operations and during September and October of that year, Nos 2 and 4 Squadrons, AFC joined RAF<sup>7</sup> units in conducting low-level bombing attacks directed at hindering the German withdrawal, which followed the Allied armies breaking through the German lines. Targets specifically selected were associated with transport infrastructure and included road junctions, railway stations and other choke points.<sup>8</sup>

It was also during October that pilots from 4 Squadron were involved in fierce aerial combats in which large numbers of aircraft from both sides fought it out. This type of fighting was something new for the Australian pilots. The reason for the large-scale air combats related back to the ground war where the German Army was withdrawing troops from Belgium and, naturally, was keen to ensure that these movements were not observed by Allied aviators nor hindered by ground attack operations. To accomplish this, large numbers of German fighters were moved to this part of the front and, in an attempt to gain air superiority, engaged the Allied aircraft at every opportunity.

No 4 Squadron first became involved in one of the large-scale combats on 27 October, when an offensive patrol of Snipes encountered a huge formation of German aircraft flying in the vicinity of Tournai. During the ensuing fight, five German aircraft were shot down while the Australian unit suffered no aircraft loss. However, one pilot, 2nd Lieutenant Barkell, was wounded in action and three Snipes became lost, due to a heavy ground mist, on the return to Ennetières.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986, transcribed by Peter Helson, 13 September 2000.

<sup>6</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'

<sup>7</sup> The RAF was formed on 1 April 1918 and RFC squadrons were incorporated into this new Service. See <http://www.raf.mod.uk/history/perardua.cfm>, accessed 3 August 2009.

<sup>8</sup> John Bennett, *Highest Traditions: The History of No 2 Squadron, RAAF*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995, p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> E.J. Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, Bruce

Two days later, Jones took part in a fight on a similar scale, which took place once again in the vicinity of Tournai. An Allied force comprising 4 Squadron's Snipes and RAF two-seaters fought it out with approximately 60 Fokkers. This action started with a fight between a formation led by Jones and a larger group of German aircraft. Jones' formation of three aircraft were flying at 11 000 feet and had started to climb to meet 15 Fokker D VII's above them when they noticed 10 of the German aircraft dive towards the RAF aircraft.<sup>10</sup> Jones turned away to gain height, while the Germans dived on one of the two-seaters. Jones led his formation in on top of the Fokkers.<sup>11</sup>

As Jones' formation dived upon the Germans, they were joined by six more of 4 Squadron's Snipes (led by Lieutenant H.W. Ross). In the meantime, more Fokkers appeared to assist their colleagues. As he dived towards the German aircraft, Jones commenced firing and destroyed two Fokkers in quick succession, one of which crashed north-east of Tournai, while the other burst into flames in midair.<sup>12</sup>

German losses from the engagement were heavy, with 11 aircraft shot down. Things were not totally in the Allies favour, however, as Jones lost another good friend, Lieutenant P.J. Sims, who was described as 'an energetic and courageous pilot, who, during his seven weeks with the 4th A.F.C., had done excellent work, including the destruction of four enemy machines.'<sup>13</sup> Jones' successful combat and the recommendation for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) did not counter the sadness he felt at the loss of Sims, whom he claimed to be one of the bravest men he knew.<sup>14</sup>

There was no let-up from the intense air fighting, and 4 Squadron was back in combat the following day as Jones recounted:

While leading a formation of nine machines over Tournai, I saw, approaching us at a much higher level, a very large formation of the enemy. As our position was decidedly dangerous, I turned away, climbing as quickly as possible, until

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& Co, Melbourne, Vic., p. 33.

<sup>10</sup> F.M. Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps in the Western and Eastern Theatres of War 1914–1918*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1984, pp. 377–378.

<sup>11</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>12</sup> Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, p. 378.

<sup>13</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 34.

<sup>14</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

all our machines were above the main body of the Fokkers. We then turned and attacked. Soon another formation joined the enemy, and one of ours came and joined us. Others kept coming in, until there must have been at least 50 Fokkers, and about 30 British machines engaged. (After considering the reports by other Squadrons on this fight, these numbers are as nearly correct as possible.) No 4 Squadron destroyed eight of the enemy, three of which went down in flames.<sup>15</sup>

George Jones' promotion to Captain came on 4 November 1918. With the promotion came the appointment to Flight Commander of 4 Squadron's B Flight.<sup>16</sup> Jones welcomed the advancement, stating, 'It was impossible to hide my delight with this new responsibility.'<sup>17</sup> At the time of Jones' appointment, C Flight was commanded by his friend, Captain J.W. (Jack) Wright. In his new position, Jones was kept busy as squadron operations continued at the same pace:

From Nov 1st until the armistice, the work consisted mostly of escorting bombing machines on long distance raids. We usually flew at heights ranging from 12,000 to 18,000 ft, and seldom failed to meet a formation of Fokkers, waiting there to attack our bombing machines, if they got the opportunity. The enemy Pilots we encountered on these trips, were very well trained and remained extremely active, up till 2 days before the Armistice.<sup>18</sup>

Coincidentally, on the same date as his promotion, Jones scored his last combat victory. Early in the afternoon he shot down another Fokker D VII near Buissenal.<sup>19</sup> On this occasion, 4 Squadron was escorting a flight of D.H.9s, which had bombed the airfield at Chappelle-à-Wattines, back across the lines, when they engaged a formation of 12 Fokker D VIIIs. In the ensuing fight Jones attacked and destroyed a Fokker that was shooting at a fellow squadron member.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Australia, Personnel Records, World War I, B2455, George Jones, Australian Imperial Force: Record of Officers' Services.

<sup>17</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'. The flying component of the Squadron comprised three Flights (A, B and C); each equipped with eight aircraft.

<sup>18</sup> Jones papers, handwritten notes, 'World War I Experiences'.

<sup>19</sup> Christopher Shores, Norman Franks & Russell Guest, *Above the Trenches: A Complete Record of the Fighter Aces and Units of the British Empire Air Forces 1915–1920*, Grub Street, London, 1990, pp. 215–216. The 4 Squadron War Diary records two different spellings for this town—Buissenal and Buissenial.

<sup>20</sup> F.M. Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1984, pp. 381–383.

On 11 November 1918, Jones and other members of his flight were sitting in their aircraft, preparing to take off, when a woman ran from the chateau they used for accommodation, shouting, '*La guerre est fini!*' Jones and his comrades climbed from their aircraft and, according to his understatement, 'there was no flying done at all that day'. He and a few other officers went into Lille to celebrate the end of the conflict:

... getting progressively more inebriated. Our Squadron Leader W.A. McClaghry,<sup>21</sup> in a gay moment accidentally poked his walking cane through a stained glass window of the Brigade HQ and we were ejected. I spent the rest of the day visiting the various HQs exchanging mutual congratulations.<sup>22</sup>

It would be reasonable to think that the Armistice was celebrated in some manner by all Allied personnel. No 4 Squadron personnel were no exception and continued the frivolities for some time, as the Royal Hotel in Lille (the city was located close to the unit's area of operations) was taken over as an officers' club for the Allied armies and 'the Armistice was celebrated right royally on the evening of November 11th, and several nights ensuing'.<sup>23</sup>

While the Armistice was signed on 11 November 1918, military service did not end for Captain George Jones. He remained with the AFC in continental Europe for a further three months (until February 1919), as 4 Squadron was deployed to Germany.<sup>24</sup>

Jones finished the war with an impressive record. He had spent three years in military service and had risen from Trooper (Private Soldier) to Captain. He had learned to fly, experienced many air combats and had survived aircraft crashes and a serious gunshot wound. As a fighter pilot he was an 'ace', having shot down seven German aircraft, and he was a flight commander. His combat skills had been recognised by recommendation for award of the Distinguished Flying Cross in January 1919, which he received in April of that year. On the Western Front he had accumulated 235 hours on Sopwith Camels and Snipes, and he had flown

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<sup>21</sup> As explained in Chapter 4 (footnote 3), Wilfred McCloughry changed his surname to 'McClaghry' to avoid confusion with his brother. Jones' use of the term 'Squadron Leader' before McClaghry's name in this passage most likely refers to his appointment as the commander of the squadron (not his rank). His rank at the time was Major.

<sup>22</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>23</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 37.

<sup>24</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, 'War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918', p. 1.

150 offensive patrols and 20 bombing raids—all in the space of eight months.<sup>25</sup> The citation for Jones' DFC recognised this commendable record and stated that he was:

A most daring and gallant leader in aerial fighting, in which he destroyed seven enemy aircraft. Captain Jones has always displayed marked ability in all his duties.<sup>26</sup>

### **Fighter Tactics**

Jones had become an experienced fighter pilot and, based on this experience, he developed a few rules and tactics for air combat, which, when put into practice, allowed him to destroy enemy aircraft while simultaneously ensuring his own survival. Jones adopted recognised tactics for formation air fighting, which depended on him, or other pilots flying with him, being fortunate enough to sight the German aircraft first. They would then manoeuvre into a position 'in the sun' (that is, with the sun behind their aircraft, with the aim of becoming invisible due to the light and glare). This move proved to be successful as he commented, 'it's surprising how often you could take them unawares and get in your first attack without them even knowing you were there'. Using these tactics, he and his formation would then dive towards the Germans at the highest possible speed. Each pilot singled out an enemy aircraft and attacked it. This broke the fight into a series of individual combats (known as a 'dogfight'), which usually ended with one aircraft getting into a tight spiral on the tail of the enemy aircraft. Each aircraft would attempt to turn in a smaller circle than the adversary while the pilot of the pursuing aircraft was shooting whenever possible.<sup>27</sup>

There was more to air combat than attacking from the sun, and 10 years after the war's end, while he was a student at the RAF Staff College, Jones was able to write his observations and ideas on fighter combat:

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<sup>25</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'

<sup>26</sup> Supplement to *The London Gazette*, no. 31273, 5 April 1919, p. 4512.

<sup>27</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Australian aviators in World War I oral history project, c. 1975, transcribed by Peter Helson, December 2001.



During my service with No. 4 squadron, I gained a certain amount of experience in most types of operation in which the squadron was engaged and the following are my impressions of certain aspects of these activities, from which I think useful lessons may be learnt.<sup>28</sup>

He noted that, in air-to-air combat, smaller (i.e. three to five aircraft) groups tended to engage each other 'and the engagements which ensued were usually well balanced'. When, in 1918, offensive patrols were flown by large numbers of aircraft (two and sometimes three squadrons) combat was rarely fought with small enemy groups (who tended to decline to fight). There were occasions when large forces on both sides came into contact but this usually started as fights between small groups with other units joining in (Jones' example was the engagement east of Tournai about two weeks before the Armistice when Snipes, Camels and S.E.5s fought it out with Fokker D VIIIs).<sup>29</sup> Jones' view of the lessons from these encounters was that it was impossible for the leaders of various formations to control the actions of their pilots beyond the initial manoeuvre for position and the launching of the attack. He added:

As will frequently be the case where large formations are engaged, both sides decided to stay and fight it out and the result was, the usual confusion of a 'dog fight'. This confusion may have been reduced had there been a ready means of communication between leaders and their pilots, and certainly such communication between the leaders of the different formations would have been a great advantage.<sup>30</sup>

Successful combat, according to Jones, was due to pilots gaining a common doctrine through constant association and fighting together. This led to them being guided instinctively by such rules as:

- when disengaged, close on the nearest friendly aeroplane, preferably on one of your own formation;
- try to keep the altitude of one's own formation above that of the enemy;
- endeavour to support friendly aircraft when they are hard pressed; and
- do not leave the locality until your flight has reformed.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, 'War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918', p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*

He qualified these rules by adding that they should not be strictly observed otherwise a pilot's action would be limited. Jones' experience with air-to-air combat was against two main types of German aircraft—single-seat and two-seat fighters. Techniques for engagement varied and Jones found the circumstances for attack on single-seat fighters were never the same and so the attack was left to the pilot's initiative. However, there were some successful methods, viz.:

- when attacking a small formation, from a higher altitude, each pilot selected a target and stayed on the tail of that aircraft; and
- when dived on by an opponent, pilots usually turned in the direction of the attack, so as to reduce the time they were under fire and, 'if the enemy attempted to press home the attack, continued turning in the smallest possible circles while outclimbing him. Such stunts as the "Loop", "Roll" and "Spin" were never used except as a means of escape, and even for this purpose they were of doubtful value.'<sup>32</sup>

Two-seat fighters usually worked alone and there were definite prescribed methods for attack; that is, beneath the tail or above from the front. From experience, Jones found the first method useless, unless it was against large, slow aircraft or when surprise had been achieved. He preferred the second method, which caused the enemy to dive under the attacker and prevented the gunner from returning fire. The attacker could then turn in the dive and destroy the enemy from directly astern.<sup>33</sup> Ground attack operations and enemy anti-aircraft defences were topics to which Jones devoted a lot of attention. He noted the sorties flown from Allonville (near Amiens) during the German offensive of August 1918 when enemy troops and vehicles were continually attacked with 20-pound bombs and machine guns—'there was no lack of targets'. By the time of the offensive, the Germans had become well equipped with anti-aircraft machine guns, which were used to defend the various potential targets from Allied air attack, so the AFC and RAF pilots developed their own form of personal armour by placing flattened steel helmets on their aircraft seats.<sup>34</sup>

During 1918, No 4 Squadron pilots frequently engaged in ground strafing, either after a patrol or while on special missions, 'but it was seldom carried out as an organised attack'. There were also lessons learned from ground attack operations:

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* pp. 3–4.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

- Do not fly straight except when diving to attack. The risk of presenting a stationary target to the ground gunner must, in this instance, be accepted.
- Do not zoom away after attack but zigzag at high speed, gaining height as the opportunity offers.
- Do not waste yourself on unsuitable targets.<sup>35</sup>

As a final example ground attack drawn from experience, Jones described the attack on German airfields at Lomme and Haubourdin, in August 1918. In these attacks the aircraft were little troubled by anti-aircraft fire and only one aircraft was lost to this cause. The main advantage the attackers had was that the locations of the German anti-aircraft guns were known and they were destroyed by an Allied artillery barrage just before the aircraft crossed into the German zone.<sup>36</sup>

In relation to the airfield attacks, Jones makes a very pertinent comment:

On looking back, one is impressed by the efficacy of this method of dealing with enemy aircraft when they can be surprised on the ground, grouped together in such large numbers.<sup>37</sup> The Germans appear to have made the mistake of concentrating their aircraft in large inflammable hangars, too near the front line for them to receive timely warning of our approach and intentions. Later we found that on some of their aerodromes their aircraft had been housed singly and considerably dispersed. Had this plan been adopted at the aerodromes attacked, the damage would not have been nearly so great.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> It is interesting to note that the preference for destroying of aircraft on the ground was also shared by the USAAF's most innovative commander during World War II, General George Kenney. As John Warden writes, 'General Kenney's goal was to find and destroy enemy aircraft on the ground.' John A. Warden III, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat*, Pergamon-Brassey, New York, NY, 1989, p. 26. The Italian air power theorist, Giulio Douhet, described these tactics more poetically, 'This is the principle which governs the situation: it is easier and more effective to destroy the enemy's aerial power by destroying his nest and eggs on the ground than to hunt his flying birds in the air. And every time we ignore this principle we commit an error.' Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air*, translated by Dino Ferrari, Air Force History and Museums Program, Washington, DC, 1998, pp. 53–54.

<sup>38</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, 'War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918', p. 6.

## **Into Germany**

The Armistice did not mean the end of operations for 4 Squadron, as it was tasked with flying patrols over the retreating German troops and ensuring that German aircraft did not fly too close to the advancing Allied armies. In addition, as a peace treaty was still to be concluded, a training regime was instigated because a standard of efficiency in aerial gunnery had to be maintained throughout the unit, while new pilots had to become proficient in formation flying and air combat, in case the need to resume hostilities arose.<sup>39</sup>

No 4 Squadron had destroyed more German aircraft than any other AFC unit and received recognition from the Allied High Command for their effort during the conflict. Late in November 1918, General Sir William Birdwood, KCMG, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Fifth Army, whose troops 4 Squadron had been supporting, visited the unit while it was still based at Ennetières and during the tour of inspection he congratulated the squadron members on their excellent achievements during the preceding months.<sup>40</sup> The unit then moved to air bases in the homeland of their former enemy.

No 4 Squadron was the only AFC unit which, accompanied by No 3 Australian Casualty Clearing Station and some railway operating personnel, went to Germany with the British Army of Occupation.<sup>41</sup> The first stage of the deployment, which began on 17 November 1918, was a 37-kilometre flight to an airfield at Bisseghem,<sup>42</sup> Belgium (once a base for the Baron von Richthofen's fighter squadron – Jasta 11). Due to poor weather, 4 Squadron's aircraft remained there until 27 November when B and C Flights (commanded by Captain George Jones and Captain Jack Wright respectively), flying low and through a thick mist, made the trip to the airfield at Fort Cognelee.<sup>43</sup>

Jones and Wright were the first to land at Fort Cognelee and fared better than some of their comrades as the airfield had a very bad surface, which caused three other Snipes to crash on landing. Fort Cognelee, located close to the town of Namur,

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<sup>39</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> C.E.W. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VI, *The Australian Imperial Force in France During the Allied Offensive, 1918*, University of Queensland Press in association with the Australian War Memorial, St Lucia, Qld, 1983, p. 1072.

<sup>42</sup> The 4 Squadron War Diary records several different spellings for this town—Bisseghem, Bissenghem and Bessinghem.

<sup>43</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 38.

was used as a base by the German Navy for their huge Zeppelin airships.<sup>44</sup> While exploring their new accommodation, Jones and his comrades found, inside the three Zeppelin hangars, about 100 German aircraft in all stages of assembly and repair, and helped themselves to an L.V.G. two-seater in flying condition. This aircraft accompanied the squadron to Germany.<sup>45</sup> While examining the contents of the hangar, Jones found some things that interested him and 'had no hesitation in souveniring two splendid Bosch magnetos for shipment home.'<sup>46</sup>

No 4 Squadron personnel spent the remainder of November billeted in the nearby town of Champion, where the majority of them were put up in a convent, which had been previously used by the Germans as a hospital and barracks. It was here that Jones suffered from another bout of post traumatic stress disorder. One night he had a dreadful nightmare, waking the place with his shouting. His comrades came to his aid and managed to restrain him as he tried to get to his pistol.<sup>47</sup> The nightmares with the accompanying screaming and shouting would continue for the rest of his life.<sup>48</sup>

The trip continued early in the next month and the squadron entered Germany at 1145 hours on 7 December 1918.<sup>49</sup> On the way to their final destination—Bickendorf airfield near Cologne—the Australians stopped for a few days at the German base at Elsenborn, where Jones and his fellow officers were accommodated in the German Officers Mess. He remembers some riotous behaviour on the part of his comrades on that first night in the new accommodation:

There was a bust of Hindenburg at one end of the mess room and a bust of the Kaiser at the other. They were only plaster. So our boys, after dinner on the first night, they got to work with beer bottles and smashed them up. The next morning they were swept out.

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<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986; and Keith Isaacs, *Military Aircraft of Australia 1909–1918*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1971, p. 85.

<sup>46</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'. One wonders the eventual fate of the magnetos. Did they end up on the engine of some vehicle under Jones' care in a Melbourne workshop?

<sup>47</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell of Glen Waverly, Vic., 16 June 2000.

<sup>49</sup> Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, p. 385.

The bar, they had a lot of beautiful steins. And I think we took a few of those away.<sup>50</sup>

The orders to proceed from Elsenborn were received on 12 December. Once again, the aircraft were delayed by bad weather and did not arrive at Bickendorf until five days later.<sup>51</sup> Bickendorf had been built as a German home defence air base and provided good on-site accommodation for the squadron's NCOs and enlisted personnel, as well as the vehicles and aircraft. The officers were accommodated in the luxurious Kaiser Wilhelm hotel. Near the hotel's entrance there was a statue of Frederick the Great, mounted on a horse, inscribed with the words '*Deutschland uber Alles*'. It also became a victim of Australian vandalism:

We rectified this to read '*Deutschland unter Alles*'. After draping a white shroud over the Emperor, and gently crowning him with a porcelain bedroom utensil, to the consternation of the fire brigade which turned out next morning to remove our decorations and bring the Emperor's uniform into line with dress regulations.<sup>52</sup>

Once at Bickendorf, 4 Squadron found itself once again part of No 11 Wing, RAF. The air base was shared with the other Wing units, which were all RAF squadrons—29 Squadron (S.E.5a), 43 Squadron (Snipe), 48 Squadron (Bristol Fighter), 70 Squadron (Camel), 79 Squadron (Dolphin), 149 Squadron (F.E.) and 206 Squadron (D.H.9).<sup>53</sup>

The time at Bickendorf was uneventful and Jones looked on the Wing's role at this base as a safeguard. That is, the squadrons were there in case the Germans mounted any kind of resistance to the Allied occupation. As it turned out there was no operational duty, although 4 Squadron did some flying over the Rhine 'just to show the flag'.<sup>54</sup> After arriving at their new base, the squadron took over 150 surrendered German aircraft. One of these, a Rumpler two-seater, which acquired the nickname of 'The Grog Wagon', was painted with AFC markings and

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<sup>50</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986.

<sup>51</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 41. Another Snipe crashed on landing at Bickendorf.

<sup>52</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>53</sup> Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

flown by 4 Squadron personnel.<sup>55</sup> On a more serious note, squadron pilots took the opportunity to display the flying characteristics of the Snipe to some German aircrew who were still present at Bickendorf.<sup>56</sup> It was later claimed that when the aircraft was demonstrated to the German pilots, the latter expressed first their astonishment and their gratification that they personally had not met 4 Squadron in combat.<sup>57</sup> Jones met some of these German aviators while he was at Bickendorf. He found them to be courageous men—the same as his comrades. ‘I found that their mental attitudes were very much the same as ours.’<sup>58</sup>

Christmas was celebrated at Bickendorf with a whole day of recreational activities and parties. The day began with teams from 4 Squadron playing a rugby and a soccer match against teams from the RAF squadrons. The officers of 4 Squadron celebrated Christmas 1918 with an evening dinner at the Kaiser Wilhelm Hotel. The menu included dishes such as mulligatawny soup, roast beef, roast duck, baked potatoes, green peas and plum pudding. Entertainment was provided by a German orchestra, which played a musical program that included selections from operas as well as patriotic numbers, such as ‘Australia will be There,’ ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ and ‘Rule Britannia.’<sup>59</sup>

The squadron’s enlisted personnel celebrated Christmas earlier that day with a midday meal at the Airman’s Mess (a hut on the base at Bickendorf). They hired the same German orchestra to play during the celebrations and had invited the squadron’s officers as guests. It was at this party that a nine-year-old orphaned Belgian boy, named Henri, ‘joined’ 4 Squadron.<sup>60</sup> Tim Tovell, a member of Jones’ flight, took care of Henri (who was given the nickname ‘Digger’) and even had a local tailor make an AFC uniform for him. When it came to finding Henri shoes, Tovell praised the generosity of George Jones:

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<sup>55</sup> Charles Schaedel, *Men & Machines of the Australian Flying Corps 1914–19*, Kookaburra Technical Publications, Dandenong, Vic., 1972, p. 56.

<sup>56</sup> Cutlack, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, Volume VIII, *The Australian Flying Corps*, p. 385.

<sup>57</sup> Bruce Robertson, *Sopwith—The Man and his Aircraft*, Air Review Ltd, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, UK, 1970, p. 119; and Richards, *Australian Airmen: History of the 4th SQUADRON Australian Flying Corps*, p. 43.

<sup>58</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

<sup>59</sup> ‘4th Squadron Australian Flying Corps, Christmas Dinner Menu, December 1918’; copy provided by 4 Squadron Association

<sup>60</sup> The story of Henri and his time with the AFC/RAAF has been described in Anthony Hill, *Young Digger*, Penguin Books, Camberwell, Vic., 2002.

... and the kid had new shoes. Captain George Jones fixed that. I measured the kid's feet with a bit of string, and Captain Jones, who was going to Blighty on leave, took the measurements with him, and came back with a pair of smart tan shoes. Who paid for them? When you ask that, you show you don't know George Jones.<sup>61</sup>

In his spare time, for recreation, George Jones played tennis<sup>62</sup> and went hunting in a nearby forest where he managed to shoot a few hares.<sup>63</sup> When it came to team sports, football matches were played by squadron personnel but these tended to be rugby or soccer. However, only two Australian Rules football games were played because of a shortage of players who were familiar with this uniquely Australian (and, at the time, largely Victorian-based) game. In both games, the teams comprised a mixed group of officers and sergeants on one side, and mechanics on the other. Jones was a member of the former team.<sup>64</sup> Another form of recreation, a bit more up-market than football, was the opera, and Jones and Jack Wright saw *Faust* and *Carmen* at the Cologne Opera House. The German opera-goers were a source of amusement for the two Australians: 'During the interval we rather rudely studied the Fraus and Herren parading in the foyer.'<sup>65</sup>

Jones took advantage of the availability of surrendered German aircraft and while he was at Cologne he flew a Rumpler C VII on 10 January 1919. On other occasions he flew the L.V.G. and a Fokker D VII.<sup>66</sup> He noted that some of the German aircraft

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<sup>61</sup> Norman Ellison, *Flying Matilda: Early Days in Australian Aviation*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, NSW, 1961, p. 6. Jones himself writes that he had been given the task of obtaining boots for Henri. There was no suitable footwear available in the local shops and he persuaded a bootmaker to fashion something from sheepskin. Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 25.

<sup>62</sup> Jones papers. A photograph in the collection shows George Jones as a player at a tennis game in Cologne.

<sup>63</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986.

<sup>64</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*. A photograph between pages 86 and 87 show George Jones as a member of 4 Squadron's Australian Rules football team.

<sup>65</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'. One wonders whether opera would have been so readily available to Jones if he had been working as a motor mechanic in Melbourne in 1919.

<sup>66</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 25. Jones may have mistaken the designation of the Rumpler aircraft as he writes that the Rumpler was a two-seat reconnaissance aircraft powered by a 200 hp Benz engine. Earlier Rumpler types were fitted with Benz engines but the C VII had a 240 hp Maybach water-cooled six-cylinder engine. See Peter Gray and Owen Thetford, *German Aircraft of the First World War*, Putnam, London, 1987, pp. 202–205. Jones gave no detail of the type of L.V.G. or the Fokker D VII, both of which he listed under the heading 'Details of types of machines flown' on his application to join the RAAF in 1921. See DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot):



(i.e. the two-seaters) were used to give sightseeing flights to squadron visitors and that he flew a few such trips.<sup>67</sup> He found the D VII to be a splendid aircraft, which had slightly better performance than the Camel but was not as manoeuvrable as the Snipe even though it had roughly the same speed and rate of climb.<sup>68</sup>

One German aircraft that left an impression on him was the Junkers J4. Perhaps the type's all metal construction aroused his interest due to his mechanical and engineering background. A photo of him standing alongside one of these aircraft appears in his autobiography and some time after the war he described it:

It was interesting to find later, at Cologne, a 'Junkers' aeroplane, which had been designed and used for the attack of ground targets. It was all metal; the wings and fuselage being covered with finely corrugated aluminium and from the nose to behind the rear cockpit with sheet steel. It was armed with one gun firing forward, two through the bottom of the fuselage and, one concludes, a movable gun for the rear cockpit. It gave the impression of being too heavy to fly.<sup>69</sup>

The Junkers J4 was designed for hazardous operations known as contact patrols—flying low over the Allied trenches to ascertain the position of forward troops during an offensive.<sup>70</sup> Jones gained the impression that, because of its heavy weight (including 10 mm thick armour around the engine and pilot), the Germans aviators themselves did not think highly of the aircraft.<sup>71</sup>

## **Returning to Australia**

At the end of the war, all UK-based AFC squadrons handed their aircraft over to the RAF.<sup>72</sup> Things were different for 4 Squadron, which did not receive orders to

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<sup>67</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 25; and National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

<sup>68</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton.

<sup>69</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, 'War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918', p. 5.

<sup>70</sup> P. St John Turner and Heinz J. Nowarra, *Junkers: An Aircraft Album*, Arco Publishing Company, New York, NY, 1971, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton. Regardless of the pilot's opinions, Junkers produced over 200 J4s during World War I, making it the manufacturer's most successful type up to that time.

<sup>72</sup> John Bennett, *The Imperial Gift: British Aeroplanes which Formed the RAAF in 1921*, Banner

cease flying until 18 February 1919. Then, 15 Snipes were handed over 70 Squadron, RAF, while the remaining nine aircraft were flown to Stree in Belgium and handed over to 80 Squadron, RAF. This was the last flight made by 4 Squadron, AFC. Within a week of receiving their orders, all technical stores and equipment (with the exception of road transport) had been handed over to the RAF and squadron personnel began their long trip back to the UK.

George Jones, Jack Wright and 4 Squadron's Commanding Officer, Major Les Ellis, decided that they had earned a few days leave in Paris and, instead of travelling with the rest of the squadron, they set off from Cologne towards the French capital in the unit's staff car, with the Union Jack flag flying from the radiator. This in itself was a rather inflammatory act, as the Union Jack was used to designate a vehicle carrying the Commander-in-Chief. Nevertheless, Jones and his comrades had a great deal of fun as the flag ensured that the guard turned out at each check point on the trip. Unfortunately, the light-hearted trip came to an end at Aachen near the Dutch border when the car broke a connecting rod, which destroyed the motor. Stranded without transport, the Australians made an appeal to a French headquarters for assistance, which brought a rude rebuff. Eventually, they managed to convince a German taxi driver to drive them to Liege where they met up with the rest of the squadron. The taxi driver went unpaid, however, because the only currency Jones and his friends had was new German marks, which were not negotiable in Belgium.<sup>73</sup> While Jones and his friends were overtly displaying their presence leaving Germany, 4 Squadron personnel smuggled Henri out of the country.

At the time of the Armistice there were in excess of 160 000 Australian military personnel in the UK and continental Europe, most of whom were eager to return home. General John Monash managed their demobilisation and the major staging area for this mammoth task was Salisbury Plain. On its return from Germany, 4 Squadron personnel joined their fellow Australians at this site, awaiting their turn to travel home. The squadron was accommodated at Hurdcott, Wiltshire. To keep themselves occupied, the Australians played sports, such as football and hockey, and became involved in other activities. They had plenty of spare time and one major task they undertook was to cut a huge trench, in the shape of Australia, in the side of a chalk hill near Hurdcott. The trench (with the word 'AUSTRALIA'

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Books, Maryborough, Qld, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

inside its boundaries) took 17 weeks to complete and was cast in concrete. Their work still exists and the hill bears the unofficial name 'Australia Hill'.<sup>74</sup>

The European-based AFC units arrived at Southampton on 6 May 1919, to board the P&O ship HMAT *Kaiser-i-Hind* for the return trip to Australia. For this trip all the AFC units were placed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Oswald Watt, who was the senior AFC officer in Europe.<sup>75</sup>

Travelling to Australia with 4 Squadron was Henri, who had been hidden in a large wicker hamper (normally used to store sports equipment) for the journey between Hurdcott and Southampton. When they reached the docks at Southampton, squadron personnel expressed some concern about how the boy would be able to board the ship. Tim Tovell recalls Jones was able to provide a solution:

Just before we went aboard the ship—it was the *Kaiser-i-Hind*—George Jones says to me, 'Tim, when I go aboard I'll find out the number of my cabin and I'll write it down on a piece of paper and toss it down on to the wharf'. I'm there, ready and waiting on the wharf and down comes a piece of paper with '21' written on it. So I hurry to the hamper and write on the label 'Captain Jones, Cabin 21'. The hamper is lifted on to the ship in a sling and after it is unloaded it is taken straight down to George Jones cabin. I go down after it as soon as we go aboard. I open the hamper. 'Well,' says Captain Jones, 'here he is!' And out comes Digger [Henri].<sup>76</sup>

At 0600 hours on 7 May 1919 the ship weighed anchor and set off on the homeward voyage. A simple routine developed for the Service personnel aboard the ship. To keep fit there was a physical training parade each morning. After this everyone was allowed to choose their own recreation, such as various forms of competitions, while concerts and cinema entertainment were organised for the evenings. Captain Henry Wrigley, a 3 Squadron pilot, wrote that it was 'safe to say that sunrise on the 9th June saw practically every person on board on deck eagerly looking out for their first glimpse of the Australian coast'.<sup>77</sup> The coast was sighted shortly after dawn and that same morning the ship anchored off Fremantle. After the Western

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<sup>74</sup> 'Australia Hill' Hurdcott, Wiltshire, England at [http://www.southsearepublic.org/2004\\_2002/gallery\\_1999\\_australiahill.html](http://www.southsearepublic.org/2004_2002/gallery_1999_australiahill.html), accessed 3 August 2009.

<sup>75</sup> Bennett, *Highest Traditions*, p. 89.

<sup>76</sup> Ellison, *Flying Matilda* p. 13. Some other accounts state that Henri was smuggled aboard the ship in an oat sack.

<sup>77</sup> H.N. Wrigley, *The Battle Below: Being the History of No. 3 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps*, Errol G. Knox, Sydney, NSW, 1935, pp. 179–180.

Australian personnel had disembarked, the voyage continued to Melbourne and the *Kaiser-i-Hind* reached Port Phillip Heads before dawn on 16 June.

It had been arranged for the AFC units based at Point Cook to stage a fly-past over the ship as it approached Port Melbourne to mark the return of the AFC personnel. Unfortunately, the weather conditions were considered unsuitable for the military aircraft to fly. According to the Melbourne Argus, the ship was instead met by two Maurice Farman Shorthorns, each piloted by their civilian owners and each carrying a female passenger. Actually, it appears that just one of the privately-owned aircraft, which recently had been sold off as surplus by the Department of Defence, managed to circle the ship a few times.<sup>78</sup>

After disembarking at Station Pier and meeting with members of his family, George Jones returned to his mother's house in Grey Street, East Melbourne where she prepared a memorable welcome home dinner. 'After four years, it was heart warming to think this dinner had been specially turned on for me.'<sup>79</sup> George's eldest brother, Henry, spoke formally at the dinner and, unaccustomed as he was to making speeches, quite excelled himself on this occasion.<sup>80</sup>

George Jones' AFC commission was terminated on 8 August 1919. Two of his brothers who had enlisted, David and Robert, also survived the war. David Jones became a landowner under the 'Soldier Settler Scheme' and took up farming, with his wife and family in Gippsland. Unfortunately, Robert Jones had been wounded and returned suffering from 'shell shock'. Robert did not marry and died not long after the war's end.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Argus*, 17 June 1919. In all, four AFC Shorthorn aircraft were sold, at the end of March 1919, to R.G. Carey and A. Fenton, who had incorporated a company, Melbourne Aerial Services, at Port Melbourne. Two of these aircraft have survived until the present day. One is on display at the Canadian National Aviation Museum in Ottawa, while the other is at the RAAF Museum at Point Cook; see Bennett, *The Imperial Gift*, pp. 179–180. In his autobiography, Jones wrote that only one privately-owned Shorthorn met the ship and that was flown by Lieutenant Harry Treloar; see Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 26. This accords with the account given in Des Martin and Bertha Carey, *A Message from the Clouds: A Biography of Robert Graham Carey, Australian Pioneer Aviator*, Edith Francis Martin, Croydon, Vic., 2004, p.40.

<sup>79</sup> Jones papers, 'War Experience from 1915 to 1918'.

<sup>80</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 26.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Mr Bob Jones of Airport West, Vic., 11 July, 2001.

## *I am the OC of Workshops*

Charles Schaedel noted in his brief account of the AFC combat squadrons that many AFC members found it difficult to adjust to peacetime conditions after their return to Australia at the end of World War I. Indeed, after enlistment at age 18 or 19, followed by three or four years of military service, quite a few had never known a 'normal adult civilian way of life'. It was logical, therefore, that such people would seek employment in flying—as it was a major part of the only occupation with which they were familiar. Some, he noted, went into the young civil aviation industry, while others looked ahead to the role aviation would play in Australia's defence. This second group of people joined the Service that would become the RAAF.<sup>1</sup>

George Jones was one who found it a curious experience to return to civilian life, after holding the rank of Captain in the AFC. He found he had to fend for himself and make decisions again.<sup>2</sup> So it is not surprising that, after being employed in a couple of civilian jobs, he returned to Service life within a few years of the end of the war.

### **Marriage**

On 15 November 1919, within five months of his return to Melbourne, George Jones married Muriel Agnes Cronan. He had met Muriel before the war and corresponded with her during the four years he spent outside Australia.<sup>3</sup> The marriage service was conducted at the Church of Saint Paul, Malvern, Victoria. This was an Anglican Church and was selected out of convenience—George was a Methodist and Muriel was a Catholic who did not practice her religion.<sup>4</sup> Muriel was born in Carlton, Victoria, and was the daughter of William and Elizabeth

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Schaedel, *Men & Machines of the Australian Flying Corps 1914–19*, Kookaburra Technical Publications, Dandenong, Vic., 1972, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 27; interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 24 October 2000; and Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 24 October 2000.

Cronan. At the time of the marriage, William Cronan was a boatbuilder. Muriel was 21 (two years younger than George) and worked as a typist. She lived in Chandlers Road, Malvern, while George resided in New Street, Elsternwick.<sup>5</sup> After the marriage they moved to a house named *Zillah* in Kanowna Street, Sandringham.

Marriage to Muriel could be seen as step upwards in society for Jones. Muriel was educated—she had attended business college and was employed in a clerical position, and she was very talented musically. She recited verse<sup>6</sup> and was an accomplished pianist who gave public performances, including long recitals at the Regent Theatre. These talents instilled pride in George Jones.<sup>7</sup>

George and Muriel's first son, Ronald, was born on 2 October 1920. As a married couple, they were not close and there was never any open display of affection between them. It is likely that as he grew up without a father, George (and other members of the Jones family) had learnt to become self-sufficient and not to get close to, nor depend on, other people. He also had a quiet personality that made him somewhat shy and retiring, and he was too involved with himself and his work to have much time for other people. Thus, he found it difficult to show affection or interest in other people, including immediate family members.<sup>8</sup> Ronald would inherit this characteristic.

### **A Brief Return to Flying**

On his return to Australia, George Jones considered becoming a farmer, on land near Coonabarabran, NSW, but decided it was financially too uncertain and instead he resumed his prewar occupation in the motor engineering trade in Melbourne.<sup>9</sup> He was working as a foreman turner for McLashan Bros and Duckett, a motor engineering company in Elsternwick, Victoria when, unexpectedly, he was given the opportunity to return to flying. Sid Nettleton, a grape grower from Irymple, near Mildura, Victoria, incorporated a company known as Mildura Aircraft Pty Ltd. The aircraft concerned was an Avro 504K, a training type similar to those Jones

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<sup>5</sup> George Jones/Muriel Agnes Cronan, Certificate of Marriage, 15 November 1919. Rather oddly, various editions of *Who's Who* show Muriel to be the daughter of F. Stone

<sup>6</sup> To assist with her speaking, Muriel Jones took elocution lessons from Richard Williams' wife. Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988', transcript of interview.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 27–28.

had flown during service with the AFC. Jones' job was to use the Avro to deliver copies of the *Sunraysia Daily* newspaper to the towns of Loxton and Renmark in South Australia. The Avro, fitted with a nine-cylinder 130 hp Clerget rotary engine, was delivered on 9 October 1920 and on 2 November Nettleton applied for its registration.<sup>10</sup> Before he started this new flying assignment, Jones was required to overhaul the engine at the Glenroy airfield, north of Melbourne.<sup>11</sup> His turning skills were put to work again and he manufactured a set of pistons for the Clerget.<sup>12</sup>

When the overhaul was complete, Jones and Nettleton flew the Avro to Mildura. Seating in the small aircraft must have been cramped as they flew with a four-gallon drum (18 litres) of castor oil secured to the front seat.<sup>13</sup> Castor oil was the lubricating agent for aircraft rotary engines at the time, but it was unobtainable in large quantities in country towns, hence the need to transport it on the initial flight to Mildura.<sup>14</sup>

The flying work in the Riverina passed without incident but, while he enjoyed flying, Jones did not stay in the job for long. Rather strangely, for someone who found it difficult to relate to other people, Jones found the separation from his wife and young son, who remained in Sandringham, too great and he gave Nettleton his resignation.<sup>15</sup> Nettleton was sorry to lose Jones and wrote him a very favourable reference:

Mr G Jones of Kanowna St, Sandringham, who had charge of an Avro plane & flew same for us was in our employ for a little over a month.

He left much to our regret. We found him thoroughly dependable in every way, having a through knowledge of stationary & rotary engines & repairs.

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<sup>10</sup> Neville Parnell and Trevor Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988, p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)'

<sup>13</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 29.

<sup>14</sup> C.G. Grey (ed.), *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1919: A reprint of the 1919 Edition of All the World's Aircraft*, David & Charles, Newton Abbot, Devon, UK, 1969, p. 61b. The 130 hp Clerget consumed .09 pints (.05 litres) of the oil per hp hour—Jones had sufficient oil for only about six or seven hours flying.

<sup>15</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986. In his autobiography, Jones notes that he had become restless and that he had not been able to bring his wife and new baby to live with him. Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 29.

While with us he was getting £7.- & board, & should he at any time reconsider his determination we would be pleased to have him back at even an enhanced salary.

S.F. Nettleton Dir  
Mildura Aircraft Pty Ltd<sup>16</sup>

Jones returned to the motor trade in Melbourne and was succeeded, as Nettleton's pilot, by Captain H.A. Rigby, MC, an ex-RFC aviator.<sup>17</sup>

### **Jones Joins the RAAF**

The way George Jones describes his entry into the newly formed Australian Air Force is quite simple. After his short stint in Mildura, he returned to work as the foreman fitter and turner fitter for McLashan Bros and Duckett. Despite the automotive nature of the business, he was still able to maintain his interest in aviation while working for this company, as one of his jobs had been to manufacture a set of pistons, valves, valve guides and other parts for a Bentley rotary engine owned by the Larkin Sopwith Aviation Company of Australasia Limited.<sup>18</sup> Jones had been working for McLashan Bros and Duckett for about a year, when one day, Harry Cobby, one of his comrades from 4 Squadron, walked into Jones' machine shop and, during the course of their conversation, announced, 'I'm going back into the Air Force. I think you ought to come too.'<sup>19</sup> Cobby's decision provided Jones with some food for thought. Re-enlistment was something he had not considered

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<sup>16</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, copy of reference by S.F. Nettleton, 8 November 1920.

<sup>17</sup> Rigby incurred the wrath of the Mildura Borough Council by conducting joy-flights on Sundays, which disturbed church services. Rigby apologised for the disturbance but pointed out that Sunday was the only day most people had off work and were able to go flying. The Avro continued to fly with Mildura Aircraft Pty Ltd until 10 February 1922 when it crashed at Mildura. Tragically, Nettleton was killed in the accident. Parnell and Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>18</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)', p. 5. The Larkin Sopwith Aviation Company of Australasia Limited was incorporated in London on 11 June 1919 with a capital of £31 500. The object of the company was to assist aerial transport companies in the formation and maintenance of their passenger services. The new company initially imported six aircraft—two Sopwith Gnu three-seat aircraft and four Sopwith Dove two-seat aircraft. Parnell and Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, pp. 34–35. The engine parts Jones manufactured were most likely for one of the Gnus as the type was fitted with a 230 hp Bentley BR.2 rotary engine.

<sup>19</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 29.



before, but the more he thought about it the more interested he became.<sup>20</sup> Knowing as much as we now know about Jones, we may wonder whether he would have needed much encouragement in making this decision. Re-enlistment would bring a return to the things he enjoyed and missed in civilian life—flying and the lifestyle of an officer. Furthermore, as the Australian Air Force had only one base (Point Cook, Victoria), and as Jones was a Melbourne resident, he would not have to move too far from his family.

On 22 March 1921, George Jones applied to join the Permanent Forces, Australian Air Force.<sup>21</sup> On his application, he advised that he had passed all examinations for Vickers and Lewis machine guns, he had three years experience with motor and mechanical engineering, he had considerable experience in draftsmanship, he was experienced in all branches of iron work, he always took charge of physical training in his own flight during his time in 4 Squadron, and he thoroughly understood motor boats.<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note one personal detail had changed between his enlistment papers for the AIF and the RAAF—his religion. In 1915, Jones stated he was a Methodist, while his RAAF records show his religion to be Church of England.<sup>23</sup> His ambitions for a better lifestyle show through here, because he believed he would have a greater chance of advancement in the Service if it was known that he was Anglican rather than any other religion.<sup>24</sup>

Eventually, Jones was called in to be interviewed by the Air Force's two most senior officers, Wing Commanders Williams and Goble. Richard Williams held the position of Director of Intelligence and Organisation, while Stanley Goble was Director of Personnel and Training.<sup>25</sup> The interview process was only the first step

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<sup>20</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 29. One wonders whether Cobby walked into the machine shop by sheer coincidence or whether he deliberately sought out Jones, although his motives for doing this are unknown.

<sup>21</sup> The Service that George Jones joined was, at that time, the Australian Air Force. The start date for the new Service was 31 March 1921. It was not until 13 August 1921 that the order, signed by the Governor-General, was gazetted adding the prefix 'Royal', making the title Royal Australian Air Force official. Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921–39*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1991, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Australian Air Force, 'Application for a Commission as Flying Officer (Pilot)', p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers'.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 24 October 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'The Air Board'. These two officers served as Chief of the Air Staff during the 1920s and 30s. Williams told his story of his life and times with the RAAF in his autobiography. There seems to be little written about Goble. Sir Richard Williams, *These are*

towards a permanent appointment. Nevertheless, Jones was successful with this part of the process and was accepted into the RAAF on a short service commission, as a Flying Officer (Service Number O31), with effect from 24 August 1921.<sup>26</sup> The appointment raised a few concerns as Jones had been a Captain (equivalent to a Flight Lieutenant) with the AFC and he thought the demotion by one rank was a bit mean, but still accepted the position.<sup>27</sup> Another officer who had concerns with the ranks allocated in the newly formed Service was Ray Brownell, who found that he 'would have to agree to be demoted to the lowly rank of Flying Officer' in order to be part of the new Service. Also of concern, for Brownell (who served with the RFC/RAF during the World War I), was the proposition whereby 'many pilots who had served in the Australian Flying Corps were to be given precedence over those of us who had served in the Royal Flying Corps, regardless of experience or of active service flying'.<sup>28</sup> Brownell noted that practically all the RAAF's first intake of officers and other ranks had served with the AFC, although there were also a few 'outsiders', including Brownell himself, who had flown with the RFC.<sup>29</sup>

Such perceptions on the part of Jones, Brownell and others were the cause of some unease and contributed to a culture of jealousy that developed in the early days of the Service. Jones commented on the situation:

Jealousy was terrible when the RAAF was formed because it was felt Williams had looked after his former friends from No. 1 Squadron in the AFC – Murray Jones, Lukis, Cole and others, like McNamara VC. He did take others in, like Wrigley and Bill Anderson from No. 3 Squadron, and Cobby from No. 4 because he had such a high score of enemy aircraft in the war.<sup>30</sup>

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*Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977; and John McCarthy, 'Goble, Stanley James (1891–1948)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1983, pp. 33–34.

<sup>26</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>28</sup> Raymond James Brownell, *From Khaki to Blue: The Autobiography of Air Commodore R.J. Brownell*, Military Historical Society of Australia, Lyneham, ACT, 1978, p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 188. Brownell had been a temporary Captain and Flight Commander with 45 Squadron, RFC and had flown with that unit over the Western Front and Italy in 1917–18. Leigh Edmonds, 'Brownell, Raymond James (1894–1974)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1993, pp. 282–283.

<sup>30</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'. A.T. Cole served with 2 Squadron, AFC.

The ranks of the newly appointed officers were only temporary. Suitability to the Service and seniority was determined by the results of an examination, which was held after the new recruits completed the basic training course.

### **Basic Training**

Jones spent most of the remainder of his first year with the RAAF as one of the 22 officers and 145 airmen who participated in the No 1 Course, RAAF, at the Australian Military Forces Central Training Depot (CTD) at Holsworthy, near Liverpool, NSW. Chris Clark explained the reason behind the military training was that, in spite of the fact that the RAAF's personnel numbers doubled during the first six months of the Service's existence and 80 per cent of these recruits had served during World War I, most had returned to civilian life following demobilisation and, regardless of their Service experience, were in need of some refresher training in military subjects.<sup>31</sup>

The newly formed RAAF had no similar training establishment of its own but Williams had plans to establish a dedicated RAAF recruit and non-technical training centre. This did not eventuate because the Minister for Defence had given his agreement to the Military Board proposal for the RAAF use the Army's Central Training Depot. Consequently, the first RAAF officers and other ranks were sent to receive their basic training at an Army base, from Army instructors. The RAAF course members were formed into four platoons, with the officers comprising the first such unit. In addition to Jones, other course participants included Flight Lieutenant H.F. De La Rue, Flight Lieutenant A. Pentland, Flying Officer W.D. Bostock, Flying Officer Ray Brownell and Pilot Officer J.D. Jarman.<sup>32</sup> Many of the officers attending this course would rise to very senior positions in the RAAF during World War II.

Jones attended the Central Training Depot between 13 September and 14 December, and under the guidance of the Army instructors, completed subjects such as Drill, Musketry and Bayonet Training, Physical Training (PT), Deportment, Power of Command and Leadership, Tact, Temper, Ability to Instruct, and Reliability.<sup>33</sup> The

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<sup>31</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, pp. 38 and 64.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Australian Military Forces, Central Training Depot, Progress Report Sheet, Flying Officer G. Jones, DFC': On his Record of Service it shows that Jones attended the Central Training Depot between 10 September and 15 December 1921. It would be reasonable to conclude that it took a few days to travel between Melbourne

training was not too demanding and attendees were given leave on the weekends. Jones took advantage of the leave situation and brought Muriel and Ronald with him to Sydney. They resided at a boarding house in Elizabeth Bay Road, Point Piper and, while Jones continued with the training and remained at Holsworthy during the week, he was able to be with his family on weekends.<sup>34</sup>

Jones considered the time at Central Training Depot was only a drill course and the RAAF officers were sent there because Williams, with his Army background, believed every officer should be acquainted with drill. While some of the officers needed to be re-acquainted with military practices and customs, Jones found he was able to return to Service life very quickly.<sup>35</sup> According to his Progress Report Sheet he was quite successful in all areas of study. Each fortnight his results were either 'Good' or 'Very Good', with the latter as the majority. The instructors' remarks reflected Jones good standard of performance. For example, for the week ending 29 October, the comment 'Good knowledge of the work – is keen' is made. Similarly, on 26 November it is recorded 'Standard of work very good' while the Chief Instructor added 'A good officer – general standard satisfactory'. His final report for the fortnight ending 12 December showed eight 'Very Good' and one 'Good' and the comment 'Standard attained highly satisfactory, a very efficient officer'.<sup>36</sup>

### **Permanent Appointment**

On his return to Melbourne, Jones had to sit the RAAF entrance confirmation examination. His results in the exam were not spectacular—he managed to score 66.9 %.<sup>37</sup> After the exam, permanent appointments were made and officers were commissioned at different ranks. Despite his examination results, Jones believed that the allocation of ranks was a reflection on Williams' favouritism towards his former colleagues from 1 Squadron, AFC. Such perceptions of favouritism fuelled

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and Holsworthy in 1921.

<sup>34</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 39.

<sup>35</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>36</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Australian Military Forces, Central Training Depot, Progress Report Sheet, Flying Officer G. Jones, DFC'.

<sup>37</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers'. Given Jones' very basic formal education and the difficulties he acknowledges he had with studying for examinations, we should consider he did very well in scoring a better than a 'pass' result.

the jealousies between the officers of the early RAAF. As noted earlier, it appears jealousy was a continual problem in the life of these men and may have conditioned the thinking of some of them for the remainder of their Service lives.

As we know, Jones had been a Captain in the AFC, the same rank as Cobby and Wrigley, whereas Bostock had been a Lieutenant in the RFC/RAF. Based on the examination results, Bostock was made a Flight Lieutenant, which put him one rank above Jones, who remained a Flying Officer.<sup>38</sup> These results and allocation of ranks would impact severely on the whole Service 21 years later. In their early years in the RAAF, Jones and Bostock became good friends and remained so for the next 20 years. They would visit each other at home in their spare time and Jones got to know Bostock's children quite well.<sup>39</sup> Bostock took on the role of adviser and mentor to Jones, providing him with guidance on how he should advance his RAAF career,<sup>40</sup> although there were times when Jones deplored his friend's competitive attitude.<sup>41</sup>

Jones' initial posting in the new Service was to 4 Squadron,<sup>42</sup> under the command of Flight Lieutenant 'Jerry' Pentland, an ex-RAF pilot, whom he described as having 'a good fighter record in the war, but was an awful dope otherwise.'<sup>43</sup> The squadron was a fighter unit and consisted of Pentland, Jones and seven airmen, and was equipped with four S.E.5a aircraft.<sup>44</sup> Unfortunately, Jones perceived the AFC/RAF

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<sup>38</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'; and Jones papers, 'Early Days in the Royal Australian Air Force'.

<sup>39</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>40</sup> Discussions with Dr Alan Stephens, Australian Defence Force Academy, 5 January 2002.

<sup>41</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers'.

<sup>43</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'. Alexander Augustus Norman Dudley ('Jerry') Pentland served with the AIF and was wounded at Gallipoli. He joined the RFC in February 1916 and trained as a pilot. He was posted to France and served with 16, 19 and 87 Squadrons. In combat, he shot down 23 German aircraft. Decorations he was awarded included the MC and DFC. Following the end of World War I, Pentland relinquished his commission with the RAF and joined the RAAF. He resigned from the Service in February 1923 to take up a job flying in the New Guinea goldfields. He joined Australian National Airways as a pilot in 1930. During World War II he served again with the RAAF as a Squadron Leader, commanding an air-sea rescue and communication unit in the Pacific Theatre. A.D. Garrison, *Australian Fighter Aces 1914–1953*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1999, p. 106.

<sup>44</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 42.

jealousies extended even into this small unit and, as an example of the pettiness of it all, he commented that in a formation flying exercise, Pentland complained that Jones was flying incorrectly, while Stephens—another ex-RAF pilot—was doing the right thing.<sup>45</sup> The situation with Pentland did not last very long as Jones found himself transferred to the position of Officer Commanding Motor Transport Repair Section in early 1922. This was an appropriate appointment for Jones because of his automotive engineering background. Equally importantly, he was still able to undertake flying duties from time to time. While in this new position Jones came to the surprise realisation that few senior officers had any knowledge of the maintenance requirements for the Service's mechanical equipment, so his transfer was also a benefit to the RAAF. On one occasion, during an inspection of the workshop, Williams was critical when he found rust spots on the handbrake lever of a Leyland truck under Jones' care. Jones' response was to advise CAS that the vehicle was in need of an engine rebuild and its transmission bearings needed replacing—activities Jones considered to be more important than cleaning rust spots from the handbrake lever.<sup>46</sup>

Regardless of the personalities and rank allocation, George Jones gained recognition and advancement through his enthusiasm and hard work. In late 1922, he had the opportunity to act as Officer Commanding Workshops, while the actual OC, Flight Lieutenant C.J. Harman, MSM, was acting in another position. Squadron Leader Alan Murray Jones, the Commanding Officer No 1 Station (Point Cook), wrote a favourable report praising George Jones for his excellent work in the acting position. The report pointed out that while he was acting Officer Commanding Workshops he also retained command of the Motor Transport Repair Section. Being placed in charge of the Workshops gave Jones an opportunity to show how he could organise and control a workshop—no doubt his experience as a civilian workshop foreman would have helped. Included in the workshop staff of about 100 officers and airmen were Flying Officer A.W. Murphy (head of the Engine Repair Section) and Flying Officer J.D. Jarman (head of the Aircraft Repair Section)—both officers had been at the Central Training Depot with Jones.<sup>47</sup> During Jones' initial time in the workshops, the main task of the aircraft and engine sections

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<sup>45</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>46</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 31. Later in his career, when he was appointed Director of Training, Jones attempted to rectify the situation by ensuring courses for officer trainees included some technical content.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 31.

was reconditioning the 'Imperial Gift' aircraft,<sup>48</sup> some of which required almost complete rebuilding. The scale of the work was too great for the available resources and from 1924 onwards private companies were contracted to carry out some of the work.<sup>49</sup> In addition, the workshop was involved in a joint task with the RAAF Experimental Section (at Randwick, NSW) to manufacture new aluminium seats for all RAAF aircraft. These seats were constructed in such a manner to allow aircrew to wear parachutes.<sup>50</sup>

The Jones family moved residence following George's enlistment, to on-base quarters at Point Cook. This would have suited him well because he was close to his main interests—his work and machinery. It also relieved him of the several hours travel to and from suburban Melbourne each day.<sup>51</sup> Jones was a capable manager of both the workshops and the Motor Transport Section and his enthusiastic work was recognised again as Squadron Leader Murray Jones reported to the Air Board:

In order to carry out the work required for these two appointments, Flying Officer JONES found it necessary to work at night and, although he was living out of Barracks at the time, decided to live in Mess from 18th January 1923, and to go home only during week-ends. Since this period, this Officer has not only worked practically every night of the week, but has also to my knowledge taken work home to complete during the week-end.

During the time he has been in charge of the Workshops, I consider that the quality and quantity of the output in the Workshops has been unequalled during any other period of my Command of the Station. The Motor Transport Sections have been similarly well organised and have been doing excellent work.

Despite some obvious defects, defects which are more apparent than real, I consider that the conscientiousness of this Officer deserves the recognition of

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<sup>48</sup> The 'Imperial Gift' was Britain's offer in June 1919 to give 100 war surplus aircraft and equipment free to any of its Dominions that wished to set up their own air force. Australia's Gift of 128 aircraft and an extensive array of equipment arrived in 1920, making it possible for the RAAF to be formed the following year. See John Bennett, *The Imperial Gift: British Aeroplanes which Formed the RAAF in 1921*, Banner Books, Maryborough, Qld, 1996.

<sup>49</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 166; and Parnell and Boughton, *Flypast: A Record of Aviation in Australia*, p. 30.

<sup>50</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 32. Jones adds that the parachute order from the US took some time to fill but the seats were available to be fitted when required.

<sup>51</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Statutory Declaration', 10 July 1923.

the Air Board, and it is respectfully suggested that the Air Board take official notice of his work.<sup>52</sup>

Murray Jones went on to recommend to the Air Board that Flying Officer Jones be appointed Officer Commanding Workshops and that Flight Lieutenant Harman be attached to RAAF Headquarters.<sup>53</sup> Squadron Leader W.H. Anderson, the Chief of Administrative Staff, replied for the Air Board:

Please convey to Flying Officer JONES the Board's appreciation of his good work and inform him that it has been decided to exempt him from re-examination for confirmation and permanent commission, and that his work will be given special consideration when the question of promotions is being dealt with.<sup>54</sup>

George Jones was consistent with his good work and Murray Jones was still pleased later that same year when he wrote the following recommendation for promotion:

F.O. JONES D.F.C. This officer has been in charge of workshops of this Station since December last and has shewn [sic] himself eminently suitable for that work. In my opinion he has improved the output, both individual and collective in the workshop Section and is an officer whose keenness and conscientiousness are a marked example to other officers.

(sgd) A.M.J. S/L.

C.O. No. 1 Station R.A.A.F.<sup>55</sup>

Murray Jones' recommendation may have helped, as George Jones was promoted to Flight Lieutenant on 1 July 1923. This was equivalent to the rank he held at the time of his discharge from the AFC (Captain) and at the same time he was granted a permanent commission.<sup>56</sup> It was not until two years later, however, that he was

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<sup>52</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Squadron Leader A.M. Jones, Commanding No 1 Station RAAF, to Secretary, Air Board, 9 April 1923.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Squadron Leader W.H. Anderson, Chief of Admin Staff to Officer Commanding No 1 Station, RAAF, 18 April 1923.

<sup>55</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Extract from FTS Letter recommending promotion, 4 July 1923. Certified true copy by Flying Officer F.M. Bladin, Adjutant, No 1 Flying Training School, 19 July 1926.

<sup>56</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 32.



appointed permanently as Officer Commanding Workshop Squadron, Flying Training School.<sup>57</sup> At that time, this was the RAAF's only workshop complex.

As part of the scheduled maintenance procedures, each aircraft had to be flight tested when it left the workshop and before it was returned to the flying units and, as Officer Commanding Workshops, Jones was test pilot for all reconditioned aircraft.<sup>58</sup> The test flights could be quite a dangerous business because on at least two occasions Jones found himself in hazardous situations. On one occasion, a rigger accidentally crossed the aileron wires on an Avro, which meant that the aircraft's lateral controls were reversed. Jones realised the mistake when he was about seven metres above the ground and was able to shut down the engine and get back on to the ground safely.

Things were very different on another occasion and Jones had a bad accident flying an S.E.5a. The testing regime for this aircraft type involved putting it through manoeuvres such as rolls, loops and spins. He was following the regime with one aircraft and did a flick roll in it. He was a bit too rough on this particular occasion, however, and a stanchion on the upper wing broke which, quite understandably, made the aircraft very unstable to fly. Fortunately, through good piloting, he was able to maintain control and prevented the aircraft from going into a spin. He brought it in for a landing but:

I couldn't hold it at the last little bit and it went into the ground, wing and nose first at about 90 miles an hour [145 km/h]. I was flush with the deck, stepped over the side of the cockpit and walked away but I realised that it was a very close go and after a few yards the side of my head started to freeze and I sat down hard.<sup>59</sup>

Murray Jones had observed the incident and drove up in his car. After getting George Jones' account of the incident he called, 'Send for the OC of Workshops!' To which George Jones replied, 'I am the OC of Workshops.'<sup>60</sup> We might wonder why the Commanding Officer did not recognise one of the officers commanding a unit on his base. In addition to suffering from the stress associated with crashing the aircraft, Jones also came away with a cracked kneecap. In spite of this accident, Jones found the S.E.5a a generally easy aircraft to fly. It was very controllable and he

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<sup>57</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Record of Service'.

<sup>58</sup> Jones papers, 'Early Days in the Royal Australian Air Force'.

<sup>59</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 32–33.

undertook a lot of formation flying with this type. However, he did not like them as much as the Sopwith Camel or Snipe because they were not as good at aerobatics as the Sopwiths with their rotary engines.<sup>61</sup>

As a Flight Lieutenant and Officer Commanding Workshop Squadron, Jones was assessed as being a conscientious and hardworking officer. His annual report for 1925, completed by W.H. Anderson noted, when it came to ability, that Jones was 'above average' in the duties he performed, in flying duties, technical knowledge and administrative knowledge. However, Jones' difficulty in dealing with people let him down and he was only rated as 'average' in areas such as power of command, tact in handling personnel and power to impart knowledge.<sup>62</sup>

In April 1926, Jones undertook the RAAF's flying instructor's course, which consisted of three subjects and he was rated as follows:

|                                |     |                        |
|--------------------------------|-----|------------------------|
| Method of Instruction          | 85% | (assessed as 'Supr.')  |
| Sequence & Ability to Instruct | 90% | (assessed as 'Ex.')    |
| Correct Flying                 | 85% | (assessed as 'Supr.'). |

As a flying instructor, he was graded as 1B. Flight Lieutenant H.F. De La Rue, the examining officer, commented, 'Excellent knowledge of aircraft (of a technical nature). A very keen & reliable pilot.'<sup>63</sup>

A few unusual aircraft came through the workshops while Jones was in charge, including a two-seat S.E.5a—serial number A2-36. This aircraft was purchased from the UK (as opposed to being one of the Gift aircraft) and was converted to the twin-seat configuration by the RAAF Experimental Section during 1925. Modifications (in addition to the extra seat) included fitting two petrol tanks to the upper main plane. The aircraft received further modifications to the main planes after it was handed over to 1 Flying Training School.<sup>64</sup> All this work on the aircraft had been undertaken to meet the need for a dual-seat trainer to allow trainee pilots to convert to the S.E.5a.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986.

<sup>62</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1925', 25 February 1926.

<sup>63</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Report on Officer or Cadet on Passing Out from or Leaving Schools and Courses of Instruction'.

<sup>64</sup> Bennett, *The Imperial Gift*, pp. 77–78 and 94.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 77–78.

This additional work took place at the Point Cook workshops and Jones, as part of his duties, was tasked with test flying it. He found it difficult to fly as the relocation of the fuel tank affected its stability on landing and the aircraft would swing violently if not handled carefully. Others who piloted it also found it a horrible aircraft to fly. Nevertheless, it was handed over to the flying squadron and on one occasion was piloted by Bostock and Brownell. Unknown to Jones, these two officers had trouble with the S.E.5a and approached him in the workshops, claiming that the aircraft had been mishandled by the workshop staff. This weakened the undercarriage, which caused Bostock and Brownell to crash-land.<sup>66</sup> Jones, who knew the aircraft was difficult to fly and suspected Bostock and Brownell had problems with it too, considered this was an unfair way to blame him and his workshop personnel for an accident, over which they had no control and which may have been caused by the aircraft's pilot.

Another interesting aircraft, which was the subject of a lot of work at the Point Cook workshops was an Avro 504 float plane. Jones provided technical advice during the aircraft's overhaul, undertaken by J.E. Hewitt (an RAN officer at that time, who later joined the RAAF).<sup>67</sup> Jones' advice proved to be valuable as Hewitt successfully completed the overhaul and flew the aircraft several times at Point Cook.

Jones remained as Officer Commanding Workshop Squadron until August 1926, when he handed over command to Flight Lieutenant E.C. Wackett. It is interesting to note that the handover certificate, signed by both officers, showed no deficiency within the unit—all buildings, plant, machinery and workshop equipment were found to be in a satisfactory condition; workshop records were up to date; barracks were in a clean and orderly condition; and all inventories were correct.<sup>68</sup> Such a report serves as a reflection of Jones' extremely good administrative skills. At the same time, Flight Lieutenant Jones also passed over another of his responsibilities—that of President of the Fire Committee—to Flight Lieutenant H.F. De La Rue.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jones papers, audio tape of interview by Mr Colin Owers, 21 April 1986. A2-36 crashed in a heavy landing on 10 February 1927. It was rebuilt and test flown on 29 August 1927. Bennett, *The Imperial Gift*, p. 94.

<sup>67</sup> J.E. Hewitt, *The Black One*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, Vic., 1984, p. 102.

<sup>68</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Handing Over Certificate', 19 August 1926.

<sup>69</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Handing Over Certificate between F/LIEUT. H.F. De La Rue and F/LIEUT. G. Jones (Duties of President Fire Committee)', 5 August 1926.

Jones now moved to a new job, that of Officer Commanding Headquarters Flight and Chief Instructor and Lecturer on Engines. In this position he was assessed, by Squadron Leader A.H. Cobby, to be, 'A most energetic and thorough officer who is painstaking in carrying out his duties.' This assessment was supported by acting Wing Commander A.T. Cole, who wrote, 'I concur except that I consider that this officer has shown exceptional zeal. He has carried out each unit duty on which he has been engaged with obvious efficiency using initiative and not requiring supervision.'<sup>70</sup> In so far as ability was concerned, Jones was again assessed to be above average against the majority of professional criteria. However, one cannot help but wonder why an officer who was reported to be energetic and efficient was only recommended for promotion in turn (as opposed to being recommended for early promotion), was not recommended for staff college, but was recommended to be retained in his present position.<sup>71</sup>

In February 1927, Flight Lieutenant Jones sat for the test for re-grading as a flying instructor at No 1 Flying Training School. The process consisted of a one and a half hour theoretical examination on training orders and instructions (he was assessed as 'excellent' and gained the mark of 94% for this part of the exam), and three tests conducted in the air—method of instruction, sequence and ability, and correct flying. He again was assessed to be 'excellent' and gained the marks of 95%, 92% and 94% respectively. This gave him an overall average of 93.75%. He was assessed as 'An instructor of outstanding ability' and was recommended for re-grading as a 1A Instructor.<sup>72</sup>

George Jones was promoted to the rank of Squadron Leader on 31 March 1927 and his next posting was as Officer Commanding Flying Squadron, No 1 Flying Training School. This posting took effect from 16 June 1927 and he took over the position from Squadron Leader A.H. Cobby.<sup>73</sup> As Officer Commanding Flying Squadron, Jones was assessed as being 'average' for rank in his tact in the handling of men. His zeal in the performance of his duties was 'above average' and, overall,

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<sup>70</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1926'.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Instructors and Pupils – Report on Officer or Cadet on Passing Out from or Leaving Schools and Courses of Instruction', 21 January 1927.

<sup>73</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Handing Over Certificate, S/Ldr Cobby to F/Lt. Jones', 16 June 1927.

his ability was generally 'above average' (especially his knowledge of engines). Jones was:

A steady, painstaking & efficient officer. S/Leader Jones has commanded his squadron with success and to my satisfaction. Throughout the year he has shown energy, forethought & judgement in his service duties.<sup>74</sup>

Almost one month later, Jones was involved in the worst flying accident the RAAF experienced during the 1920s. The Duke of York arrived in Melbourne on 21 April 1927 on an official visit to Australia and, as part of the welcoming celebrations, the RAAF staged a fly-past over the centre of the city during the afternoon of the same day. Shortly after 4 pm, seven D.H.9s flying at 1000 feet in a 'V' formation, led by George Jones, started to perform a shallow dive, which was the customary form of an aerial salute. During the climb out of the dive Jones looked back to check that other aircraft in the formation were in their allocated positions. Instead, he saw the disaster, 'the two near machines on my starboard quarter were falling apart, evidently after a collision'. One aircraft went into a vertical dive and crashed through the roof of a Post Office garage. The other aircraft went into a flat spin as the pilot tried to regain control. His efforts were in vain and the aircraft crashed on to Dodd Street, about 50 metres from the site of the first crash. All four aircrew were killed in the crashes. Amazingly, they were not wearing parachutes! Many people on the ground, including the Duke of York and CAS, witnessed the accident.<sup>75</sup>

Jones had another change in duties in mid 1928 when Squadron Leader W.D. Bostock replaced him as Officer Commanding of the Flying Squadron.<sup>76</sup> Jones resumed his old position in charge of Workshop Squadron.<sup>77</sup> He also moved his family back into suburban Melbourne and bought a Nash car, which he drove over to Point Cook each day, with J.E. Hewitt and a few other fellow officers as passengers.<sup>78</sup> It was while he was commanding the Flying Squadron that Jones took another step towards furthering his career—he applied to attend Staff College.

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<sup>74</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1927'.

<sup>75</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 316; Bennett, *The Imperial Gift*, p. 106; Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 179; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>76</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, untitled minute, 19 June 1928.

<sup>77</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Handing Over Certificate, Workshop Squadron, No. 1 F.T.S.', 10 August 1928.

<sup>78</sup> Hewitt, *The Black One*, p. 126.

### **The RAF Staff College at Andover**

From 1923 onwards, RAAF officers could attend the RAF Staff College at Andover in Hampshire. Usually two RAAF officers per year were selected for the College and 30 passed through there before the outbreak of World War II. Included in this number were Squadron Leader A.T. Cole, Wing Commander S.J. Goble, Flight Lieutenant W.D. Bostock, Squadron Leader W.H. Anderson and Wing Commander R. Williams.<sup>79</sup>

The College was another part of Lord Trenchard's 'great scheme' for building the RAF and was opened by Trenchard himself in spring 1922, with Air Vice-Marshal H.R. Brooke-Popham as its first Commandant.<sup>80</sup> John James comments that the RAF College was a lodger unit on the station. He downplays its role, by adding that the main task of the Army College was to train Army officers for minor staff posts and that, in the same manner, the RAF College mainly trained officers in the preparation of Task Charts.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, Alan Stephens notes that Williams and Hewitt expressed reservations about the College and the training they received there. However, Stephens also states there were benefits to be gained because the College provided 'a comprehensive and first-class education in the theory and practice of air power'. Furthermore, students benefited from the opportunity to discuss air power with some of the noted thinkers of the day (including Colonel J.F.C. Fuller and Air Marshal Sir John Salmond).<sup>82</sup> Certainly 1929, the year Jones attended, was no exception when it came to noted military personalities being associated with the College. The College's Commandant was Air Commodore E.R. (later Air Chief Marshal Sir Edgar) Ludlow-Hewitt,<sup>83</sup> while one of the officers who took up duty there as an instructor that same year was Wing Commander A.W. (later Marshal of the RAF, Lord) Tedder.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cole was the first RAAF officer to attend the College. Goble attended in 1925 and Bostock and Anderson in 1926. Dennis Newton, *First Impact*, Banner Books, Maryborough, Qld, 1996, p. 3. Williams completed the course at the British Army Staff College at Camberley in 1923 and then spent six months at Andover. Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 155.

<sup>80</sup> Andrew Boyle, *Trenchard: Man of Vision*, Collins, London, 1962, p. 424.

<sup>81</sup> John James, *The Paladins*, Futura Publications, London, 1991, p. 150. While administrative in its nature, the Task Chart is a fundamental air planning tool and is a detailed account of what is required to carry out an operation, in terms of aircraft, parts, fuel, manpower etc.

<sup>82</sup> Alan Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, pp. 40–41.

<sup>83</sup> Ludlow-Hewitt was appointed Commander-in-Chief of Bomber Command in September 1937. John Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware, Hertfordshire, UK, 1997, p. 81.

<sup>84</sup> Arthur William Tedder, *With Prejudice: The War Memoirs of Marshal of the Royal Air Force*,

## **The Selection Process**

Squadron Leader Jones applied to sit for the Staff College qualifying exam during late 1927. He applied because, at that time, he had begun to feel more confident about his future with the RAAF and had aimed for entry to the College as a means of furthering his career.<sup>85</sup>

The Commanding Officer of No 1 Flying Training School agreed that Jones was suitable for the course. In his recommendation to the Air Board, he described Jones as temperate, prudent and steady in conduct; active and energetic. In addition, it was stated that Jones possessed force of character and displayed considerable interest in his profession as well as intelligence and discretion in the performance of his duties. He was 'of a suitable disposition and temper; an efficient leader and instructor.' The other two contemporary applicants from the Flying Training School were Flight Lieutenant F.M. Bladin and Flight Lieutenant D.E.L. Wilson.<sup>86</sup> Jones was selected ahead of these officers.

Three RAAF officers (George Jones, Frank McNamara, VC and Frank Lukis) eventually sat the three-day series of test papers and Jones was the only one who passed. He comments cynically on CAS's surprise at the results, saying that Williams thought there was a mistake with the results and returned the exam papers to London for re-marking; 'After all, McNamara had a Bachelor of Arts degree, whereas I was only a product of the Rushworth State School, and both McNamara and Lukis had served under Williams in No. 1 Squadron in the Middle East.'<sup>87</sup> Unfortunately for McNamara there had been no mistake, he missed out on one subject.<sup>88</sup> The results were confirmed and Jones gained entry to the College.

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*Lord Tedder*, Cassell, London, 1966, p. 3. In 1944, Tedder was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander of Operation Overlord.

<sup>85</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 41. Jones adds that he knew the exams would be difficult and studied hard for the various subjects.

<sup>86</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute 'Applications – RAF Staff College Examination' from Commanding Officer No 1 Flying Training Squadron to Secretary Air Board, 23 November 1927.

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 42. Jones' memory may have been a little hazy in relation to McNamara's qualifications at the time of the exam in 1928, as McNamara did not gain his Bachelor of Arts degree until 1933 (i.e. some years after the Staff College entrance examination). Frank Lukis attended Andover in 1931.

<sup>88</sup> McNamara, also a former student of Rushworth State School, made several attempts to gain selection for RAF Staff College. He had been selected for a two-year posting to the UK in 1925 and while over there, during 1926, he sat the entrance exam for the first time without success. As noted above, he was again unsuccessful in 1928 and also in 1929 when he tried for a third time. McNamara's 1929 exam results were his worst as he missed several subjects. On commenting on

The motive for the selection of the other RAAF officer to attend the College is interesting. Flight Lieutenant Bill Palstra, who, Jones claims had been too old to take the examination, was selected as a 'special case'.<sup>89</sup> Jones was wrong in this instance as Palstra was a highly capable officer whose abilities impressed his superiors. He had a university degree and we may assume this would have negated the need to sit for the exam because he had already proven he was capable of academic study.<sup>90</sup>

It was a long time before the results were made known to the applicants. In the meantime, it was business as usual at Point Cook. The day after he took over command of the Workshop Squadron from Flight Lieutenant J.D. Jarman, word reached Jones that his application was successful. He was to attend the College's seventh course, commencing 21 January 1929. The duration of the course was 12 months, with a second year in the UK attached to the RAF.

Jones was given the choice of departing Melbourne on 17 November 1928 aboard the SS *Ulysses* of the Blue Funnel Line (arriving in London on 5 January 1929), or aboard the SS *Ormonde* of the Orient Line (leaving on 27 November and arriving London on 3 January). The SS *Ormonde* was selected because the RAAF needed to retain Jones' skills up until the last moment:

Squadron Leader Jones is at present commanding the Workshops Squadron of this Unit and is carrying out some specially urgent work, which it is not in the interests of the Service to hand over in its present state.<sup>91</sup>

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McNamara's persistence to gain entry to the Staff College, Chris Coulthard-Clark notes that 'he readily appreciated that having the initials "psa" after his name was a useful step towards further advancement'. In 1928, McNamara turned his attention to another form of higher education and resumed his studies, begun before World War I, at the University of Melbourne, as a part-time student, and eventually graduated at the end of 1933 with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Honours Class 2) in International Relations. See Chris Coulthard-Clark, *McNamara, VC: A Hero's Dilemma*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1997, pp. 72–73.

<sup>89</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 42. Flight Lieutenant W. Palstra, MC served with 3 Squadron during World War I. He was born in Zwolle, in the Netherlands, on 8 October 1891 and would have been 36 years of age at the time of the exam in 1928. At the same time Jones and Lukis were 31 and McNamara was 33. One wonders at what age a person became 'too old'. This seems to be a very lame excuse on Jones' part. It also must be asked, if he was too old, what would have been the benefit to the RAAF of sending Palstra on the course?

<sup>90</sup> Chris Clark, 'The Difference One Man Makes', in Chris Clark and Sanu Kainikara (eds), *Pathfinder Collection – Volume 1*, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, ACT, 2005, pp. 94–95.

<sup>91</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Commanding Officer No 1 Flying Training School to Secretary Air Board, 18 August 1927.



It was noted that Jones had accumulated 56 days leave which would have been impossible to adjust before his departure. His Commanding Officer made a generous concession and agreed to allow him to take 'small quantities of leave on occasions when this would not effect his work.'<sup>92</sup>

Jones was accompanied by Muriel and Ronald for the duration of the posting to the UK. Before leaving Australia Jones, then a resident of 33 Northcote Avenue, Caulfield, posted a bond of £500 payable to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors for the use of the Commonwealth of Australia. What this meant was that Jones would attend the College and remain in the UK for the additional year, posted to the RAF. In return he would continue to serve as an officer of the RAAF, Permanent Air Force, for five years after his return to Australia.<sup>93</sup> Should he not complete this service he was bound to pay the Commonwealth Government £500.

### **The College Course**

The 12-month College regime had two components. There were the classes in various military topics and there was the opportunity to fly contemporary RAF aircraft, such as the types built by de Havilland, Avro and Bristol. During the first three months in the UK these were short duration (25 to 45 minutes) practice flights. Later during the posting Jones had the opportunity to participate in some longer training flights, which were planned along operational lines.

The year at the College was broken into three terms. In the vacations between the terms, Jones spent time with the Royal Navy and British Army. The first vacation was a week during late April–early May and was spent at the School of Army Co-operation at Old Sarum where:

Some experience was obtained in Army Co-operation work including the duties of I.L.O. and S.A.O., and also in writing operation orders for co-operation between Aircraft and Ground Forces. Practical air work consisted of picking up and dropping messages, and reconnaissance flights.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Bond', 16 November 1928. This document was witnessed by W. Palstra of 60 Guilford Road, Surrey Hills, Vic.

<sup>94</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Quarterly Report in Accordance with A.F.O.'s, Part 1 – Record of Duty Performed', 16 December 1929.

The second vacation was aboard HMS *Vindictive* during a cruise to Scotland as part of the autumn exercise of the Atlantic Fleet. Jones noted that a variety of Fleet exercises were carried out day and night and that aircraft, flying from carriers, were used by both opposing sides participating in the exercise. During the trip he 'witnessed the laying of a smoke screen by aircraft, followed by an attack by 9 torpedo bombers'. He also had the opportunity to fly a Fairey IIID seaplane, which was catapulted from the cruiser.<sup>95</sup>

During his time at the College, Jones forwarded quarterly reports on his studies to the RAAF Liaison Officer in London. Of these, only the final appears to have survived. Jones reported for the third term (16 September to 13 December 1929) the principal subjects studied included Land and Air Operations 1914–1918, Mobility and Equipment, Mobilisation, Combined Operations, Air Control of Uncivilised Countries,<sup>96</sup> and Imperial Strategy. When it came to air power theory, a subject that one might expect to be a specialty of the College, Jones was later to admit he received a 'sketchy education' in the subject (as an example of this lack of education he noted Douhet's theories were not taught); however, this type of education was no better in Australia.<sup>97</sup>

As part of the College course, Jones visited military and related sites in the UK, such as the Bristol and Supermarine factories, the RAF apprentice school at Halton, No

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<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Air control was the RAF's success story for the 1920s. The British Government, in the throes of postwar military expenditure cutbacks, adopted a proposal whereby the RAF would provide the military force necessary to maintain control over the colonies. That is, saving resources such as troops and money by the substitution of air forces for land forces. What the concept meant was that law-breaking tribes (i.e. those who had disrupted the maintenance of the primary rules of law and order) would be given an ultimatum—the colonial government would advise what they had done wrong, what was expected of them in the future and what restitution they were expected to pay. Should the tribes not comply with the ultimatum, the RAF would begin bombing the villages. This, interspersed with propaganda leaflet drops would slowly intensify until the recipients sued for peace, on terms that were acceptable to the Government. In this manner, the RAF could achieve the same result as land troops in a much shorter time. Air control was also seen as being more cost-effective because it employed fewer military personnel. Air control was successfully employed through the 1920s in Somaliland, Mesopotamia and Aden. Capt David Willard Parsons, USAF, 'British Air Control: A Model for the Application of Air Power in Low-Intensity Conflict?', in *Airpower Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2, Summer 1994; Marshal of The Royal Air Force Sir John Slessor, *The Central Blue: Recollections and Reflections*, Cassell & Co, London, 1956, pp. 51–73; David MacIsaac, 'Voices from the Central Blue: The Air Power Theorists', in Peter Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy, from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, UK, 1991, p. 633; and Boyle, *Trenchard: Man of Vision*, pp. 376–395.

<sup>97</sup> Alan Stephens, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones conducted in Melbourne on 31 October 1989', transcript of interview.

1 Stores Depot at Kidbrooke, naval establishments at Portsmouth, and the Calshot seaplane base, as well as the Army's School of Artillery, School of Chemical Warfare and the Tank Training Establishment. Jones also visited the Royal Airship Works at Cardington where the huge R101 airship was nearing completion. The College field trips gave Jones the opportunity to observe new aircraft types and weapons systems. Therefore, his report gave brief details of the latest developments with the Westland Wapiti and Supermarine Southampton (both types had entered service with the RAAF), and a one-day cruise aboard the aircraft carrier, HMS *Furious*, as well as details of new bombs and comments on air transport.<sup>98</sup> In all, the course appears to have covered a lot of ground. Regardless of the content and field trips, Jones admitted he found the course difficult, largely due to the deficiencies in his education and especially his lack of training in English expression. As a student he would have made a sharp contrast to the RAF officers, who, he noted, were mostly university graduates and considered themselves to be the cream of their Service. He also found the social life a new experience.<sup>99</sup>

One assignment given to Staff College students was to write an essay of their experiences of World War I. Jones prepared a five foolscap page document titled 'Experiences in France during 1918 with No. 4 (Fighter) Squadron, Australian Flying Corps'. The essay begins with 4 Squadron commencing operations from an airfield at Bruay in France.<sup>100</sup> Jones' essay is very interesting, not because it contains very little detail of his combat experiences nor even the squadron's operations but, rather, because it is a collection of observations, lessons learned from air combat and tactics he developed for fighter and ground attack operations.

### **Postings with the RAF**

While Jones acknowledged he found the College course difficult, it is a mark of his determination that he worked hard, graduated and received a very satisfactory

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<sup>98</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Quarterly Report in Accordance with A.F.O.'s, Part 1 – Record of Duty Performed', 16 December 1929.

<sup>99</sup> Jones papers, 'I qualify for the R.A.F. Staff College and spend two years in England.'

<sup>100</sup> National Library of Australia, NLA/PRO AIR 1, Reel 6883, 'War Experiences by Squadron Leader G. Jones, 1917–1918; 7th Course, RAF Staff College, Andover. Much of the detail contained in the essay has been included in Chapters 4 and 5 of this biography.

## *The Private Air Marshal*

report.<sup>101</sup> The term 'very satisfactory' is open to debate as Ludlow-Hewitt's report includes a few reservations as well as praise:

He has shewn [sic] marked perseverance and determination in his course work here, and has consequently gained full profit from the Course. He has worked very hard and consistently.

A little retiring, he is nevertheless ready to express his views when necessary, and when he does so he speaks clearly and well. Has fully taken part in discussions and conferences.

Although not analytical he is yet a sound and practical thinker, and has excellent powers of application.

A good officer who will do good staff work.

Recommended for p.s.a.<sup>102</sup>

The second year in the UK was spent in a variety of short-term postings, the first of which was 10 days, beginning on 20 January 1930, at the Admiralty Compass Observatory at Slough. This was followed by attendance at the 31st Flying Instructor's Course (4 February to 21 April 1930) at the Central Flying School (CFS) at Wittering in Yorkshire. Here, Jones ran up nearly 60 hours flying Avro 504, Bristol, de Havilland D.H.9a, Siskin, Grebe, Gamecock and Moth aircraft.<sup>103</sup> For most of this second year in the UK, Jones and his family lived in a rented house in Sutton, Surrey. In his spare time, Jones took Muriel and Ronald on sightseeing trips to different parts of the country.

Jones time at Central Flying School was quite successful and he had a motive for attending. He recognised the status, in Australia, attached to qualifications gained in the UK and commented many years later, 'I had been a flying instructor back at Point Cook, but I wanted to attend RAF training to give me a sort of hallmark.'<sup>104</sup> Despite his difficulties in relating to people, flying instruction was an area of Service employment well suited to Jones and he enjoyed the work there immensely and

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<sup>101</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 45; and Jones papers, 'I qualify for the R.A.F. Staff College and spend two years in England.'

<sup>102</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Commandant's Report on Students at the end of the Course', 29 November 1929. Palstra was also recommended for 'p.s.a.' (passed staff air). Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 45.

<sup>103</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Quarterly Report in Accordance with A.F.O.'s', 4 April 1930.

<sup>104</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988.'

graduated top of the course with the highest grading attainable.<sup>105</sup> His RAF report showed he was a category 'A1' instructor, recommended to instruct on all types of aircraft and was qualified by:

This officer has been very keen and has gained an excellent knowledge of the system of instructing. He demonstrates well and imparts his knowledge in a convincing manner. He flies well with plenty of confidence and his proficiency in aerobatics is much above average. He has had considerable experience as an instructor in the R.A.A.F.

(sgd) J.M. Robb S/Ldr. C.F.I.<sup>106</sup>

Not surprisingly, Jones also excelled at the ground subjects and achieved the following results, giving him an average mark of 85.2%:<sup>107</sup>

|                 |     |                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| Engines Lynx    | 87% | Rigging General | 78% |
| Engines General | 90% | Airmanship      | 80% |
| Rigging Avro    | 91% |                 |     |

In relation to his ability to instruct, Jones was classed as 'A very good instructor who has made full use of his opportunities.' While the Commandant of the Central Flying School wrote:

Fully qualified for an A.1 Category in every respect. An excellent officer with plenty of common sense.<sup>108</sup>

Jones retained his A1 category for 10 years.<sup>109</sup>

Jones took the opportunity to visit every major aircraft factory in the UK because he had been in charge of the RAAF's only aircraft repair workshop and was very

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<sup>105</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 45. In another source Jones claims he graduated second from the top. See Jones papers, 'I qualify for the R.A.F. Staff College and spend two years in England'

<sup>106</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, RAF Form 364, 'Report on Officer or Airman Pilot Passing Out from or on Leaving a Flying Instructor's Refresher Course at the Central Flying School', 17 April 1930. J.M. Robb had a long career with the RAF and during World War II, as Air Vice-Marshal Sir James Robb, became Air Officer Commanding No 2 Group, RAF. See Michael J.F. Bowyer, *2 Group RAF: A Complete History, 1936-1945*, Crecy Books, Bodmin, Cornwall, UK, 1992, p. 78.

<sup>107</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, RAF Form 364, 'Report on Officer or Airman Pilot Passing Out from or on Leaving a Flying Instructor's Refresher Course at the Central Flying School', 17 April 1930.

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Jones papers, 'I qualify for the R.A.F. Staff College and spend two years in England'

interested in aircraft production.<sup>110</sup> More than anything else, the factory visits confirmed Jones' belief in the establishment of an Australian aircraft industry because he was able to observe manufacturing techniques and was aware that the same sort of work could be done by factories in Australia. Jones maintained his belief in Australia's capacity to produce military aircraft for the rest of his life.

The next RAF attachment was three weeks (25 April to 15 May) with 17 Squadron flying Bristol Bulldog single-seat fighters, based at Upavon on the Salisbury Plain. Jones ran up 14 hours on this aircraft type, flying practice attacks on Fairey Fox light bomber formations, aerobatics, and a flight to the Sutton Bridge armament training camp. The rest of May was spent on visits to the Westland factory at Yeovil and the de Havilland factory at Stag Lane. At the latter site he observed the construction and repair of the Gipsy engine and Moth and Puss Moth aircraft (the former was in use as a trainer with the RAAF).

This was followed by two weeks with 111 Squadron, equipped with Armstrong Whitworth Siskins at Hornchurch. Here Jones gained experience with radio communication and studied the Air Defence of Great Britain (ADGB) scheme.<sup>111</sup>

The squadron attachment was followed by another visit to an aircraft factory. This time the company was Bristol, where he noted the construction and repair of Bulldog fighters; no doubt this was useful information as the RAAF was just receiving the type into service. Jones, however, was unimpressed with the aircraft itself.<sup>112</sup>

The next RAF posting was to the Home Aircraft Depot at Henlow (23 June to 4 July). This also was quite interesting for Jones and he reported on engine and aircraft repairs. On the subject of aircraft repairs, he made the significant comment, 'repairs at this depot are now confined almost entirely to metal aircraft' (the RAAF

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<sup>110</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 46.

<sup>111</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Quarterly Report on Duties Performed', 12 July 1930.

<sup>112</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'. Jones considered that Williams—through his lack of aircraft technical knowledge—had selected badly when the Bulldog was bought for the RAAF. The Service received eight Bulldogs in February 1930. They served with the Fighter Squadron at Point Cook and then with 1 Squadron. They proved to be very popular with spectators at RAAF flying displays, but five were written off during their time with the Service. The last three were taken off strength in 1940. See <http://www.airforce.gov.au/RAAFMuseum/research/aircraft/series1/A12.htm>, accessed 3 August 2009.

was still to receive its first all-metal aircraft). He also commented on the high standards to be attained before an airman qualified as a metal rigger.

The UK posting ended in December 1930. The Jones family returned to Australia by sea aboard the SS *Ascanius*, 'via the Cape of Good Hope because that was the cheapest route.'<sup>113</sup> Unfortunately, while the two-year posting was obviously very interesting and informative for Squadron Leader Jones, it had a sad ending. The R101 airship had been completed and Squadron Leader Palstra, the RAAF Air Liaison Officer at the Air Ministry, was selected as the Air Aide to the Secretary of State for Air and to represent the Australian Government aboard it on its inaugural flight to India.<sup>114</sup> The airship crashed at Beauvais, France on 4 October 1930.<sup>115</sup> Palstra was one of the 48 people killed in the disaster.

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<sup>113</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p 46/

<sup>114</sup> Sir Peter G. Masefield, *To Ride the Storm: The Story of the Airship R.101*, William Kimber, London, 1982, p. 321; and Clark 'The Difference One Man Makes', p. 96. Jones had expected to travel on the airship because he was the more senior of the two officers. Williams, however, had asked that the Air Liaison Officer be the person to make the flight.

<sup>115</sup> Len Deighton and Arnold Schwartzman, *Airshipwreck*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1978, pp. 52–56.





## *A Most Capable, Keen and Conscientious Officer*

On his return from Britain in October 1930, Squadron Leader George Jones moved to the position of Officer Commanding of the Training Squadron at 1 Flying Training School at Point Cook.<sup>1</sup> In a sense this was both good and bad for Jones. His real interest was in aircraft manufacture and he would have preferred to have been appointed to a position where he could have followed this ideal but, as he had qualified as an A1 instructor while in Britain, it was logical that he would be posted to a position where his instructor skills could be put to best use. In addition to being Officer Commanding he was also the RAAF's Chief Flying Instructor. This made Jones responsible for examining and grading all the Service's flying instructors on all aircraft types (including himself).<sup>2</sup> Regardless of the position, Jones still was able to undertake one of the activities of Service life he enjoyed the most—flying. He flew 69 hours during his first year as the Officer Commanding and was rated as proficient on Wapiti and Bulldog aircraft. Perhaps Jones had gained some additional 'people skills' during his time at the Staff College because in his annual report for 1930/31 he was assessed as being 'exceptional' in his tact in handling men, as well as in his zeal in the performance of his duties. The assessment of his tact was short lived, however, and future assessments in this regard would not be as positive. He was also rated as 'exceptional' in his current and flying duties. The assessing officer, F.H. McNamara, VC, made the following remarks:

A very capable and conscientious squadron leader. He has done very good work in command of the Training Squadron and in addition has loyally and actively assisted me in many other aspects of the Flying Training School as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

The same report noted 'tennis' as Jones' special athletic qualification. In addition to his day-to-day RAAF duties, Jones was given a few other tasks, such as being

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<sup>1</sup> Jones papers, 'Flying Training at Point Cook as Chief Instructor'

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1930/31'.

appointed Commissioner for taking Declarations and Affidavits in November 1930.<sup>4</sup>

It was also late in 1930 that Jones was tasked with an unusual mission. He flew to Warrnambool on the southern coast of Victoria to investigate unidentified flying objects (UFOs), which local residents claimed to have sighted flying over the coast. Jones reasoned that he was selected because, as the Chief Flying Instructor, he could fly to the correct location and form an opinion on what had been seen. He questioned the local residents who had reported seeing the UFOs. One elderly resident had some definite ideas and told him 'it must have been some of these Germans coming here.' Jones reported his findings and formed no conclusion on what had been seen other than it was neither an Australian nor a foreign aircraft but was possibly a flock of birds.<sup>5</sup> This was not to be Jones' only experience with UFOs, as later in his life, he personally observed some unusual phenomena.

Through the early 1930s, Jones' annual reports recognised and praised his skills and abilities. It is through these reports that we can build a brief picture of his activities during this period, as well as gain an appreciation of how he was viewed by his colleagues. Jones himself believed his early life in the 'bush' (i.e. living in the country environment at Rushworth) helped him in his career in the RAAF. He claimed:

I didn't give myself any airs and it was very hard for me to think I was different from a lot of other people. I couldn't be seen to be different because I remembered my humble beginnings, shall we say.<sup>6</sup>

In reality, he partially lived up to this statement. He enjoyed certain aspects of Service life, especially flying. However, on looking at Jones' background and subsequent career we may suspect that he was also aware that a commission in the RAAF was the means to achieving a middle-class lifestyle that would not have been available to him had he remained a motor mechanic. As will be seen later, Jones certainly gave himself airs when stating his views on his role as CAS and in the subsequent clashes with Bostock.

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<sup>4</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Commanding Officer No 1 Flying Training School to Air Board, 7 November 1930.

<sup>5</sup> B. Chalker, 'Air Marshall [sic] Sir George Jones and the UFO'; 2000, at [http://www.theozfiles.com/air\\_marshall\\_george\\_jones.html](http://www.theozfiles.com/air_marshall_george_jones.html), accessed 3 Aug 2009.

<sup>6</sup> D. Gadd, 'War veteran finds peace', in *Herald-Sun*, 21 April 1992, p. 52.

Jones undertook the Flying Instructor test to maintain his qualifications again in May 1931. This time he flew the de Havilland Moth and the Wapiti at 1 Flying Training School. The examining officer, Flight Lieutenant F.R.W. Scherger, assessed Jones to be a very capable pilot on both aircraft types and a very good instructor. He was recommended by the Director of Training, Squadron Leader W.D. Bostock, to retain his Grade A1 instructor qualification.<sup>7</sup> As a flying instructor, Jones undertook flying tests of other RAAF officers, in Victoria, during the second half of 1931.<sup>8</sup>

Another step upwards in his career came on 16 November 1931, when Jones succeeded Bostock as Director of Training, at RAAF Headquarters. He stayed in this position until 19 April 1936.<sup>9</sup> This new job meant a change of workplace from Point Cook to RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne. Jones would remain at RAAF Headquarters, working in different positions, for the rest of his Air Force career. He would, however, have the occasional break from Headquarters as he visited bases as part of his duties. As Director of Training, Jones was responsible for the syllabus of training at the Flying Training School and Service squadrons. He was also responsible for developing specialist courses and training standards in areas such as armament, navigation and signals.<sup>10</sup> He still continued to fly, however, and to undertake flying tests, which on at least one occasion proved to be hazardous. At the end of March 1932, he conducted tests at Richmond air base in New South Wales. Accompanied by Squadron Leader McCauley, he flew a de Havilland Moth (A7-42) for the seven-hour flight from Point Cook to Richmond, via Wangaratta, Junee and Goulburn. When they finally reached their destination, Jones carried out tests for his fellow officers, including Ewart, Bostock and Charlesworth. Unfortunately, during the tests, Jones had a very serious accident.

On 2 April 1932, Moth A7-28 crashed during take-off while Pilot Officer Candy was being tested.<sup>11</sup> Jones was piloting the Moth, which ran into a sandy patch of ground on take-off and collided with a fence. Candy was uninjured but Jones was knocked unconscious and was taken to the South Sydney Hospital with a suspected

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<sup>7</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Report on Pilot on Passing Out or on Leaving a Flying Instructors' Course', 29 June 1931.

<sup>8</sup> RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones'.

<sup>9</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers'. Bostock took over as Commanding Officer of 3 Squadron, based at Richmond, NSW.

<sup>10</sup> Jones papers, 'My Experience as a Staff Officer – Director of Training, Director of Personnel Services, Assistant Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>11</sup> RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones'.

fracture at the base of the skull. He remained unconscious for two and a half days.<sup>12</sup> This injury led to another long period of recovery. After a stay of 11 days at South Sydney, Jones was transferred to the Prince of Wales Hospital, where he remained until 19 April. While he was able to return home to Melbourne, Jones' recovery was slow and a month after the accident a medical examination found him fit for ordinary duties, with the exception of flying duty.<sup>13</sup> Despite the examination, he was admitted to hospital again (this time in Caulfield) for two weeks in May and it was not until 16 September that the medical officer classified Jones to be 'A1 – Fit for Full Flying Duties'.<sup>14</sup> Four days later, Jones took to the air for a 45-minute solo practice flight in another Moth.<sup>15</sup>

Accidents aside, George Jones' excellent work performance continued to be noted by his supervisors. In his 1931/32 annual report he was assessed as 'exceptional' in the performance of his duties. In so far as technical knowledge was concerned, it was reported he was 'Above average. Has had some practical technical training', while his staff work was 'exceptional'. Jones also rated 'exceptional' for his general standard of professional knowledge. 'Jimmy' Goble, his Commanding Officer, concluded the report with: 'A most capable, keen and conscientious officer, whose high all round qualifications fit him for any command or senior staff appointment'.<sup>16</sup>

Around this time, Jones gained additional experience in long-distance flying. In October 1932, he piloted a Wapiti as part of a six-aircraft (three Wapitis and three Bulldogs) trans-Australian flight. The aircraft departed from Laverton on 12 October, flew to Nhill and then on to Adelaide. On 14 and 15 October, the aircraft flew formation flights over the South Australian capital, as part of an air pageant staged at the Parafield airfield. Two days later they headed to Perth, stopping first at Ceduna, then Forrest and Kalgoorlie.<sup>17</sup> This was the second ever visit to the

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<sup>12</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 50.

<sup>13</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Deputy Director Medical Services–Air to Air Member for Personnel, 'Medical Fitness – S/Ldr. G. Jones', 9 May 1932.

<sup>14</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Deputy Director Medical Services–Air to Air Member for Personnel, 'Re – Squadron Leader G. Jones H.Q', 9 September 1932.

<sup>15</sup> RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones'.

<sup>16</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1931/32'.

<sup>17</sup> RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones'.

Western Australian capital by a formation of RAAF aircraft. While there, Jones and his comrades took part in an air pageant staged at Mayfield and flew two formation displays over Perth on 23 October. Jones suffered a mishap during one flying display when his aircraft's wind-driven generator fell apart during a low pass. Parts of the generator pierced his petrol tank and he landed with fuel streaming from the aircraft, and sickened from the petrol fumes. He found this a frightening incident and he had recollections of the fighter combat on 24 March 1918.<sup>18</sup> The damage was repaired and Jones was able to continue flying, as the Wapitis left Perth after the pageant. On their return to Laverton, they spent a day at Kalgoorlie-Boulder airfield and staged the first display by Service aircraft on the goldfields. Approximately 5000 people turned out to watch aerobatics and simulated air-to-air combats between the Bulldogs and Wapitis. Jones and the other Wapiti pilots also flew message pick-up exercises.<sup>19</sup>

His 1932/33 annual report again assessed Jones to be 'exceptional' in the performance of his duties, in flying duties and in staff work. He was 'above average' in technical knowledge, administrative knowledge and in his power to impart knowledge. W.H. Anderson described him as 'An exceptionally keen and capable officer'.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, his report for the following year assessed Jones to be 'exceptional' or 'above average' against the majority of reporting criteria, with Anderson commenting, 'Another excellent year's work'.<sup>21</sup> Jones requalified as an A1 flying instructor twice during 1933. On the first occasion, on 19 January, F.R.W. Scherger assessed him to be a most accurate and capable pilot and a very able instructor.<sup>22</sup> At his second test in June 1933, the examining officer, Squadron Leader J.H. Summers considered Jones to be a very sound pilot with the qualification, 'Must guard against tendency of being too firm in the handling of aircraft'. When it came to his ability to instruct, Jones was reported to have a sound knowledge of patten and his ability in relation to instructional demonstrations and explanations was very good. As Director of Training, Jones recommended his own Category A1 grading on both occasions.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup> 'Air Force 'Planes', in *The Western Australian*, 24 October 1924.

<sup>20</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1932/33'.

<sup>21</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1933/34'.

<sup>22</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Report on Passing Out or on Leaving a Flying Instructors' Course or on Instructors' Passing Test', 3 February 1933.

<sup>23</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Report on Passing Out or on

In addition to conducting flying tests for his fellow officers, Jones spent some time back at Point Cook engaged in other training activities. Throughout 1933–1935, he and his colleagues carried out gunnery exercises, dive-bombing tests and camera gun tests, as well as solo flying practice for instruction tests. He also organised and controlled a number of RAAF air displays. The first of these was held at Laverton on 10 November 1934. As well as assisting Wing Commander H.N. Wrigley with the organisation of the display, Jones also participated in the flying events, one of which (known as a ‘tow home’) involved him piloting a de Havilland Moth with its airscrew removed. To the amazement of the crowd of 75 000 people, the Moth was towed into the air by a Wapiti. When the Moth was cast loose from the Wapiti at 2000 feet (600 metres), Jones performed two loops before gliding back to the airfield and landing alongside the official enclosure (which contained the Duke of Gloucester, ‘Colonel’ Roscoe Turner, C.W.A. Scott and Tom Campbell Black).<sup>24</sup> Jones’ unpowered flight was reported in the contemporary newspapers with one account stating:

Squadron Leader Jones sat in the cockpit of the Moth. The uninitiated wondered what would happen to him if the wire hawser broke. They soon found out. Suddenly the wire hawser fell loosely behind the Wapiti. But the Squadron Leader did not turn a hair. He glided the Moth down with ease and flourish.<sup>25</sup>

A similar display was conducted at Richmond, NSW on 26 November 1934, where the ‘tow home’ with the Moth was carried out by another pilot before a large crowd, which included the State Governor, Sir Philip Game.<sup>26</sup> The gliding stunt attracted more media attention than any other part of the display, and one newspaper account poetically described the flying as follows:

The two planes rose in the air. The tow line was cast off and the propellerless plane descended in circles and landed easily.

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Leaving a Flying Instructors’ Course or on Instructors’ Passing Test’, 30 June 1933

<sup>24</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 52–53. Roscoe Turner was well-known US aviator (and speed racer) billed as ‘America’s greatest showman pilot’ in the barnstorming era of the 1920s. He was granted the honorary title of ‘Colonel’ by the Governor of Nevada in 1929—a title he kept proudly until his death. C.W.A. Scott and Tom Campbell Black, who had both served in the RAF, became world famous when they won the London to Melbourne Centenary Air Race in October 1934 (Roscoe Turner finished in third place in the same race).

<sup>25</sup> ‘75,000 See Air Frolics at R.A.A.F. Pageant’, in *The Herald*, 10 November 1934.

<sup>26</sup> RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, ‘Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones.’

An exhibition of 'crazy flying' seemed, to the groundlings, the very height of madness. Yet the unerring skill of the aviator made the display one of marvellously clever manipulation. He made his 'plane perform all manner of 'stunts'. It swooped, touched the ground and skimmed along like an albatross on the surface of the water.<sup>27</sup>

While things were going well for Jones' career, he had become even more remote from his home life (the Jones family, at this time, were living at 15 Maple Crescent, Camberwell).<sup>28</sup> George and Muriel's second son, Ian, was born on 26 June 1934, in Kew, Victoria. George Jones was 38 when Ian was born and he was not too enthusiastic about the prospect of another son. After Ronald, George had become disillusioned with children and told Muriel that she was 'mad wanting another child'. As it turned out, Ian developed a different personality to that of his father and brother and, as a child, he and mother became very close.<sup>29</sup>

In his 1934/35 report, Jones was assessed, once again, as 'average' in his tact in the handling of men. He was 'exceptional' in flying duties and as an instructor, and he was also 'exceptional' when it came to staff work. His administrative knowledge and professional knowledge were 'exceptional'—as one might expect from the Director of Training. 'Jimmy' Goble commented, 'Has in all ways maintained the high standard of his earlier work as DT'.<sup>30</sup> Goble also noted Jones was the 'right type' to attend the Imperial Defence College. At his Flying Instructor's re-qualification test for 1934, Jones was considered to be a sound and accurate pilot although, once again, there was a warning from Summers, the examining officer, that Jones 'Must guard against tendency of being too firm in the handling of controls'. Despite this cautioning, Jones' instructional manner, demonstrations and explanations were very good and he again recommended his own Category A1 qualification.<sup>31</sup>

In addition to his duties as Director of Training, Jones was given another job, albeit part-time. On 17 March 1934, he began a six-year appointment as an Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the Governor-General of Australia (Sir Isaac Isaacs and then Baron

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<sup>27</sup> 'Air Pageant', in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 November 1934.

<sup>28</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Statutory Declaration', 20 July 1934.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 11 July 2001.

<sup>30</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Annual Confidential Report (Officers) for 1934/35'.

<sup>31</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Report on Passing Out or on Leaving a Flying Instructors' Course or on Instructors' Passing Test', 6 August 1934.

Gowrie). Each Defence Service appointed an ADC in each Australian state, so Jones was the RAAF ADC for Victoria. This position would have introduced him to different strata of government and society, and he would have met politicians, State Governors, senior military and government officials, and members of the clergy and judiciary. The tasks associated with the position were simple enough—when Isaacs or Gowrie visited Melbourne, the Navy, Army and RAAF ADCs were at the railway station or airport to receive, or farewell, him. A few times each year Jones would accompany the Governor-General to a social function or event, usually in the evening and Muriel also would have been asked to attend. At other times, Jones would have represented the Governor-General at official functions and one expects he would have been very proud to attend in this capacity.<sup>32</sup>

After reading so many good reports on George Jones personal file, a few questions come to mind. Why, when he was continually given the highest rating (i.e. 'Exceptional') for so many criteria, was Jones never recommended for accelerated promotion? How was it that he was constantly rated as an A1 instructor with very good ability to instruct when his tact in the handling of men usually was rated as 'Average'? In answer to the first question, it is possible that in a new and very small Service there was no position into which Jones could be promoted. That is, in the 1930s many of the RAAF senior officers were in the 30–40 age group and they were still a long way from retirement.<sup>33</sup> In the small Service, suffering from resource cutbacks due to the Depression, there were few senior positions and, therefore, it is likely that the only way an extraordinary promotion could take place would be if a senior officer died or resigned.

To answer the second question we must also consider Jones' personality. From the reports, we get a picture of a very conscientious officer, with a good technical and administrative knowledge and with a good ability to impart flying knowledge. What appears to have let him down was his inability to deal with Service personnel. However, this is most likely a result of Jones overall personality. As an adult, generally he did not relate very well with other people. Instead he found the

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<sup>32</sup> Jones makes no mention of his appointment as ADC in his autobiography. However, Lawrence Wackett was the RAAF ADC in Sydney and briefly mentions the tasks associated with the position in his autobiography. It is quite reasonable to assume that Jones undertook similar tasks in Melbourne. Lawrence James Wackett, *Aircraft Pioneer*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, NSW, 1972, pp. 107–108.

<sup>33</sup> Williams was born in 1890, Goble in 1891, Wrigley and Bostock in 1892, MacKinoly in 1895, L.J. Wackett and Jones in 1896, and Bladin in 1898. Alan Stephens and Jeff Isaacs, *High Fliers: Leaders of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996.



satisfaction that others would find in companionship in aspects of his employment, such as flying or working with machinery.<sup>34</sup>

As Director of Training, Jones was in a position of importance within the Service and was given the opportunity to participate in RAAF strategic planning exercises. One such exercise was conducted by the Air Board as part of the senior officers' conference, which was convened annually during the years prior to World War II. For the 1934 conference, it was Jones' turn to organise the exercise for his fellow officers. Jones developed a scenario, which involved the Japanese Government attempting to send immigrants to Australia. In the scenario, the Australian Government refused to accept the immigrants. The Japanese Government then approached the League of Nations, which decided in their favour and agreed that the Japanese immigrants should be allowed to settle in Queensland. The Australian Government continued to resist while the Japanese prepared a transport fleet (which was protected by naval vessels and aircraft) to convey its citizens. The next part of the scenario had the Japanese fleet reaching the Coral Sea and the RAAF officers were tasked with finding ways to prevent the Japanese taking over Port Moresby and landing on the Queensland coast in the vicinity of Bundaberg.<sup>35</sup> The exercise concluded as the officers found that without adequate aircraft, and the right type of aircraft, they were unable to halt the theoretical invasion.

Following the exercise, Jones gave an address to the participants, in which he was critical of the lack of suitable aircraft and commented that to undertake an exercise without such fundamental assets as appropriate aircraft was similar to conducting a naval exercise without ships. Williams was advised of the exercise, its results and Jones' opinions. He thus directed Jones, together with two other RAAF officers, Squadron Leader George Mackinolty (Director of Technical Equipment)<sup>36</sup> and Flight Lieutenant Harold Seekamp (an engineering officer), to conduct an investigation into aircraft production in Australia. As we might expect, Jones and his team approached their task very thoroughly and with great enthusiasm. After three weeks, they were able to present a report to CAS, through the Air

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>35</sup> Jones found it interesting later to compare how closely the Japanese fleet at the battle of the Coral Sea, in May 1942, followed the plans he had devised for the exercise. Jones papers, 'My Experience as a Staff Officer – Director of Training, Director of Personnel Services, Assistant Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>36</sup> In his autobiography, *From Private to Air Marshal* (p. 58), Jones gives Mackinolty's rank as 'Air Commodore' but this is incorrect as Mackinolty was only a Squadron Leader at the time; he was not promoted to Air Commodore until June 1942.

Member for Personnel, Group Captain W.H. Anderson. One recommendation they made was for the establishment of an aircraft factory at the site of the Army's Ordnance Factory at Maribyrnong, Victoria. Anderson was pleased with the report and forwarded it to Williams. That was the last Jones heard of the report and he doubted Williams ever read it.<sup>37</sup> As we shall see, it would take a catalyst, in the form of a well-connected industrialist, to provide the impetus to start local aircraft production.

In August 1935, Squadron Leader George Jones was involved in another aircraft accident. This time he was flying a Hawker Demon (A1-2), which turned over on the ground at Laverton. At 1520 hours on 6 August, the aircraft ran into some soft ground after landing on the airfield and its wheels bogged. Jones opened the throttle, perhaps to give the aircraft sufficient power to free itself. Unfortunately, this did not happen and instead the Demon tipped forward on to its nose and then over on to its back. Jones received a cut to the face in the accident. The other crew member, Aircraftman W.G. Thompson, suffered from shock. The Demon came out worse, with broken main planes, empennage, airscrew and struts.<sup>38</sup> The accident did not hinder Jones from setting off on another adventure that would take him to some of the remotest parts of Australia.

### **The North Australian Aerial Geological and Geophysical Survey Flight**

During the 1920s and 30s the RAAF was called on to undertake non-military operations, for other government agencies, which meant that, in addition to being a fundamental component of national defence, the Service also was being used as an instrument of national policy to further national development goals and objectives.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, RAAF personnel and aircraft participated in geographic surveying operations of remote parts of Australia and its territories. The surveys took various forms and had different goals. For example, between 1926 and 1928,

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<sup>37</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 58–59; and Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988', transcript of interview.

<sup>38</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Preliminary Report of Flying Accident or Forced Landing', 6 August 1935. Despite the damage, the aircraft was repaired at No 1 Aircraft Depot (1AD) and a month later it was returned to 1 Squadron. Office of Air Force History, 'Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines and Mechanical Transport', Hawker Demon A1-2. The Demon continued service with the RAAF until it was converted to components on 23 July 1941.

<sup>39</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921–39*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1991, pp. 424–430.

Supermarine Seagull III flying boats were based at Bowen, Queensland, to survey the Great Barrier Reef. These aircraft were used again to survey Papua New Guinea to identify possible oilfields during 1927. Other survey flights were undertaken over outback Australia seeking potential oilfields. The Service also undertook land surveys to identify potential civilian landing grounds and surveyed civilian air routes.

Squadron Leader George Jones participated in one of the survey flights as he was selected to fly a party of geologists to north-western Australia. The party was led by Sir Herbert Gepp (the Director, Development Branch, Prime Minister's Department), and included Mr James Stopford (the Queensland Secretary for Mines), Mr L.C. Ball (a senior Queensland geologist) and Mr P.B. Nye (chief executive officer associated with the survey). An RAAF fitter, Leading Aircraftman G. Harford, accompanied Jones.<sup>40</sup>

The aircraft selected for the flight was a de Havilland DH-89 Dragon Rapide biplane transport, powered by two 200 hp de Havilland Gipsy Six piston engines, mounted on the lower main plane. At the time of the flight, the Dragon Rapide had only just entered service with the RAAF. Two of these aircraft had been acquired specially for survey work and were allocated the serial numbers A3-1 and A3-2.<sup>41</sup> The DH-89 was capable of carrying between seven and nine passengers, so one assumes that it was very cosy aboard the aircraft with the two RAAF members and the geological party with their luggage. With the full load aboard, Jones was required to initiate an interesting practice to get the aircraft off the ground—he found it necessary to have the passengers move forward, close behind the pilot, so as to get the tail up quickly.<sup>42</sup>

Jones claims he was selected for the survey flight because he had flown the DH-89 during his time in England.<sup>43</sup> There is, however, some inaccuracy here because as we know, Jones was living in the UK during 1929–30, while the prototype DH-89 was first flown on 17 April 1934.<sup>44</sup> So it could not have been for his experience

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 430–431.

<sup>41</sup> Stewart Wilson, *Military Aircraft of Australia*, Aerospace Publications, Canberra, ACT, 1994, p. 95.

<sup>42</sup> NAA A9376/1/77 – 'Report on flight of de Havilland 'Rapide' Aircraft A3-1 by Squadron Leader G. Jones D.F.C.'

<sup>43</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 430; and Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988.'

<sup>44</sup> A.J. Jackson, *British Civil Aircraft Since 1919*, Volume 2, Putnam, London, 1988, p. 142. Perhaps Jones mistook the DH-89 Dragon Rapide for its predecessor, the DH-84 Dragon.

with the aircraft type that he was selected for the flight. Rather, the selection may have been made because he was a reasonably senior officer and a very experienced pilot with extremely good mechanical skills who would be able to undertake or supervise repair work on the aircraft, should it be necessary, in remote locations.

The flight began at Laverton on 18 September 1935, when the DH-89 (A3-1) took off at 0945 hours on the 135-minute leg to Cootamundra. The entire expedition was undertaken in short legs; the afternoon flight on the first day was a 120-minute trip between Cootamundra and Nyngan. Jones took his party north to Cloncurry via Charleville, Longreach and Winton.<sup>45</sup>

Jones then headed west to Tennant Creek via Camooweal and Brunette Downs. Jones and Harford undertook maintenance work on the aircraft's rigging while at Tennant Creek. As he prepared for a test flight, Jones was unaware that dust was clogging the aircraft's magnetos. As he attempted to take off, he found he could open the throttles only halfway and so he was unable to take off on the short runway. To avoid a serious accident he shut off the engines and applied the brakes. The DH-89 ended up among the ant hills on the edge of the airfield!<sup>46</sup> Fortunately, no major damage was done and, after the necessary repairs had been made, Jones was able to take the DH-89 for a 25-minute test flight later the same day.

From Tennant Creek, Jones flew the Geological Survey Party to a few locations within the Northern Territory—Alice Springs, Newcastle Waters and west to Wave Hill. At the Wave Hill airfield, Jones was intrigued to find the remains of a Liberty aero engine from one of the RAAF's D.H.9a aircraft, which had been destroyed in 1929, while participating in the search for the missing aircraft, the *Kookaburra*.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> NAA A9376/1/77 – 'Report on flight of de Havilland 'Rapide' Aircraft A3-1 by Squadron Leader G. Jones D.F.C.'; and RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones'.

<sup>46</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 431.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 54–55; Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 431; and John Bennett, *The Imperial Gift: British Aeroplanes which Formed the RAAF in 1921*, Banner Books, Maryborough, Qld, 1996, p. 135. On 31 March 1929, Kingsford Smith's Southern Cross aircraft made a forced landing on a mud flat near a river in north-western Australia. A small aircraft, named Kookaburra, with a crew of two, set out from Alice Springs on 10 April to search for the Southern Cross. The Kookaburra, in turn, became lost and a search was mounted for it. The RAAF sent three D.H.9a aircraft, one of which (A1-20) suffered an engine fire on take-off at Wave Hill and was destroyed. A QANTAS aircraft discovered the remains of the Kookaburra on 21 April 1929. Edward P. Wixted, *The North-West Aerial Frontier 1919–1934*, Boolarong Publications, Spring Hill, Qld, 1985, pp. 37–39.

That same afternoon the party flew to Halls Creek, where the proprietor of the local hotel was also the supplier of aviation fuel. Refuelling practices were primitive and potentially hazardous. Jones noticed the proprietor, at the airfield, refuelling the DH-89 with a hand pump stuck into a 44-gallon drum (200 litres), which was leaking petrol from every joint. Oblivious to the danger, the proprietor was smoking a cigar. Jones comments in his autobiography that 'I can tell you that I disposed of that cigar very promptly.'<sup>48</sup>

The next important destination was Port Hedland (via Broome), where the party remained for five nights. During the daylight hours, Jones flew the geologists to such remote locations as Warrawagine Station, Roy Hill and Noonkanbah Station. In his autobiography, Jones mentions that he also visited Marble Bar. As this is not recorded in his official report, we can conclude it was in another town that Stopford and Harford accidentally started a fire with their cigarette butts that almost destroyed the local hotel!<sup>49</sup> Despite all the other incidents he records, it was the flight back to Broome that caused Jones the most anxiety. Sometime after take-off, the DH-89 encountered a very strong headwind and Jones found, much to his distress, that the aircraft had used up over half of its fuel supply but had travelled less than half the distance to Broome! He quickly found the solution was to descend to sea level and to fly above the beaches, using the cliffs to shelter the aircraft from the wind. This proved to be successful and, through skilled piloting, the aircraft reached Broome with 10 minutes of fuel in reserve.<sup>50</sup>

The next major leg was to Darwin, which was reached via Noonkanbah Station, Halls Creek and Wave Hill.<sup>51</sup> From Wave Hill, Jones followed the Victoria River as far as the Victoria River Downs station. It was here he experienced a few navigation problems as contemporary charts did not identify landmarks and he was forced to navigate by compass. Fortunately, Jones' navigation skills proved to be sound as he managed to find the Darwin to Birdum railway and followed it north until the aircraft reached the planned destination before fuel became a problem again. The party spent two days in Darwin and, in addition to their other activities, the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Mr Abbot, showed them the sights of

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<sup>48</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 55.

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* In his book, Jones incorrectly names James Stopford as 'Stopforth' (pp. 54 and 55) and 'Stopworth' (p. 57).

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 55–56.

<sup>51</sup> NAA A9376/1/77 – 'Report on flight of de Havilland 'Rapide' Aircraft A3-1 by Squadron Leader G. Jones D.F.C.'

the town.<sup>52</sup> From Darwin, Jones and his party flew south to Pine Creek and then retraced their outward journey back to Laverton.

On the return flight, Jones wanted to get to Brisbane quickly and admits that he did 'one very silly thing'. He organised for the party to depart at 0430 hours from Cloncurry. The weather was thoroughly unpleasant, 'black as ink and raining'. Rather than wait for the weather to clear, Jones stuck to his schedule and proceeded to take off at the arranged time. Stopford, who had drunk a bottle of whisky earlier that night, nearly walked into a spinning propeller and then fell asleep immediately after boarding the aircraft.<sup>53</sup> To facilitate a take-off in the poor weather, Jones sent Harford out on to the ground in front of the DH-89 so he could use a pocket torch to guide the aircraft to the runway:

I couldn't see a darned thing. Once we got off it was just like being shut up in a light-proof box, but I had arranged for the navigation lights to be turned on at Moscow Downs and McKinley. Although it was very dark I could sense that we were getting very close to the ground, so I shot up into the cloud and from there on flew by compass and got to McKinley just on daybreak.<sup>54</sup>

With this incident in mind, it is surprising that Jones reported after the flight that the aircraft's 'lighting and instrument flying equipment was adequate, but would be improved by the addition of an artificial horizon instrument. The head light in the aircraft provides sufficient illumination for take off, but landing by it would be difficult unless flares were available on the ground also'.<sup>55</sup>

This was the last major incident on the long trip. The DH-89 returned to Laverton on 16 October 1935, nearly a month after its departure. The total flying time was 89 hours, which comprised 87 hours and 55 minutes for the survey flight, and two 20-minute test flights at Cloncurry and one 25-minute test flight at Tennant Creek.<sup>56</sup>

Jones reported on the flying characteristics of the DH-89 to RAAF Headquarters. He found the aircraft performed excellently, the only trouble experienced being

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<sup>52</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 56.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*, p. 57. Jones incorrectly names James Stopford as 'Stopworth' in this reference.

<sup>54</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>55</sup> NAA A9376/1/77 – 'Report on flight of de Havilland 'Rapide' Aircraft A3-1 by Squadron Leader G. Jones D.F.C.'

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*

with the tail wheel. An average cruising speed of 190 kilometres per hour was maintained. He found the aircraft could climb on one engine, either port or starboard, at heights below 4000 feet (1200 metres) with full load under tropical conditions.<sup>57</sup> Regardless of Jones' favourable report, the RAAF sold A3-1 to a civil operator soon after the survey flight.<sup>58</sup>

This flight was an activity that satisfied the needs of the RAAF's client. In late November 1935, Sir Herbert Gepp sent a highly complimentary letter to George Jones, acknowledging his role in the survey flight. Gepp expressed officially the appreciation of the North Australian Aerial Geological and Geophysical Survey for the excellent service Jones rendered in conducting the survey party through northern Australia. Gepp added, 'the fact that we were able to carry through an itinerary of this nature without mishap or delay is a splendid testimony to your capabilities'.<sup>59</sup>

### **Australian Aircraft Manufacture**

On 7 January 1936, a small group of prominent Australian corporate heads, including the Broken Hill Proprietary (BHP) Chairman, Harold Darling, and General Manger, Essington Lewis, together with Laurence Hartnett from General Motors Holden (GMH), met in Melbourne and agreed to form a syndicate to study the possibility of aircraft manufacture in Australia. This initiative was triggered by a visit Lewis made to Japan in 1935. During this visit he learned of the intensity of the fighting between Japan and China, and the role Japanese air power was playing in the conflict. He returned home with the strong belief that it would be in his country's interest to have an aircraft industry established in Australia.

The syndicate met again on 22 January and agreed to send a mission overseas to study aircraft manufacturing techniques and to select an aircraft type suitable for production in Australia. Hartnett was nominated to lead the mission but could not

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<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* Jones made no mention of the aircraft's short range in his report.

<sup>58</sup> 'A33 de Havilland DH 89 Dragon Rapide', at <http://www.airforce.gov.au/RAAFMuseum/research/aircraft/series2/A33.htm>, accessed 3 August 2009. The DH-89 remained in civil service until 1940 when it was acquired again by the RAAF and given the serial number A33-3. It was used as a training and communications aircraft until 1943 when it was handed back to the civil operator.

<sup>59</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM Collection Record: 3DRL/3414 – Jones, George (Air Marshal, Director of Training and Chief of Air Staff, RAAF), letter from Gepp to Jones, 27 November 1935.

because of business commitments. He, in turn, asked CAS, Richard Williams, to nominate someone from the RAAF to take his place.

Williams, without hesitation, named Wing Commander L.J. Wackett, Australia's foremost aircraft designer and an RAAF Reserve officer working, at that time, for the Tugan Aircraft Company in Sydney. Another RAAF Reserve officer, Squadron Leader H.C. Harrison, was selected to accompany Wackett.<sup>60</sup> Hartnett also told Williams he considered it essential that members of the mission were influenced by a serving, senior RAAF officer. Hartnett suggested:

The kind of officer, may I suggest, should be one who has a clear insight and understanding of the operation side of the R.A.A.F. and the work it intends to carry out in the future, which directly means the types of aircraft, with their performance, which would be desirable; under this heading, a senior operations officer which, I venture to suggest, in the main amounts almost entirely to yourself.<sup>61</sup>

Realising that Williams was required to remain in Australia to head the RAAF, Hartnett nominated five officers he considered to be most suitable for the task. These were Squadron Leader Jones, Wing Commander Cobby, Squadron Leader Murphy, Wing Commander Hepburn and Squadron Leader E.C. Wackett. Hartnett included the reasons for the nominations, which he had formed from discussions with L.J. Wackett and Harrison, 'together with other impressions I have formed'. Jones' name was first on Hartnett's list with the accompanying comment:

Squadron Leader Jones ... Believed in charge of training, but a very enthusiastic Australian with a conviction that aircraft can be manufactured in Australia, with some knowledge of operations and to some degree technical.<sup>62</sup>

Despite this fine reference, Williams selected Murphy and thus Jones missed the opportunity to become involved directly with the one aspect of the aviation world he was most enthusiastic about—the manufacture of aircraft in Australia.

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<sup>60</sup> Brian L. Hill, *Wirraway to Hornet: A History of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation Pty Ltd, 1936 to 1985*, Southern Cross Publications, Bulleen, Vic., 1998, p. 6; and Sir Richard Williams, *These are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, pp. 226–227.

<sup>61</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 6525, Papers [of Sir Richard Williams], 1919–1967, letter to Williams from Hartnett, 12 February 1936.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*



Before the mission departed, Williams briefed them of the RAAF's needs and stated that the Government's policy was to use British equipment, if it was suitable. As it was, the mission visited aircraft production facilities in the UK, the Netherlands, France, Germany and the US. The aircraft deemed to be the most suitable for Australian production was the single-engined, two-seat North American NA-16 monoplane, which later evolved into the Wirraway.<sup>63</sup>

Jones' career moved in another direction, but it was still away from aircraft production. He was promoted to Wing Commander on 1 January 1936 and his next posting was in March 1936, when he moved from Director of Training to Director of Personnel Services.<sup>64</sup> In this position he was responsible for the policy and decisions relevant to the promotions, postings and disciplinary matters for all Service members.<sup>65</sup> This position gave him a new insight into the RAAF's senior management structure and fuelled his ambition. While working on officer career planning activities, Jones arrived at the realisation that, because of his age and with reasonable luck, he could expect to reach the Service's top position—Chief of the Air Staff—during his Service career.<sup>66</sup>

Jones remained as Director of Personnel Services for two years before being appointed Director of Recruiting in March 1938.<sup>67</sup> He was not long in the new position before he was asked to undertake a task at the other end of Australia, which was more closely related to immediate national security concerns than recruitment. In light of the deteriorating world situation in the late 1930s, the RAAF planned to construct an air base at Darwin, Northern Territory. Before any building work started, Williams instructed Jones and Squadron Leader Charles

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<sup>63</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, pp. 227–228; John McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918–1939: A Study in Air and Sea Power*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1976, pp. 121–125; Wackett, *Aircraft Pioneer*, pp. 114–139; and Ian B. Fleming, 'Once Upon a Time – Aircraft Design in Australia', in *Australian Aeronautics*, 1987–88, p. 27.

<sup>64</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers.'

<sup>65</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 60. Jones claimed that he did no flying while he was in this position. Strangely, as one would have expected him to undertake a small amount of flying each year, the claim may be correct. There is a gap in his log book between 27 April 1936 and 18 June 1940. One wonders whether he was even given an annual assessment by the Chief Flying Instructor. RAAF Museum, G. Jones box file, 'Flying Log Book – Group Captain G. Jones.'

<sup>66</sup> Jones papers, 'My Experience as a Staff Officer – Director of Training, Director of Personnel Services, Assistant Chief of Air Staff'. Jones added, 'This subsequently became true, but much sooner than I anticipated.'

<sup>67</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers.'

Eaton, on 11 April 1938, to act as a committee to collect and collate all information relevant to the construction of the base, to arrange for visits by RAAF aircraft to Darwin, and to submit a report on these activities to the Air Board.<sup>68</sup>

As was the case with Jones' previous visit to northern Australia, this trip was not without incident. Jones and Eaton, in the company of Leading Aircraftmen Harris and Robilliard, arrived in Darwin aboard Avro Anson A4-1 on 17 May 1938. Two days later, Jones and his team were diverted from their primary task. The Anson was ordered to fly to Victoria River Downs to join three other aircraft participating in the search for a missing flying doctor. Dr King's de Havilland DH-83 Fox Moth had gone missing on a flight between Wyndham and Victoria River Downs. The missing aircraft was found the following day at Victoria River Depot (approximately 130 kilometres north of Victoria River Downs). Jones and Eaton returned to Darwin and collected the data necessary for their task during the next few days. On 24 May, the Anson departed Darwin and arrived at Laverton two days later.<sup>69</sup>

Based on Jones' and Eaton's findings and recommendations, construction of the RAAF Station at Darwin began during 1938.<sup>70</sup> Provision for its establishment was made in the Federal budgetary financial estimates for 1937–38, with an allocation of £282 000. The necessary land, amounting to 1174 hectares, was acquired at a cost of £1000.<sup>71</sup>

## **Family Problems**

While his Service career progressed satisfactorily, things continued to go badly for Jones' home life and by 1938 he had virtually disowned his elder son. Even though Ronald continued to live with his family, his father made no mention of him on

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<sup>68</sup> 'Operations in the Darwin Area 1939–1945', in *13 Squadron Association Newsletter*, no. 10, September 1987.

<sup>69</sup> National Archives of Australia: Royal Australian Air Force, A9186, No 21 Squadron Unit History Sheet – RAAF Form A.50, 1936–1948, <http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/imagine.asp?B=1158584&I=1&SE=1>, accessed 3 August 2009.

<sup>70</sup> The RAAF Station was formed on 1 June 1940. It was disbanded on 22 August 1942 when it became Operational Base, Darwin, under the command of Squadron Leader A.D. Swan, MBE. It became No 52 Operational Base, Darwin on 10 October 1942 and No 52 Operational Base Unit, Darwin on 24 December of the same year. It was renamed RAAF Station Darwin on 1 August 1944, with Wing Commander J.P. Ryan as commander. RAAF Museum, Darwin Documents box file, 'RAAF Darwin Commanding Officers'.

<sup>71</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'Brief History of RAAF Station Darwin'.

official RAAF documents relating to family matters.<sup>72</sup> As has been mentioned earlier, George Jones did not relate well to other people and Ronald inherited this characteristic. To make the situation worse, Ronald had even greater difficulties than his father in dealing with people. George Jones found this an impossible problem to deal with (possibly because of his own lack of interest in people) and the two would quarrel frequently. Jones senior did not understand Ronald and could not deal with him. He thus tended to distance himself from his son and by the late 1930s had 'given up on him.'<sup>73</sup>

### **The 1939 Australia–New Zealand–United Kingdom Defence Conference**

The Defence Conference, a New Zealand initiative, was held in Wellington, New Zealand, between 14 and 26 April 1939. The Australian Government had no desire to participate and turned down a New Zealand request to send a Government Minister as a delegate.<sup>74</sup> Instead Australia was represented by a delegation, which comprised an officer from each of the Services and Captain E.C. Johnson, DFC from the Department of Civil Aviation. The delegation was led by Vice Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin (Chief of the Naval Staff). The Army representative was Colonel Vernon Sturdee, while Wing Commander George Jones represented the Australian Air Board.<sup>75</sup> In keeping with its lack of interest in the conference, the Australian Government placed restrictions on the contributions made by its representatives:

In so far as the defence aspect of the Conference is concerned Australian representative will be empowered to discuss only technical aspects of service plans, and it is noted that cablegram of 2nd February from United Kingdom Government also takes this view.<sup>76</sup>

Regardless of the directive, Jones was still able to provide a valuable contribution to those conference discussions relating to air power.

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<sup>72</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Statutory Declaration', 18 July 1938. This document shows the Jones family still living in Camberwell, with Ian listed as the only child.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>74</sup> McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918–1939*, p. 145.

<sup>75</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1049/9/0/1846/4/101, Pacific Defence Conference 1939, 'Proposed Administrative Arrangements'.

<sup>76</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1049/9/0/1846/4/101, Pacific Defence Conference 1939, cablegram from Department of Defence to Prime Minister of New Zealand, 28 February 1939.

Conference delegates were organised into three different committees. Jones was a member of Committee One, 'Strategic Problems'. He was also adviser to Captain Johnson who was a member of Committee Three, 'Trans Pacific Air Routes'.<sup>77</sup>

On the Conference's second day, Jones spoke for the RAAF when his committee discussed reconnaissance patrols between Port Moresby and Fiji. The RAAF's plan was to base a flight of amphibious aircraft in Port Moresby. Their role was to be reconnaissance, though they would take action against surface vessels and submarines in certain circumstances. These aircraft would be reinforced by Empire Flying Boats and would operate between New Guinea and the Solomons or the New Hebrides—depending on the availability of a fuel supply. Jones also advised that Australia planned to develop a series of landing fields at 600-mile intervals (965 kilometres) through the chain of islands at sites that could be defended against attack. Very optimistically, Jones told the conference, 'We will very soon have land planes which will operate throughout the whole of the area, either to supplement the reconnaissance force or in certain circumstances to act as a striking force if suitable opportunities present themselves'.<sup>78</sup>

When writing about the conference in his autobiography, Jones makes the wry comment that among his fellow guests at the Hotel Waterloo were a German baron and his wife, and he could not help but think that everything discussed at the conference 'was somehow passed on to Germany'.<sup>79</sup>

### **Imperial Defence College**

As was the case with many of its activities during the 1920s and 30s, the RAAF was dependent on the RAF experience for air power education, some of which was gained by sending Australian officers to Service education institutions within the UK. We have already seen that RAAF officers were sent to the RAF College at Andover to further their Service education. Later, another institution, the Imperial Defence College (IDC), provided education to senior Australian government and military officers.<sup>80</sup> By the 1930s, the Imperial Defence College had come to be

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<sup>77</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1049/9/0/1846/4/101, Pacific Defence Conference 1939, 'Allotment of Delegates to Committees'.

<sup>78</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1049/9/0/1846/4/101, Pacific Defence Conference 1939, 'Notes on Proceedings of the second day of meeting of the Defence Conference held on the 15th April, 1939'.

<sup>79</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 61.

<sup>80</sup> Alan Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra,

regarded as the premier institution in the British Empire for the advanced study of defence organisation and the problems of high-level strategy.<sup>81</sup>

These courses were normally one year in duration and the RAAF usually sent its selected attendees to the UK for two years. The first year was spent at the Imperial Defence College, the second as Air Liaison Officer at the Australian High Commission in London.<sup>82</sup> Attendance at the Imperial Defence College was a distinction much sought after by Australian career public servants and military officers.<sup>83</sup> There was some doubt as to the merit and relevance to Australia of the courses conducted at British institutions such as the Imperial Defence College. However, as was the case with the RAF College, the attendees made contact with some of the leading military and political thinkers of the day.<sup>84</sup>

Wing Commander George Jones was nominated to attend the Imperial Defence College for the 1940 course. This would have been another positive step in his career but, unfortunately, the outbreak of World War II put an end to that, as the college ceased to conduct long duration courses.<sup>85</sup> The fact that Jones was nominated to attend the Imperial Defence College suggests that someone at RAAF Headquarters held the view that Jones was an officer who had the potential to advance to a senior position within the Service. Although it is interesting to speculate that, had Jones attended in 1940 and served as Air Liaison Officer (ALO) in 1941, he may have been retained in this position, due to the war. Jones would have been the 'man on the spot' in London and the Air Board may have found it convenient to retain him

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1992, p. 40; and Harry Rayner, *Scherger: A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1984, p. 93. The Imperial Defence College (IDC), later known as the Royal College of Defence Studies, was established during the 1920s and conducted courses that had been drawn up to train military officers and civilian officials in 'the broadest aspects of imperial strategy.'

<sup>81</sup> David Horner, *Crisis of Command: Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat, 1941–1943*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, pp. 8 and 15. Australians who attended the Imperial Defence College prior to World War II included Frederick Shedden, Vernon Sturdee, John Northcott, Richard Williams and Frank McNamara, VC.

<sup>82</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *McNamara, VC: A Hero's Dilemma*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1997, p. 77.

<sup>83</sup> Rayner, *Scherger*, p. 93.

<sup>84</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *McNamara, VC*, p. 78. When McNamara attended the 1937 course, the IDC's Commandant was Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore and his Air Force assistant was Air Commodore Charles Portal. If we look at the list of those who attended the course with McNamara we find that he was in the company of officers who would distinguish themselves in World War II, such as Keith Park, Sir Alan Cunningham, Viscount Slim and Sydney Rowell.

<sup>85</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 6525, Papers [of Sir Richard Williams], 1919–1967, handwritten letter to Williams from unknown person (signature unreadable), 1 October 1939.

*The Private Air Marshal*

there—perhaps not as the Air Liaison Officer, but working for that officer. Had such an event occurred, the history of the RAAF in the 1940s would have been very different.



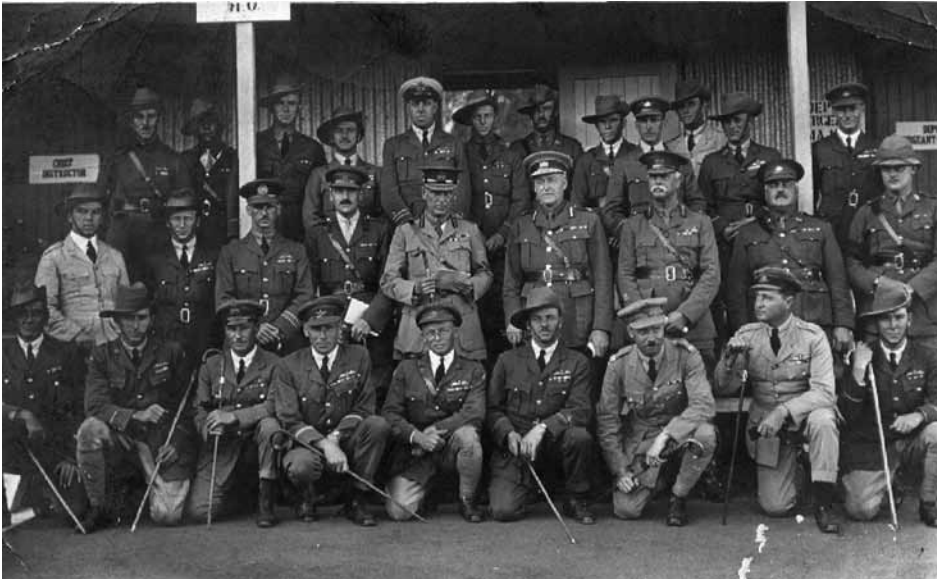
Captain George Jones, DFC, Australian Flying Corps, 1918.

*(E.J. Richards, Australian Airmen)*



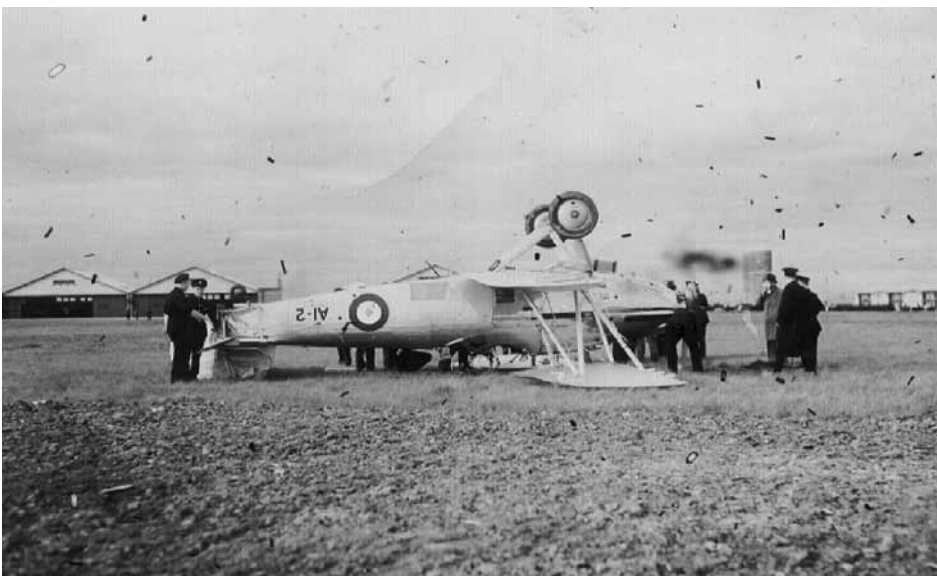
George Jones (far right) at a tennis match in Wendover, Germany, 1919.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Flying Officer George Jones (front row, second from left) at the Australian Military Forces Central Training Depot, Holsworthy, 1921.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Hawker Demon A1-2, following the accident at Laverton, 1935.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*





Squadron Leader George Jones (left) with a local police officer in front of his DH-89 Dragon Rapide aircraft, somewhere in the outback during the North Australian Aerial Geological and Geophysical Survey Flight, 1935.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Wing Commander George Jones (Assistant Chief of the Air Staff), Group Captain W.D. ('Bill') Bostock (Deputy Chief of the Air Staff) and Air Commodore S.J. ('Jimmy') Goble (Acting Chief of the Air Staff), September 1939.

*(Mr I. Goble)*



Air Commodore George Jones (second from right) in a rare moment of relaxed conviviality. His companions are not identified, although the Dutch naval officer (second from left) was probably Commander Salm, the Liaison Officer at Navy Office in Melbourne from February 1941. The occasion must have been during 1941 or the first five months of 1942 (the only period in which Jones wore the rank of Air Commodore).

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



The new Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal George Jones (still wearing Air Commodore rank), being congratulated by his predecessor, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, May 1942.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 012251)*

# *The Darkest of Dark Horses*

On 5 May 1942, acting Air Commodore George Jones was appointed Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Royal Australian Air Force. As there were other officers senior to Jones, his appointment came as a surprise to most, except for the politicians who comprised the Federal Cabinet. Possibly no-one was more surprised by the appointment than Jones himself, as he expected a fellow officer, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, to be appointed to the Service's highest position.<sup>1</sup> Jones' appointment has remained a controversial incident in the history of the RAAF, but it should be viewed in light of the events relating to the Service's high command in the few years before and after the outbreak of World War II.

## **RAAF High Command Prior to World War II**

The command of the RAAF went through a period of confusion during the lead-up to and through the course of the war. Air Vice-Marshal Richard Williams had fallen out of favour with the Government, following the unfavourable review of the Service, in 1938, by Marshal of the Royal Air Force Sir Edward Ellington (then Inspector-General of the RAF).<sup>2</sup> Williams was 'effectively banished from office'<sup>3</sup> shortly before the beginning of the war when, in February 1939, he was sent on a two-year posting to Britain as Air Officer in Charge of Administration (AOA) with

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<sup>1</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Ellington arrived in Australia in June 1938, at the invitation of the Lyons Government, to conduct an inspection of the RAAF. Ellington's report was best remembered for its criticism of the RAAF's flying accidents and led to Williams' removal from office as CAS. Jones' opinion was that Ellington had been invited by the Australian Government to inspect Williams, rather than the RAAF, and to recommend his removal from the CAS position, if necessary. Alan Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, p. 46; and John McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918–1939: A Study in Air and Sea Power*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1976, pp. 84–92. Alan Stephens also has commented that Williams was removed from office because, after nearly 20 years of political infighting on behalf of the RAAF he had made too many enemies. Alan Stephens and Jeff Isaacs, *High Fliers: Leaders of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger, transcript, p. 10; and Alan Stephens, 'The Office of Chief of the Air Staff', in Alan Stephens (ed.), *Australia's Air Chiefs – The Proceedings of the 1992 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 14 October 1992*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1992, p. 6.

the RAF Coastal Command.<sup>4</sup> His replacement was Air Vice-Marshal Stanley J. ('Jimmy') Goble, who was appointed CAS on an acting basis.<sup>5</sup> Goble had served as CAS on two previous occasions while Williams was overseas. A powerful and detrimental rivalry had developed between the two officers to the extent that it became common knowledge they could not work together at the same headquarters.<sup>6</sup> So by the outbreak of World War II, the higher levels of the RAAF had already experienced considerable turmoil based on disagreements between the most senior officers.

Goble was now to experience difficulties in his command of the RAAF that would alienate him from the Government and would set a precedent as to how the Government would deal with personality problems in the Service. Air Commodore John Russell was an RAF officer who had been posted to Australia in exchange for Williams. Goble soon found himself drawn into personal conflict with Russell.

Wing Commander George Jones, the then RAAF Director of Recruiting, was appointed Assistant Chief of the Air Staff on 1 July 1939.<sup>7</sup> Despite its apparent closeness to the CAS, this position was not one with as much power as the title suggests. A few months after Jones moved into his new position, Group Captain Bostock was appointed Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS) on 1 September 1939.<sup>8</sup> Initially, the Service maintained the positions of Assistant CAS and DCAS

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<sup>4</sup> Sir Richard Williams, *These are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> Goble served as CAS during the following periods: November 1922 – February 1925, December 1932 – January 1934, and February 1939 – January 1940. Department of Air, *The Golden Years: Royal Australian Air Force, 1921–1971*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1971, pp. 112–113.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921–39*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1991, p. 360. There was an allegation that the relationship between Williams and Goble was so bad that a practice evolved of separating them by keeping one of the out of the country at any given time.

<sup>7</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers.'

<sup>8</sup> Jones papers, 'The Organisation and Administration of the Empire Air Training Scheme'. In this paper, Jones claims Bostock became DCAS 'by methods which I thought very unfair'. Unfortunately, Jones does not spell out what those methods were. Prior to his appointment as DCAS, Bostock had been Director of Operations and Intelligence. Bostock had a distinguished career in the RAAF and had also served on 48 Squadron, RFC during World War I. After the Armistice, 48 Squadron accompanied the Army of Occupation into Germany and was based in Bickendorf between December 1918 and May 1919. One wonders whether a young Captain George Jones, DFC met a young Lieutenant Bill Bostock during their time in Germany. Central Army Records Office, CARO/540 William Dowling Bostock, Australian Imperial Force,

concurrently. The DCAS position, however, gained greater power and eventually superseded that of the Assistant CAS. The main difference between the positions was that DCAS was given the authority to act for CAS (something the Assistant CAS was not empowered to do). DCAS was also made a member of the Joint Planning Committee.<sup>9</sup> In practice, this meant that while Jones was working within the Service Headquarters, he was more of a senior personal assistant to CAS, while Bostock had the power to act as CAS in the event of the Chief's absence. Appointment to the DCAS position was initially to Bostock's advantage. Regardless of the status of his position, Jones' work must have been quite satisfactory because, after working as Assistant CAS for five months, he was made a temporary Group Captain.<sup>10</sup> While Jones was advancing in his own career, the RAAF was to undergo another change in leaders.

At the outbreak of the war in September 1939, the Australian Government, headed by Prime Minister Robert Menzies, considered the role of Australia's armed forces was largely to provide support and assistance to Britain, based on a proposition of Japan's neutrality. Insofar as the deployment of the RAAF was concerned, the Government examined three initiatives, the first of which was an expeditionary air force proposed by Goble, Jones and Wing Commander Swinborne.<sup>11</sup> The second was the transfer of No 10 Squadron to Britain.<sup>12</sup> Finally, there was a scheme to

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'Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad'

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, pp. 69–70.

<sup>10</sup> RAAF Discharged Personnel Section, Index Card – Officers: 'Jones, Sir George'. Jones was made temporary Group Captain on 1 December 1939.

<sup>11</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger, transcript, p. 11; and National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 9th October, 1939', Minute (28), 'Air Force Expeditionary Force'. This force was to be sent to Britain and would be manned by 3200 personnel who were to be placed in an organisation comprising a Headquarters Field Force, a Fighter Wing (made up of a headquarters and two fighter squadrons), two Bomber Wings (each made up of a headquarters and two bomber squadrons), No 1 Air Stores Park, No 1 Medical Receiving Station, a Headquarters Base Area, a Base Depot, and reserves. In early October 1939, the Australian War Cabinet considered the expeditionary air force's formation and agreed that it should include the minimum number of Permanent Air Force (PAF) personnel. Instead, it would be made up of new volunteers into the RAAF, while PAF personnel would be retained in Australia for local defence and to develop other air power initiatives to contribute to 'Empire Air Defence'.

<sup>12</sup> The RAAF had ordered Short Sunderland flying boats from Britain to equip 10 Squadron, which was to be based at Rathmines in NSW. Aircrew had travelled to Britain and were preparing to fly the first three aircraft back to Australia when the war began. No 10 Squadron spent the war conducting maritime operations from Britain. Stewart Wilson, *Anson, Hudson and Sunderland*

provide Britain with trained or partially trained aircrew for deployment with the RAF. This became the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) and George Jones played a part in its establishment.

Despite these initiatives, the command of the Service was an issue for the Government. The foreshadowed conflict between Goble and Russell (who was in the position of Air Member for Personnel)<sup>13</sup> came to the fore in October 1939, when Goble advised G.A. Street, the Minister for Defence, that Russell had refused to adjust to local conditions and regulations and that he had shown a marked inconsistency and unreliability in his statements and opinions on Service matters. Goble told Street that Russell's attitude made him unsuitable for an Air Board or command appointment. The following month Goble sent a minute to Street in which he documented examples of Russell's unsuitable behaviour and asked for the situation to be resolved.<sup>14</sup>

When no resolution from the Australian Government was forthcoming, Goble took his own action and sent a signal to Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril Newall (the RAF CAS) requesting Russell's recall. He continued by stating that it would be impossible to implement EATS if Russell remained as Air Member for Personnel, as it was a position that required stability and a sound knowledge of training.<sup>15</sup>

Russell may well have undermined Goble's plans for the RAAF's war effort, as he had advised Sir Frederick Shedden (the Secretary of the Department of Defence Co-ordination—later Department of Defence) that EATS was viewed by the British Government as vital to their war effort, thus he considered the RAAF should abandon the idea of the expeditionary air force.<sup>16</sup> We may question why this officer was allowed to approach a senior public servant with neither the knowledge nor consent of the Service Chief. The Australian Government finally sent Russell back to Britain after the situation had become so bad for Goble that he attempted to resign from the RAAF.<sup>17</sup>

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*in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, ACT, 1992, pp. 160–162.

<sup>13</sup> Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 460.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p 461.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p 462.

<sup>17</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/13, 'Resignation of Air-Vice Marshal S.J. Goble, Chief of the Air Staff', letter from Goble to Menzies, 19 December 1939; and National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 22nd December, 1939; Minute (103), 'Resignation of Air Vice-

The Government was becoming disillusioned with the RAAF senior leadership and moves by Cabinet were already underway to import some expertise from Britain. The formation of the expeditionary air force and participation in EATS led Menzies, in early October 1939, to approach the British Government for the loan of a 'thoroughly competent R.A.F. Officer' with a rank senior to Williams and Goble to be appointed as the RAAF's CAS in place of the Australian officers.<sup>18</sup> These moves were being conducted without any official consultation with Goble, although the civilian Secretary of the Air Board had unofficially advised him.<sup>19</sup> Goble, who believed the RAAF's contribution to the war effort should be organised as a self-contained national unit, continued to develop his plans for the expeditionary air force.<sup>20</sup> Despite his planning, the Government abandoned the idea in early November 1939 and, instead, it was decided the full resources of the RAAF would be devoted to EATS, while 10 Squadron would remain in the UK (and would be placed under RAF control).<sup>21</sup>

On 11 November 1939, Menzies announced changes to the War Cabinet and the Government's administration restructure. These changes included the establishment of separate Departments, each with its own Minister to oversee the Defence Services. The Department of Air was set up with Melville Cecil Langslow as its Secretary and James Valentine Fairbairn was made the Minister for Air. The Finance Members of the Service Boards were appointed as Secretaries of the new Departments (Langslow had been the Air Board's Finance Member since July 1936 and he retained this position until July 1940). These appointments were part of the Government's plan for effective administration and control of war expenditure because it was thought that Ministers from the large spending Service Departments would have Secretaries with expert financial knowledge as advisers.<sup>22</sup>

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Marshal S.J. Goble, Chief of the Air Staff'.

<sup>18</sup> John Robertson and John McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939–1945: A Documentary History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1985, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 462.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, p. 460.

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Sydney, 1st November, 1939', Minute (75), 'Australian Contribution to Empire Air Defence'. Had the three initiatives been agreed, the RAAF would have found itself in the position of having competing requirements for trained personnel between the expeditionary air force and EATS.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/240, 'Civil Staffing – Department of Air: Functions and Responsibilities of the Permanent Head', paper titled 'New Departments – Appointment of Secretaries', 13 November 1939.

At the time of their establishment, it was expected that the Service Departments would be temporary entities and would exist for the duration of the war. Therefore no amendment had been made to the Defence Act or the Air Force Act or Regulations to define suitably the functions of the Department of Air and its Secretary.<sup>23</sup> This lack of legislation did not affect the new Department carrying out its work, which was to provide the basic RAAF administration and financial functions, previously undertaken by civilian staff in Department of Defence. This included: the executive functions previously carried out by the Defence Secretariat; clerical work associated with the Air Board and the branches of CAS, the Air Member for Personnel, and Air Member for Organisation and Equipment; the work of the Finance Branch (Air); and internal audit. In terms of personnel numbers, the new Department grew steadily and by 30 June 1945 its staff numbered 4507.<sup>24</sup>

One of Fairbairn's first tasks as Minister for Air was to lead a group, known as the Australian Air Mission, to represent Australia's interests at the Ottawa Conference, which formulated the agreements governing EATS. Goble recommended Jones accompany the Air Mission as Air Adviser.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the Australian Air Mission comprised James Fairbairn, and his Private Secretary (Richard Elford), George Jones and Cedric Kellway.<sup>26</sup> Before the trip, Jones relinquished his military rank because the United States was not at war at the time of the Ottawa Conference and to reach the Canadian capital, the Air Mission would be required to cross the US. Travel, without impediment, across the neutral country by an RAAF officer might have

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<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/240, paper titled 'Functions and Responsibilities of Department of Air and Permanent Head – Need for Authoritative Definition of', September 1949. Despite its temporary nature the Department of Air remained in existence until the early 1970s

<sup>24</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/240, 'Committee of Review – Civil Staffing of Wartime Activities – Report on the Department of Air', 19 December 1945.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 9th October, 1939', Minute (29), 'Air Mission to Canada.'

<sup>26</sup> John McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire: Australian Aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988, p. 18. It is beyond the scope of this biography to deal with every issue relevant to EATS. The reader is directed to Professor McCarthy's book. Kellway was a career public servant who had spent most of his working life with the Treasury. In 1939, he was acting Australian trade commissioner in New York and was brought to the negotiations because of his financial background. After the EATS negotiations, he was appointed Finance Member of the Air Board and he remained in this position until 1942. Jenny Newell, 'Kellway, Cedric Vernon (1892–1963)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, at <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A140698b.htm>, accessed 3 August 2009.



been difficult.<sup>27</sup> To overcome this, Jones was 'seconded' to the position of Assistant Director of Training, Department of Civil Aviation on 13 October 1939.<sup>28</sup> Thus when the Australian Air Mission left Sydney it comprised three civilians.

Fairbairn, Elford and Jones arrived in the Canadian capital on 2 November and set up offices in the Canadian House of Commons.<sup>29</sup> The Australian Mission put forward a proposal regarding the level of training for EATS aircrew, which resulted in a considerable increase in Jones' workload after his return home. Early planning called for Australia to send aircrew, who had received the minimal amount of training, to Canada where they would receive the remainder of their training. Jones and Fairbairn opposed this on the grounds that, if advanced training was carried out in Australia, it would allow the RAAF to build itself up into an instrument for national defence—this was an important consideration in view of the possibility of hostilities with Japan. It would also have been impossible for the Australian Government to pay the enormous sum the Canadian Government had requested for their part in the training regime.<sup>30</sup> The proposal also meant that some of Australia's huge financial contribution to EATS would be spent in the country. The conference acceded to the Australian proposal, which was formally recognised in the agreement between Britain and the Dominions.<sup>31</sup>

After completing the EATS negotiations, Fairbairn and Elford took with them a copy of Jones' report on the proceedings—'Report on Air Training Conference Held at Ottawa from 2nd November to 27th November 1939'<sup>32</sup> and travelled to Britain. While in Britain, Fairbairn interviewed RAF officers who had been nominated as suitable for appointment as the RAAF's CAS.<sup>33</sup> Jones was left to pack

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<sup>27</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 64.

<sup>28</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Officers Personal Records, Notations of Appointments, Promotions, Awards, Postings, Commonwealth Gazette, No 108, 19 October 1939. p. 2177.

<sup>29</sup> Jones papers, 'The Empire Air Training Scheme (to the attack on Pearl Harbour)'.

<sup>30</sup> G. Jones, 'Australia's Shield and Spear', in *Aircraft*, April 1951, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> Chief of the Air Staff, *War Report of the Chief of the Air Staff, Royal Australian Air Force, 3rd September 1939 to 31st December 1945, to the Minister for Air*, RAAF Printing and Publications Unit, Melbourne, Vic., 1946, p. 17.

<sup>32</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1969/100/547/ALO OTTAWA/S17, Report for Air Liaison Officer from G. Jones (RAAF Liaison Office Ottawa), 'Report on Air Training Conference Held at Ottawa from 2nd November to 27th November 1939, Written for the Minister for Air by Wing Commander G. Jones R.A.A.F., 27th November, 1939, Ottawa'.

<sup>33</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 463. Jones' opinion was that Fairbairn had served with the RFC during World War I and this may have inclined him to support the Cabinet push for an RAF

the remaining conference papers and return them to Australia. It was more than two months before the War Cabinet considered Jones' report. Jones accompanied Fairbairn (who, by that time, had returned to Australia) to the War Cabinet meeting on 6 February 1940. Jones noted, 'the only papers submitted were my report and an estimate of the costs. Despite the costs, which ran into some hundreds of millions of pounds, the War Cabinet approved it completely, after a short discussion.'<sup>34</sup> The War Cabinet minutes of the discussion were brief: 'The report of the Australian Air Mission which represented the Commonwealth at the Empire Air Conference at Ottawa in November, 1939, was noted by the War Cabinet.'<sup>35</sup>

On 21 December 1939, Menzies advised the War Cabinet that he had received Goble's resignation both from the CAS position and from the RAAF.<sup>36</sup> The Prime Minister met with Goble on 23 December and questioned him over the reasons for his resignation. Goble gave as his excuse the impossible working relationship with Russell.<sup>37</sup> Goble had also found himself in an untenable position when the expeditionary air force was rejected in favour of EATS,<sup>38</sup> and his personality did not help in this situation. Goble was gregarious and affable (as opposed to

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officer. Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 77. Jones, however, was wrong as Fairbairn initially favoured reappointing Williams as CAS. Menzies and Casey wanted an RAF officer and they had their way. Alan Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 114.

<sup>34</sup> Jones papers, 'The Empire Air Training Scheme (to the attack on Pearl Harbour)'

<sup>35</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 6th February, 1940', Minute (155), 'Agendum No. 20/1940 – Report of the Australian Air Mission which Represented the Commonwealth at the Empire Air Conference at Ottawa, November, 1939'

<sup>36</sup> Goble, believing that his resignation had been passed to the Prime Minister, spoke with newspaper reporters on 19 December 1939 and gave the following reasons for his resignation: he was dissatisfied with his relationship with the Government, and the decision to proceed with EATS rather than the expeditionary air force. 'Resignation Confirmed by Air Staff Chief', in *The Herald*, 20 December 1939; 'Air Chief wishes to resign', in *The Argus*, 20 December 1939; and 'War Cabinet holds important meeting today', in *The Herald*, 21 December 1939.

<sup>37</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/13, minute from Goble to Shedden, 22 December 1939. Goble sent his resignation to the Government on 19 December 1939. The letter, however, was mishandled and did not reach Menzies until after news of the resignation was published in the newspapers. Therefore, the first the Prime Minister and the Minister for Air knew about it was when they read the newspaper. 'Resignation Confirmed by Air Staff Chief', in *The Herald*, 20 December 1939; and Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, pp. 460–461.

<sup>38</sup> Air Vice-Marshal E.M. Weller, 'A Characterisation of Leadership and Command in the RAAF', in Barry Sutherland (ed.), *Command and Leadership in War and Peace 1914–1975 – The Proceedings of the 1999 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 29 October 1999*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 2000, p. 7.

Williams who was seen as stiff-necked and authoritarian).<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately these characteristics, which might have made him popular with his fellow officers,<sup>40</sup> were of no help when dealing with politicians and Goble proved to be unable to handle the pressure of the senior command appointment and the political environment.<sup>41</sup> Goble was prepared to withdraw his resignation after Russell had been sent back to Britain. He had also said that he intended to go to Britain and offer his services, in any capacity, to the RAF.<sup>42</sup> However, at his meeting with Menzies, Goble was told that he could remain with the RAAF but not as its Chief, because the Government planned to seek a replacement CAS from the RAF. The Government's preference was for this officer to be someone with considerable experience and with seniority to Goble.<sup>43</sup> A precedent had thus been set for the government of the day not to support the CAS in the resolution of disputes with other officers and the regime that followed Menzies would maintain this precedent.

Goble's resignation did nothing to restore the Government's confidence in the RAAF's leadership and Menzies continued with his proposal to secure the appointment of a RAF officer to serve as CAS. The War Cabinet discussed the possibility of approaching the British Government for the loan of one of the officers interviewed by Fairbairn and before the decision was finalised, it was agreed to direct the Australian High Commissioner to Britain, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, to make confidential inquiries and to 'advise personally on the relative merits of Air Chief-Marshal Sir Charles Burnett and Air Chief-Marshal Sir John Steel.'<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Stephens and Isaacs, *High Fliers*, pp. 31 and 33; D. Martin, 'The Apprentice Air Marshal', in *Over the Front*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1992, p. 99; and Roger Hunt, *Australian Air Aces*, Horwitz Publications, Sydney, NSW, 1962, p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> Jones claimed that he liked Goble because 'He wasn't so [sic] competitive as Williams'. Competition, in any form was one thing Jones detested to the extent he played very few sports himself (tennis and lawn bowls later in life) and showed no interest at all in the major competitive sports such as cricket or football.

<sup>41</sup> Weller, 'A Characterisation of Leadership and Command in the RAAF', p. 7.

<sup>42</sup> 'Air Chief wishes to resign', in *The Argus*; and 'Resignation Confirmed by Air Staff Chief', in *The Herald*.

<sup>43</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 462.

<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 21st December, 1939', Minute (94), 'Resignation of Air Vice-Marshal S.J. Goble'. Steel and Burnett were the two officers the RAF was prepared to make available to the RAAF. Following the 1936 reorganisation of the RAF, Air Chief Marshal Sir John Steel was appointed head of Bomber Command, while Burnett had headed Training Command. Steel, at the time of the Australian Cabinet discussions, had retired and was aged 62. R.G. Casey (the Minister for Supply and Development) nominated him as being suitable for the RAAF CAS position.

On 22 December 1939, the War Cabinet further considered the appointment to the RAAF's most senior position and the fate of the Service's two most senior officers. It was agreed that Goble's resignation as CAS would be accepted but he would be asked to reconsider resigning his commission. As Goble's health was said to be suffering,<sup>45</sup> Cabinet agreed he would be given several weeks leave and then offered a post, at 'his normal rank of Air Commodore', with the EATS administration in Canada. Williams, however, would not be reinstated as CAS and Cabinet decided he was to remain with the RAF until the termination of his two-year placement. With Goble in Canada, and Williams remaining in Britain, the RAAF was in the position where its two most senior officers were posted outside Australia, so there was an urgent need to appoint someone as CAS.

The War Cabinet then made an extraordinary decision—Menzies was to discuss with the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) the possibility of obtaining the services of Commodore Boucher, the Second Naval Member, to act as CAS until the arrival of a suitable officer from England.<sup>46</sup> One might wonder how low the Government's confidence in the RAAF officer corps had become when an RAN officer was considered to head the Service. We might well ask the question as to why DCAS or the Assistant CAS were not appointed to act in the position for a few months until the arrival of the 'suitable' officer. Perhaps Cabinet was so disillusioned with the RAAF's senior command that these two Goble appointees were considered as unsuitable.

Commonsense may have prevailed as the War Cabinet gave up its idea of appointing Boucher as CAS, and Air Commodore W.H. Anderson (the Air Member for Supply) was chosen to act as CAS.<sup>47</sup> One new task, stemming from the wartime situation, imposed upon Anderson as CAS (and the other two Service Chiefs), was to provide a weekly report of their Service's activities to Cabinet. Anderson, accompanied by

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<sup>45</sup> Newspaper reports at the time of his resignation stated that Goble was suffering from influenza. 'Resignation Confirmed by Air Staff Chief', in *The Herald*.

<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 22nd December, 1939; Minute (103), 'Resignation of Air Vice-Marshal S.J. Goble, Chief of the Air Staff'. Boucher's qualification for the position appears to be that he had served as a pilot with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) during World War I. National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/13, cablegram from Menzies to Bruce, 25 December 1939. Menzies also considered Boucher as suitable because of the 'fact that present wartime functions of R.A.A.F. are largely cooperation in trade defence'.

<sup>47</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 4th January, 1940; Minute (112), 'Agendum No. 8/1940 – Selection of Royal Air Force Officer as Chief of the Air Staff, and Resignation of Air Vice Marshal S.J. Goble as Chief of the Air Staff'.

Bostock (who remained DCAS), attended the War Cabinet meeting in their official capacities for the first time on 24 January 1940.<sup>48</sup>

### **A Suitable RAF Officer**

The Australian Government's attitude towards the RAAF's high command and the prospect of a RAF officer heading their Service was a source of disappointment to many RAAF officers. This disappointment increased when they learned of Fairbairn's selection—Sir Charles Burnett.<sup>49</sup> With the benefit of hindsight, we can see things differently to those officers.

If the proposed major role of the RAAF was to be a training institution for the RAF (i.e. through EATS), Burnett probably had as much claim, through experience, as any RAAF officer to the CAS position. In fact, Fairbairn explained to the Australian Parliament that Burnett was selected because no RAAF officer had experience on a comparable scale.<sup>50</sup> Despite the Anglophile overtones of the Menzies Government, this was probably a reasonable explanation given the very small size of the prewar RAAF.

Following the May 1936 restructuring of the RAF, Training Command had been established with Air Marshal Burnett as its head.<sup>51</sup> He successfully presided over the Command between 1936 and 1939, where he had the highly responsible task of building up the RAF for the forthcoming war.<sup>52</sup> At the time of his selection as RAAF CAS, Burnett was one of the two Inspectors-General of the RAF, a position Williams described as a means of continuing the employment of an officer who had completed a term in a senior appointment and who had only a short period to serve before his retirement.<sup>53</sup> Up until his appointment as RAAF CAS, Burnett had

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<sup>48</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 24th January, 1940; Minute (132), 'Agendum No. 14/1940 – Weekly Progress Reports by Chiefs of Staff (No. 1 – Week ended 20th January, 1940)'.  
<sup>49</sup> Stephens and Isaacs, *High Fliers*, p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Session 1940, Vol. 163, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 15 May, 1940, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1940, pp. 856–857.

<sup>51</sup> John Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware, Hertfordshire, UK, 1997, p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> Stephens and Isaacs, *High Fliers*, p. 49. Burnett was appointed Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Training Command on 1 May 1936 and was replaced in that appointment by Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore on 1 July 1939. Denis Richards, *Royal Air Force 1939–1945 – Volume I: The Fight at Odds*, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1953, pp. 404–405.

<sup>53</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 246. Burnett had only been in the position of Inspector-General of

not been to Australia. However, he had served with Williams in the Middle East in 1918.<sup>54</sup> Williams himself had corresponded with Burnett (when the latter held the position of the RAF's DCAS and then when he was the Air Ministry's delegate in Geneva) to gain advice and support during the early 1930s when the Australian Prime Minister, J.A. Lyons, had proposed to disband the RAAF as a demonstration of Australia's attitude towards world disarmament.<sup>55</sup>

Fairbairn outlined his negotiations for the return of Williams from the Coastal Command position and the loan of Burnett at the War Cabinet meeting on 4 January 1940. Fairbairn had acted alone, when making his selection and the subsequent agreements, without permission from his Government, as the Cabinet minute notes:

Mr Fairbairn explained that, under an erroneous impression that he had full authority to make an appointment to the post of Chief of the Air Staff, he had entered into a commitment with Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, who was in his view the outstanding officer of those available for selection.<sup>56</sup>

Cabinet approved Fairbairn's recommendation after Menzies had emphasised that appointments to senior posts, such as Heads of Departments and Services, were the prerogative of Cabinet, not of individual Ministers.<sup>57</sup> It was agreed that Burnett, with the rank of Air Chief Marshal, should be appointed CAS for one year with an option for an extension.<sup>58</sup> He was to be paid a salary of £3000 per annum (the same rate of pay as the Chief of the Naval Staff).<sup>59</sup> Williams, on the other hand, was

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the RAF for six months when he was selected as RAAF CAS.

<sup>54</sup> Mark Lax, 'The Impact of Technology and Command on No 1 Squadron Operations 1916–1958', Master of Arts (Hons) thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1995.

<sup>55</sup> McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918–1939*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>56</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume I, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 4th January, 1940', Minute (112), 'Agendum No. 8/1940 – Selection of Royal Air Force Officer as Chief of the Air Staff, and Resignation of Air Vice Marshal S.J. Goble as Chief of the Air Staff'.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*; and Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p. 463. As an Air Chief Marshal, Burnett was, for a few months after his arrival, the highest-ranking Defence officer in Australia.

<sup>59</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/163/1/296, Conditions Governing the Loan of Sir Charles Burnett, Chief of Air Staff, minute from Secretary Department of Defence Co-ordination to Secretary, Department of Air, 20 February 1940. Burnett was to be paid an annual salary of £3000. Of this £1800 was to be paid into his bank account in London. The terms of his appointment also stated that if Lady Burnett remained in the UK, three-fifths of the salary was

returned to Australia with the temporary rank of Air Marshal and on the same rate of pay as he received before his departure—£1,750 per annum.<sup>60</sup>

Burnett left Britain for Australia on 19 January 1940 aboard an RAAF Sunderland that flew him to Egypt. He completed the trip aboard an Imperial Airways aircraft<sup>61</sup> and was appointed CAS on 15 February 1940.<sup>62</sup>

Burnett's time in Australia was, for the most part, disappointing for the RAAF and has been the subject of commentary and criticism. The general comment is that he was a strong advocate of Imperial defence, with a forceful personality and considered that his main purpose was to train aircrew for the RAF under EATS. Consequently, he showed little interest in the home-defence of Australia, supporting instead the view that the defence of Australia rested in the Royal Navy base at Singapore.<sup>63</sup> Jones was one who held such critical views of the new CAS and commented that because of Burnett's poor management of the RAAF, with the emphasis on EATS training, 'we were even less prepared for the Japanese attacks than we might have been.'<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, the Minister for Air and other members of the Australian Government were pleased with Burnett's work and on 3 July 1940 the War Cabinet accepted Fairbairn's recommendation to extend the CAS appointment for a further year.<sup>65</sup>

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to be paid in sterling or, if she accompanied him to Australia, one-fifth was to be paid in sterling. From the £3000, Burnett was to pay for the upkeep of a house in the UK and one in Melbourne. One can only suspect that Burnett had an expensive lifestyle. On his departure for Britain at the end of his term with the RAAF, he received an income tax assessment of £3000. He laughed when he received it and said, 'I cannot pay'. No provision had been made officially for his income tax payments and he eventually paid what he could. His total income for his term with the RAAF was £7000. John McCarthy papers, 'Notes on ACM Burnett, while in Australia', Australian Defence Force Academy Library. We should also recall that the Pacific War started while Burnett was CAS and the last five months of his term were at a time when Australia was under its greatest threat.

<sup>60</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'The Air Board'. Williams, on his return to Australia, was appointed Air Member for Organisation and Equipment (AMOE).

<sup>61</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/163/1/296, minute from Official Secretary, Australia House to Secretary, Department of Air, Melbourne, 19 January 1940. Williams returned to Australia after his two-year posting with the RAF aboard the same aircraft as Burnett.

<sup>62</sup> Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, p. 90.

<sup>63</sup> David Horner, *High Command: Australia's Struggle for an Independent War Strategy, 1939–1945*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1992, p. 28.

<sup>64</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/804/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume III, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 3rd July, 1940', Minute (392), 'Extension of Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff'. James Fairbairn died in an aircraft accident near Canberra

Burnett served as CAS until 4 May 1942. He has been described as an RAF officer who had filled the CAS position 'without particular distinction' for the previous two years.<sup>66</sup> While in office, he paid little heed to the formalities of the RAAF command arrangements:

... the CAS rode rough-shod over the Australian Air Board, ignoring the members' collective responsibility and acting as though he were a Commander in Chief as he sought to implement the provisions of the EATS as quickly and as broadly as possible.<sup>67</sup>

He fell into petty wrangling all too easily and was not well respected by senior RAAF officers. During his time in office, the Australian Federal Government changed from a Conservative to a Labor ministry and Burnett had little respect for members of the incoming Government. Burnett's appointment did not enhance the authority and prestige of CAS, and his attitude towards Labor (and especially his dealings with the Minister for Air) was the source of further differences between the Government and the Service's high command. Burnett's time in Australia was later termed 'a folly' by the British Air Staff.<sup>68</sup>

There were some positive aspects, however, from his time in office as he took some initiatives that were beneficial to the Service long after he left Australia. Burnett was the driving force behind the formation of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF).<sup>69</sup> During World War II, members of the WAAAF undertook non-combat work, which in the past had been solely done by male Service members. Recruiting women expanded the Service and allowed men to be transferred to work more closely related to combat. Burnett was also responsible for the formation of the Directorate of Public Relations,<sup>70</sup> the Inspectorate of Air Accidents,<sup>71</sup> the RAAF

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on 13 August 1940 and Arthur Fadden succeeded him as Minister.

<sup>66</sup> Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Stephens, 'The Office of Chief of the Air Staff', p. 7.

<sup>68</sup> John McCarthy, *Defence in Transition: Australian Defence and the Role of Air Power 1945–1954*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1991, p. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Burnett received encouragement and support from his daughter with this initiative. Joyce A. Thomson, *The WAAAF in Wartime Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1992, pp. 45–46; and Wing Commander Mark Lax, 'A Short History of the RAAF', in Mark Lax (ed.), *Air Power Presentations 1995*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, p. 160.

<sup>70</sup> N.K. Quamby, 'Regrettable at Best? A Reappraisal of Sir Charles Burnett's Effect on the Royal Australian Air Force 1939–1942', Bachelor of Arts (Hons) thesis, Department of History, Royal Military College, Canberra, 1985, p. 38.

<sup>71</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/804/2, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume



Nursing Service, and the Directorate of Medical Services.<sup>72</sup> The formation of the latter two organisations meant that the RAAF was no longer dependent on the Australian Army to provide all of its health services. Burnett also presided over a huge growth in the RAAF's personnel strength. At the end of his two-year posting as CAS, the personnel numbers had grown from the prewar strength of 3489 to 79 074.<sup>73</sup>

Jones, in the meantime, relinquished his position as Assistant CAS on 10 March 1940 and resumed his earlier appointment of Director of Training, while Bostock remained DCAS. Jones now set about the enormous task of building up a huge training network to meet the demands of EATS. Jones' achievements in this sphere were numerous and included the establishment of Initial Training Schools, Elementary Flying Training Schools, Air Navigation Schools, Air Observer Schools and Bombing and Gunnery Schools, as well as the acquisition of aircraft to equip these institutions.<sup>74</sup>

To meet the obligations of the EATS agreement, the RAAF needed to establish a training regime capable of producing 280 trainee pilots every four weeks. These men were to be trained to the advanced flying standard. There was also the requirement to train 184 air observers and wireless/air gunners (WAGs) every four weeks. In addition there was a requirement for the partially trained aircrew to go to Canada for the completion of their training—80 pilot trainees, 42 observers and 72 WAGs every four weeks. Jones was also faced with the task of aircraft acquisition. At the outbreak of the war, the RAAF had 246 aircraft, placed in 13 squadrons, located

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IV, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 2nd October, 1940; Minute (549), 'Flying Accidents in R.A.A.F. Burnett advised Cabinet that 'he had appointed an Inspector of Air Accidents with a legal officer to assist him in the interrogation of the persons concerned and witnesses'. These officers were to be independent of the Service court of inquiry constituted to inquire into all air accidents and were responsible to CAS.

<sup>72</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/803/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume II, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 5th April, 1940; Minute (229), 'Agendum No. 74/1940 – Organisation and Administration – R.A.A.F. Medical Service'. Cabinet approved the Director-General of Medical Services (Army) relinquishing his responsibilities in the control of the Air Force Medical Service and that a standing committee, comprising the permanent medical directors of the three Services be established within the Department of Defence Co-ordination. The committee's purpose was to resolve matters that required coordination between the Services.

<sup>73</sup> Robert O'Neill, 'Burnett, Sir Charles Stuart (1882–1945); entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 13, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1993, p. 312.

<sup>74</sup> Chief of the Air Staff, *War Report of the Chief of the Air Staff*, p. 18.

at six air bases around Australia.<sup>75</sup> The Service would need thousands more to meet its training commitments. When EATS wound up in 1944, nine months before schedule (an event Jones likened to attempting to stop an ocean liner at full speed), Jones reported that the RAAF had trained 27 387 aircrew (10 882 pilots, 6071 navigators and 10 434 WAGs and air gunners) in Australia. In addition, 4760 elementary trained pilots, 2282 navigators and 3309 WAGs were sent to Canada for final training, while 674 pilots were sent to Rhodesia to complete their training.<sup>76</sup>

Jones' achievements did not go unrecognised; on 21 February 1941 he was made an acting Air Commodore<sup>77</sup> and later that year he was rewarded by being made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE). The citation stated that Jones, as Director of Training, had been responsible for the entire training of Australia's part in EATS. It continued, 'His ability, energy and determination have, to a large extent, been responsible for the successful output of trainees from all schools. Air Commodore Jones is an officer who has always shown diligence, devotion to duty and perseverance of outstanding merit.'<sup>78</sup>

As noted earlier, following Burnett's appointment, Bostock was retained as DCAS.<sup>79</sup> In this position Bostock loyally and energetically supported Burnett who, in turn, prepared the DCAS to succeed him as CAS.<sup>80</sup> As DCAS, Bostock was twice promoted ahead of officers who were senior to him even though this was contrary to Air Board Orders (ABO). ABO 60/1940 allowed for all promotions to be temporary initially (except for promotion to Flying Officer). The ABO was ignored, despite protests by the Air Member for Personnel (Air Commodore H.N.

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<sup>75</sup> The RAAF was equipped with 82 Ansons, 54 Demons, seven Wirraways, 21 Seagulls and 82 training aircraft of various different types. This was nowhere enough to meet EATS demands and it was estimated the RAAF needed 666 primary trainers, 771 Avro Ansons, 414 CAC Wirraways, 423 Fairey Battles and 12 Douglas DC-2s. Britain had undertaken to supply the Ansons and Battles, but the RAAF had to find ways to acquire the other aircraft. This was the start of the aircraft acquisition problem that would remain with the Service for the rest of the war and would occupy so much of Jones' time in the future.

<sup>76</sup> Chief of the Air Staff, *War Report of the Chief of the Air Staff*, p. 21.

<sup>77</sup> RAAF Discharged Personnel Section, Index Card – Officers: 'Jones, Sir George'.

<sup>78</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, Commander of the Order of the British Empire, acting Air Commodore Jones, DFC, Citation.

<sup>79</sup> W.D. Bostock was promoted to Group Captain on 1 September 1938. He was appointed DCAS one year later while still a Group Captain. He was made acting Air Commodore on 1 June 1940 and promoted to Air Vice-Marshal on 1 October 1941. David Wilson, 'Commander in the Shadow: Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock 1942–1945', Master of Defence Studies sub-thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with the late Air Commodore A.D. Garrison (Retd), 11 October 1995.

Wrigley), when Bostock was promoted from acting Air Commodore to Air Vice-Marshal.<sup>81</sup> It was alleged that Burnett pushed for Bostock's promotion to Air Vice-Marshal, arranged for him to receive the Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB), and was the first to congratulate him when the decoration was received.<sup>82</sup> It would be reasonable to expect, therefore, that the Menzies Government would have appointed Bostock as CAS after Burnett's time in Australia had finished.

### **A Change of Government and the Entry of Japan into the War**

During the second half of 1941 the Australian Federal political scene changed in a major way. On 28 August, Menzies resigned as Prime Minister and was succeeded by Country Party leader, Arthur Fadden. Fadden's term in office was short. On 3 October, during debate on the Federal Budget, two independent politicians, upon whom the Government depended to hold office, changed their allegiances and voted with the Labor Opposition. Fadden thus resigned on 7 October and a Labor Government, led by John Curtin, took office. In addition to the Prime Ministership, Curtin took on the Defence Ministry, while the War Cabinet now included A.S. Drakeford as Minister for Air, J.B. Chifley as Treasurer, and H.V. Evatt as Minister for External Affairs and Attorney General.<sup>83</sup> As Minister for Defence, Curtin relied heavily on the advice of the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Sir Frederick Shedden.

In early December 1941, two months after Curtin became Prime Minister, the Pacific War erupted with Japanese military forces initially attacking bases in Hawaii, the Philippines, and Malaya. The Japanese then embarked on a rapid conquest of the region. The achievements of the Japanese military forces included the sinking of the Royal Navy's two Singapore-based capital ships and the eventual conquest of Singapore itself—thus putting paid to the Australian Government's defence plans that centred around the Royal Navy and the British Navy base in Singapore, referred to as the 'Singapore Strategy'. Following these victories it was feared by the majority of Australians (including the Government) that the Australian mainland

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<sup>81</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Agenda 3984, 16 May 1942.

<sup>82</sup> John McCarthy papers, 'Notes on ACM Burnett, while in Australia', Australian Defence Force Academy Library.

<sup>83</sup> John Robertson, *Australia at War 1939–1945*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, Vic., 1981, pp. 34–35; and Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin's War*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997, p. 45.

was under imminent threat of Japanese invasion.<sup>84</sup> These events and fears brought about a radical change in Australia's defence relationships as Curtin turned to the United States for military assistance.

Shortly before the fighting started in the Pacific, Jones made another trip to Canada. Burnett was concerned that sudden changes in the length of EATS training were difficult to understand and consequently were causing problems for future planning. He directed Jones to proceed, by Pan American Clipper, to Ottawa to discuss the problems with Goble, at the earliest possible date.<sup>85</sup> Jones arrived in Canada on 2 November 1941. As part of the visit's itinerary, Goble had arranged for Jones to visit the training command headquarters and one school of each type where Australians were receiving instruction.<sup>86</sup> Thus, while in Canada, Jones visited training establishments at Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg and Edmonton. He also was invited to attend a meeting of the Canadian Air Board and there met the World War I fighter ace, Billy Bishop.

Jones was a passenger aboard a Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Norseman aircraft, flying over Lake Manitoba in a snowstorm on a visit to one of the training establishments, when he first received word of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.<sup>87</sup> His biggest concern then was his return to Australia. After a long journey across Canada and the US he managed to secure passage on a US troopship, SS *Mariposa*, bound for Melbourne.<sup>88</sup> The ship arrived in Melbourne on 2 February 1942, three months from when Jones had arrived in Canada. It had been a very long trip for him.

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<sup>84</sup> Other works have adequately covered most of these events and defence thinking of the time. For example, the development of the Singapore Strategy has been described by John McCarthy in *Australia and Imperial Defence 1918–1939*, while the sinking of the 'Force Z' ships (HMS Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse) is described in many works, including Christopher Shores and Brian Cull with Yasuho Izawa, *Bloody Shambles – Volume One – The Drift to War to the Fall of Singapore*, Grub Street, London, 1992, pp. 108–127.

<sup>85</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/2/212/4/221, Movement of Air Commodore Jones to Canada, minute from Burnett to AMP, 11 November 1941.

<sup>86</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/2/212/4/221, Movement of Air Commodore Jones to Canada, Cypher message from RAAF ALO Ottawa to Air Board, Melbourne, 26 November 1941.

<sup>87</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 73; and Jones papers, 'The Empire Air Training Scheme (to the attack on Pearl Harbour)'.

<sup>88</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/2/212/4/221, Movement of Air Commodore Jones to Canada, cablegram from RAAF ALO Ottawa to Air Board, 21 December 1941. Jones describes his adventures on this trip at some length in his autobiography; Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 73–75.

George Jones would hardly have had time to unpack his bags before Burnett sent him on another trip in early February 1942—this time to the Northern Territory. Burnett was concerned about the condition of the RAAF units stationed in the North-Western Area (NWA) and directed Jones to make an on-site inspection and report on their status. Jones again flew an Anson up to Darwin and from there he flew to Daly Waters, an airfield about 480 kilometres to the south. It had been decided to move the Hudson squadrons to this site because it was reasoned that they would have been out of the range of Japanese bombers, should an attack be mounted on northern Australia.

Jones was quite concerned with what he found at Daly Waters. All Service aircraft were in very poor condition and morale was very low. Personnel were accommodated in tents and the airfield was without the sheds, hangars and other buildings necessary for aircraft storage and maintenance. He found that the senior NCOs, who were usually the inspiration of activity, were edgy or worse. In the new surroundings, they viewed their relocation away from Darwin to be the beginning of a general retreat. Jones attempted to disabuse them of this idea.

Jones spent a day at Daly Waters and while there he supervised the installation of a diesel-powered electric generator. He was disturbed by the morale of the airmen assisting with this task and he had difficulty keeping them working as every so often they would group together and discuss courses of action in the event of a Japanese attack.<sup>89</sup>

On his return to Melbourne, Jones reported quite bluntly to Burnett that he found the fighting value of the three RAAF flying units in the North-Western Area, Nos 2, 12 and 13 Squadrons, 'to be not very high'. This was due to the unsatisfactory state of serviceability of a considerable proportion of the aircraft; to the low morale of all ranks and to the wide dispersal of aircraft and personnel.<sup>90</sup> Jones attributed the poor standards of maintenance to the dispersal of aircraft away from the appropriate facilities. He therefore recommended the establishment of an aircraft maintenance facility at Daly Waters, a site he anticipated would be beyond the range of Japanese bombers.<sup>91</sup> Jones' report was submitted to Burnett five days before the first Japanese

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<sup>89</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 78.

<sup>90</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM Collection Record: 3DRL/3414 – Jones, George (Air Marshal, Director of Training and Chief of Air Staff, RAAF), 'Report on Personnel and Administrative Problems in the North Western Area — Written by Air Commodore Jones for the CAS', 14 February 1942.

<sup>91</sup> Jones papers, 'Difficulties in Obtaining Sufficient Good Aircraft.'

air raid on Darwin (19 February 1942). Burnett was sceptical, doubting things were as bad as Jones reported. This doubt vanished after accounts of the first air raids and the subsequent behaviour of Service personnel were received. Burnett visited Darwin after these raids, saw the situation for himself and told Jones the content of his report was not exaggerated.<sup>92</sup>

Jones considered one of the causes of the early Japanese victories in the war, leading up to the air raids on northern Australia, was the RAAF's lack of specialist combat aircraft. The available aircraft, Wirraways and Hudsons, were not in the same league as the high-performance Japanese fighters, such as the Mitsubishi A6M 'Zero':

It was a situation which should never have happened, and in my opinion, those responsible were never properly called to account for it.

In the first two years of the war, we had concentrated on the training organisation, neglecting to build up adequate operational strength. When the Japanese attacked Darwin, we had hardly a feather to fly with.

Between the wars the Air Board had concentrated on bricks and mortar expansion, and we failed to set up our own aircraft industry, until it was too late.<sup>93</sup>

Jones returned to his office in Melbourne, unaware that the most significant event in his professional life was about to happen very shortly.

### **The South-West Pacific Area**

Even though Curtin had made a fundamental change in Australia's defence relationships from a dependence on Britain to a dependence on the US, Australia was already part of US war planning, having gained this role soon after the attack on Hawaii. On 14 December 1941, the War Plans Division of the War Department recommended to US Army Chief of Staff, General Marshall, that Australia serve as the supply base to support operations in the Philippines where US and Filipino forces under the command of General MacArthur had to be re-supplied and reinforced very quickly.<sup>94</sup> In early 1942, Australia became a base for US troops

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<sup>92</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> E.J. Drea, 'Great Patience is Needed', in *War & Society*, vol. 11, no. 1, May 1993, p. 22. At the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) decided to bolster Australia for use in a future offensive against Japan. By March 1942, approximately 80 000 troops had been sent to the country, with an additional 200 000 scheduled to go later in 1942. Although MacArthur

and materiel needed to defend the Philippines and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI—now Indonesia). Contrary to popular views, the Americans did not come to provide military assistance to Australia. They came because the only way to reach the beleaguered Philippines was northward from Australia. The US and Australia were drawn together initially through a logistic system created out of necessity to counter the Japanese advances.

General Douglas MacArthur was the Commanding General of US Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), which had its headquarters in the Philippines. By early 1942, American and Filipino forces had retreated to the Bataan peninsula after the Japanese landing on the island of Luzon.<sup>95</sup> On 24 February 1942, President Roosevelt ordered MacArthur to leave his headquarters and proceed to Australia, where he was to reorganise the American offensive against Japan, with the primary objective being the relief of the Philippines. Travelling by PT boats<sup>96</sup> and B-17 aircraft, MacArthur, his family and personal staff reached Darwin on 17 March and arrived in Melbourne four days later.<sup>97</sup> Curtin had not been informed of MacArthur's arrival in the country until the commander of the Australian-based US forces, Lieutenant General George H. Brett, advised him by telephone on 17 March of Roosevelt's directive appointing MacArthur to command all US Army Forces in Australia.<sup>98</sup>

Roosevelt's directive suggested to the Australian Government that MacArthur should be appointed Supreme Commander of all Allied forces in the South-West Pacific. The appointment was considered by the Australian War Cabinet, which agreed that MacArthur's leadership of the Allied forces 'would be an inspiration to the Australian people and all forces serving under his command'.<sup>99</sup> The following

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had expressed disappointment with the paltry resources at his command (and the plans to assist Britain as a higher priority), these forces, with accompanying aircraft, actually represented the largest concentration of American power outside the Western hemisphere during the early stages of the war. Michael Schaller, *Douglas MacArthur: The Far Eastern General*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 1989, p. 62.

<sup>95</sup> By 5 January 1942, the US and Philippine forces had retreated to Bataan and MacArthur had established his headquarters on the fortress island of Corregidor. The US forces at Bataan surrendered on 9 April 1942 and those on Corregidor on 6 May.

<sup>96</sup> PT boats were a variety of motor torpedo boat ('PT' for 'Patrol Torpedo') used by the US Navy in World War II.

<sup>97</sup> William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880–1964*, Arrow Books, London, UK, 1979, p. 247.

<sup>98</sup> Dudley McCarthy, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series One (Army) – Volume V – South-West Pacific Area—First Year, Kokoda to Wau*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> National Archives of Australia, A2676, 'War Cabinet Minute No. 2021, Canberra – 17th March

day Curtin announced the news of MacArthur's arrival to the Australian people, who greeted it with enthusiasm.<sup>100</sup>

The area of Allied operations in the Pacific that included Australia was designated the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA), which came into being at 1400 GMT on 18 April 1942. On that same date, MacArthur, by the agreement of the Governments of Australia, Britain, the Netherlands and the USA, was appointed Commander-in-Chief and established his General Headquarters (GHQ) in Melbourne.<sup>101</sup> The forces assigned to him were organised into five subordinate commands, largely for the purpose of operational control.<sup>102</sup> The ground troops were designated the Allied Land Forces and placed under the command of General Sir Thomas Blamey. Major General Julian Barnes commanded the United States Army Forces in Australia, while the United States Forces in the Philippines were under Lieutenant General Jonathan Wainwright. The naval elements assigned to the Allied Naval Forces were under the command of Admiral Herbert Leary. Lieutenant General George Brett commanded the Allied Air Forces (AAF), which was formed on 22 April 1942.<sup>103</sup> The AAF comprised USAAF tactical and service units, and was given operational control of the combat elements of the RAAF and the Netherlands East Indies Army Air Forces and, a little later, the RAF units in the SWPA.<sup>104</sup>

The USAAF's contribution to the AAF was formidable on paper but many of the aircrew and their equipment were worn out from fighting in the Netherlands East

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1942 – Appointment of Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific.

<sup>100</sup> The Australian Chiefs of Staff welcomed Roosevelt's suggestion, as they had, at the time of MacArthur's arrival, completed a report in which they agreed the Supreme Commander of the SWPA should be an American who should be located in Australia.

<sup>101</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54 81/2/17, SWPA General Order No. 1, 18 April 1942. MacArthur moved his headquarters to Brisbane a short time later, on 20 July 1942.

<sup>102</sup> US Army General Headquarters SWPA, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, Volume 1, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1994 (reprint of 1966), pp. 31–34.

<sup>103</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54 81/2/17, SWPA General Order No. 1, 18 April 1942. Brett was initially the commander of US forces in Australia but relinquished this position upon the arrival of MacArthur. Brett then succeeded Major General Lewis Brereton as Commander AAF. Gavin Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, NSW, 1969, p. 91.

<sup>104</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), 'Higher Organisation of the RAAF: Operational and Administrative Control', letter from Curtin to MacArthur, 17 April 1942. When handing over the Australian units to MacArthur, Curtin stated that all orders concerning Australian forces issued by MacArthur would be considered as emanating from the Commonwealth Government.



Indies, while other pilots were newly arrived in the SWPA and inexperienced. Of the approximately 500 aircraft in the AAF, only about 200 were operational.<sup>105</sup>

For the RAAF, being part of the AAF meant that operational control of the squadrons and necessary operational headquarters was vested in the Commander AAF. CAS remained responsible for all matters associated with RAAF personnel, procurement and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings, and training.<sup>106</sup> We should now consider how the division of the RAAF into two separate bodies came about.

### **The Foundations of the Divided Command**

In order to make the best use of the RAAF's resources within the AAF structure and to meet the EATS commitment, Drakeford worked on what was, in principle, a well-intentioned plan to separate the operational and administrative functions of the RAAF into two distinct bodies. In the preparation of this plan, Drakeford had been greatly influenced by Langslow.<sup>107</sup> On 5 March 1942, Drakeford advised Curtin:

... the time has arrived for the establishment of a special Operational Command to control operations of the R.A.A.F. in the field – leaving C.A.S. to deal with Air Force policy and administration, organisation and his normal Service responsibilities.<sup>108</sup>

Obviously Drakeford had come to the conclusion that managing the RAAF was too big a task for just one person.<sup>109</sup> Drakeford based his plan on contemporary

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<sup>105</sup> Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK, 1987, p. 159.

<sup>106</sup> National Archives of Australia, A2676, 'War Cabinet Minute No. 2127, Canberra – 28th April, 1942 – Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command'

<sup>107</sup> McCarthy, *Defence in Transition*, p. 15.

<sup>108</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, 'Higher Direction of the RAAF: Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, 1942; minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 5 March 1942.

<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, Drakeford was working on his plan for a divided command at the same time as the Government appointed General T.A. Blamey as Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces (AMF)—a force, in terms of personnel, that was considerably larger than the RAAF. Those responsible for that appointment obviously did not think it was too big a task for just one person. Jeffrey Grey, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume I – The Australian Army*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 136; and Horner, *High Command*, p. 183.

events, namely the serious deterioration of the Allied position in the SWPA, Japanese attacks on Australian territory, and the proposed expansion of the RAAF to a 73-squadron Service. In addition, to further support the plan, he noted the influx of American forces into Australia, (which, he considered, necessitated the 'closest collaboration and co-ordination' between the RAAF, the Australian Army and the US forces); the huge increase in the volume of work now devolving to Service Departments; and the rapidly increasing tempo of the war effort.<sup>110</sup> Drakeford expected the proposed operational command to be headed by an Air Officer Commanding (AOC), whose position would be similar to that of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Home Forces (GOC-in-C Home Forces).<sup>111</sup> This Australian Army appointment came about when the Australian Government, anticipating Japan's entry into the war, decided to organise some form of home defence force. Lieutenant General Sir Iven Mackay returned to Australia from the Middle East to become GOC-in-C Home Forces, with effect from 1 September 1941. Mackay's task was to command the home army—a largely militia force—designed to defend Australia. The GOC-in-C Home Forces had direct access to the Minister for Army as a commander but worked through the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) for certain administrative functions. The position was overtaken by the appointment of Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces (AMF) in March 1942 and Mackay then took over command of the Second Army.<sup>112</sup>

Drakeford proposed the AOC Operational Command would:

- exercise all operational control over the RAAF;
- be responsible for the operations of the units under his control;
- furnish advice to CAS in respect of matters of inter-Service cooperation;
- supervise the preparation of operational plans and the execution of all preparations necessary to implement such plans;
- be responsible for Operational Training Units and operational training in squadrons under his control (he would report to CAS on the efficiency of such training); and

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<sup>110</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 5 March 1942.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Correspondence received from Mr Bill Houston, Army History Unit, Canberra, ACT, 17 May 2002.

- be required to report on the fighting efficiency of personnel and equipment under his command.<sup>113</sup>

However, the RAAF's existing administration framework would remain under CAS's control.<sup>114</sup>

With this proposal, Drakeford unintentionally laid the foundation for the divided command structure that plagued the RAAF for the remainder of World War II. In theory, the proposed divided structure could have worked in the RAAF at that time, but this was before Cabinet agreed to the transfer of operational units to AAF control. The proposal would also have worked if the AOC Operational Command had been an officer with a rank lower than CAS. Unfortunately, Drakeford and his colleagues did not appear to have anticipated the personality differences between senior RAAF officers and the impact this would make on the command arrangements.

While Drakeford and Langslow were planning a structure for the RAAF, Burnett was working with Brett to set up an integrated structure for the AAF, comprising RAAF and USAAF units. Under their plans, the AAF was to be overseen by a combined headquarters that directed operations, with Brett as Commander AAF and Bostock as his Chief of Staff. Australian and US officers were to hold the senior positions within the headquarters. Both Brett and Burnett were expecting Bostock to be appointed as the next RAAF CAS (and Bostock himself was under this expectation). If the combined arrangements as planned by Brett and Burnett had been allowed to continue, the senior USAAF officer would have had complete authority over all RAAF activities—not just operational control.<sup>115</sup> This would have meant that the Australian Government, in theory, would have had no say in how any part of the RAAF was used. With this in mind, it may be considered beneficial to Australian interests that the combined headquarters did not remain.

Brett and Burnett's plans seem to have been formulated with little consultation with the Australian Government and were contrary to the agreement Curtin made with MacArthur regarding the handover of RAAF units to the AAF. Their plans called for the abolition of the Air Board, the establishment of functional commands in the

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<sup>113</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 5 March 1942.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 61.

RAAF<sup>116</sup> and for the heads of the various RAAF and USAAF branches (including non-operational branches, such as works, supply and equipment) to be under Brett's direct control, with one officer, either Australian or American, at the head of each division.<sup>117</sup> This caused considerable concern for Drakeford, who sought the retention by the RAAF of non-operational functions because he felt that Brett should have been free to concentrate on operations and should not have had to concern himself with support and administration matters and also because, at that time, approximately three-quarters of the RAAF's personnel, infrastructure and assets was devoted to EATS.<sup>118</sup> Langslow also opposed Burnett and Brett's planning and advised his Minister, 'The question of handing over full control to General Brett is a matter requiring closest consideration.' Langslow questioned the structure of the combined headquarters on the grounds that USAAF and RAAF organisations were entirely different. He questioned whether the RAAF should adopt USAAF organisation schemes or retain the existing scheme that was similar to the RAF. He thus advised Drakeford that the RAAF should not abandon the RAF organisation that had been in place for years and had been developed under extensive wartime experience. That organisation met local defence needs and the management of EATS.<sup>119</sup>

Langslow pressed for the retention of RAAF administration functions because he reasoned the USAAF would only remain in Australia for as long as it took to conduct offensives against the Japanese. The Americans would then move to the next theatre of the war. It was therefore important that the RAAF did not lose control over essential functions, such as supply, maintenance and finance, which would be needed when the USAAF departed and were also needed for EATS.<sup>120</sup> Langslow was also concerned about the integrity of the Service and feared that Australia would lose control over the RAAF if the administration functions were handed over to the AAF. By retaining the non-operational functions, the Australian Government was able to maintain some control over its Air Force. In providing this

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<sup>116</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), minute from Burnett to Drakeford, 20 April 1942.

<sup>117</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), Notes by Minister, 'Organisation – Air Forces in Australia', 6 April 1942.

<sup>118</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 8 April 1942.

<sup>119</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), paper titled 'Review of Higher Joint Machinery', authored by M.C. Langslow.

<sup>120</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), Note for Minister, 'Organisation – Allied Air Forces', 17 April 1942.

advice, Langslow set in train one of the major areas of grievance in the forthcoming dispute between CAS and the RAAF's operational commander.

Drakeford took up the argument with Curtin, claiming that the Burnett/Brett plan allowed for Brett to have full control over the whole of the RAAF, including training and administrative functions. It did not appear sound to him, or Langslow, that USAAF officers with little or no knowledge of the RAAF could efficiently administer the Service.<sup>121</sup> Curtin sought advice on the matter from Blamey, Colvin and MacArthur, all of whom told him that Brett's command should not be limited to operational control. Curtin concluded that the best form of command for the RAAF was the appointment of an AOC RAAF. In the case of such an appointment, he reasoned, 'The integrity of Government and Ministerial control of Australian Policy was fully safeguarded under these proposals.' As we will see, Curtin would pursue such an appointment for the remainder of the war but at this time he acceded to Drakeford's concerns:

I wish you to be aware that personal consideration of your viewpoint has influenced my decision, but it must be clearly understood that, if there are any indications that the organisation adopted is not working satisfactorily, it may be necessary to revert to the original proposals or such other changes as may be necessary.<sup>122</sup>

### **Chief of the Air Staff**

In early 1942, Curtin's Government found itself having to contend with the end of Burnett's tenure as Chief of the Air Staff.<sup>123</sup> The problem that confronted the Government was selecting his replacement. In February 1942, the Australian High Commissioner in London, Stanley Bruce, aware of the situation, sent a cablegram to Curtin, stating that he expected the Prime Minister would be considerably preoccupied with the problem of the RAAF's senior command. He advised, 'it is

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<sup>121</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 20 April 1942.

<sup>122</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'Air Force Organisation', 25 April 1942. Before making this decision, Curtin had gained MacArthur's advice that it was better to maintain separate organisations for each part of the RAAF and rely on cooperation, rather than unified direction, for the essential results.

<sup>123</sup> As noted above, Curtin's Government took office in October 1941. It would be reasonable to think that the Menzies/Fadden Governments, during their time in office, would have considered Burnett's replacement. One suspects that Burnett would have nominated Bostock to the Government as his successor.

desirable that you should have Drummond in your mind'.<sup>124</sup> Drummond was Air Vice-Marshal (acting Air Marshal) Sir Peter Drummond, an Australian serving with the RAF as Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle East. Bruce met Drummond when the latter made a short visit to London and advised Curtin 'I was most impressed with him and would feel much happier with him in Australia than most senior Air Force Officers I have contacted'.<sup>125</sup> With his broad Service experience,<sup>126</sup> Drummond would have been an ideal choice for appointment to a very senior position within the RAAF and the Australian Government should have moved quickly and fought hard to secure his transfer to the Service.

As Drakeford had planned and argued for the structure of the RAAF, it seems reasonable that he would also have some idea who should command it. To start with, he recommended to the Prime Minister that Burnett's appointment be terminated from 16 March 1942 and Williams replace him. Once he was in the office of CAS, Williams' first task would be to examine and immediately report on the steps necessary to establish the proposed Operational Command as well as the respective responsibilities and functions of the CAS and the AOC Operational Command. Williams would have been highly suitable for the tasks Drakeford proposed. Drakeford then proposed that Drummond would be transferred from the RAF and appointed to the new position with the title AOC Operational Command of the RAAF.<sup>127</sup>

Bruce and Drakeford were not the only people to have opinions on the appointment of CAS. Burnett too had views. Bypassing the Minister for Air (because he considered the matter to be of such urgency!), he approached Curtin with the view

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<sup>124</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from High Commissioner London to Prime Minister, 5 February 1942.

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> During World War I, Drummond served with No 1 Squadron, AFC, No 111 Squadron, RFC and No 145 Squadron, RAF. By the end of the war, he had reached the rank of Major, had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order and Bar, and was credited with the destruction of eight German aircraft. He remained with the RAF after the war and was sent to Australia as a Squadron Leader on exchange to the RAAF, between 1925 and 1929, when he served in the position of Director of Operations and Intelligence. During the early years of World War II, Drummond served in several operational command positions, rising to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. On 1 May 1941, he was appointed acting Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Middle East (this became a permanent appointment in June that year). John McCarthy, 'Drummond, Sir Peter Roy Maxwell (1894–1945)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 14. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Vic., 1996, pp. 39–40; and A.D. Garrison, *Australian Fighter Aces 1914–1953*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1999, p. 95.

<sup>127</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 5 March 1942.

that his successor should be a person with wide experience in all aspects of warfare and that this experience be used to Australia's benefit. He too recommended Drummond and advised that he had made informal inquiries to the Air Ministry (one assumes he also did this without Drakeford's knowledge or consent!) and had received the reply, 'if Australia asks for him we shall do our best to make him available when required.'<sup>128</sup>

Burnett, in the meantime, continued to command the Service and was planning changes to the upper command structure, which, had they proceeded, would have led to a sideways move for Jones. CAS decided on a minor reorganisation of the Air Board, with an increase in the number of members by creating a new position of Air Member for Organisation and Works. In addition, he planned some changes at RAAF Headquarters. Burnett's plan was for the existing Air Member for Organisation and Equipment Branch to be retitled Air Member for Equipment and Technical Services Branch. The latter's functions were to be divided in two with the Director of Equipment, Director of Armaments and Director of Technical Services placed under acting Air Vice-Marshal W.H. Anderson, while the Director of Organisation, Director of Staff Duties and Director of Works and Buildings were to be placed under acting Air Commodore Jones. The reason Burnett gave for the proposed change was that it would allow better control and quicker action because 'with the present distribution of duties, the work cannot adequately be undertaken by one man.'<sup>129</sup> Burnett does not appear to have nominated anyone for the new Air Member position but Group Captain J.E. Hewitt was to succeed Jones as Director of Training. Hewitt's deputy was to be an RAF exchange officer, Wing Commander Freestone, who would have been promoted to Group Captain.<sup>130</sup> It has been acknowledged that Jones did excellent work as Director of Training<sup>131</sup> so we may wonder why he was to be removed from this position. Did Burnett plan to allow Jones to broaden his knowledge and experience with the new responsibilities, or did he see Jones as being more suited to a technical position? In hindsight, the

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<sup>128</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Burnett to Curtin, 5 March 1942.

<sup>129</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, 'Dept of Air & Air Board, Minutes Corres, 1939–45', minute from Assistant Secretary (Department of Air) to Minister for Air, 7 March 1942. Burnett began his minute to the Air Board et al with, 'I would like the following re-organisation to take place without delay'.

<sup>130</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Assistant Secretary (Department of Air) to Minister for Air, 7 March 1942.

<sup>131</sup> Stephens and Isaacs, *High Fliers*, p. 95; and Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, p 67.

new position for Jones looks more like a 'backwater' that would have removed him from the highly important task of managing EATS.

It appears that Burnett's plans for the Air Board reorganisation were unknown to Drakeford until he was advised of their existence by Langslow. Burnett had the tendency to act without Ministerial consent (a characteristic that Drakeford would raise with Curtin during the deliberations over the appointment of Burnett's successor) and this reorganisation was one such example of his behaviour. Drakeford opposed the reorganisation and directed Langslow, 'If any instructions have been given other than those already assented to by me cancel them, and defer any further action until my return to Melbourne.'<sup>132</sup> With these instructions communicated, the Minister set off to Canberra for a meeting of the War Cabinet to discuss, inter alia, the CAS appointment, while Jones remained in his old job.

### **Cabinet Deliberations and Decisions**

The War Cabinet met on 9 March 1942 and agreed not to re-appoint Burnett. Unbelievably, given the international situation and the Japanese attacks on Australia, a successor was not decided upon, although Drakeford's proposals for the reorganisation of the RAAF must have made some impression because he was tasked with arranging an interview between Williams and Curtin.<sup>133</sup> It may be recalled that in early 1940, W.H. Anderson was appointed temporary CAS, and we may ask why Cabinet was unable to appoint someone to head the RAAF, even on a temporary basis, at a time of national crisis. Perhaps an answer to this question, and many subsequent questions that may be asked about the Government's attitude vis-a-vis the RAAF's command situation, lay partially in the composition of the Labor Government and the diverse backgrounds of the members of that Government.

When Curtin and his colleagues took office, the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party was made up of people with a variety of beliefs. The majority of Ministers (including Curtin) had not been in government before and few of them had served in the Defence Services, while some were anti-conscription and unsympathetic towards the military. Few had the necessary background to deal with matters of defence, foreign policy and world affairs. Curtin himself had developed a strong dislike for militarism and had been gaoled for anti-conscription activities during World War

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<sup>132</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, teleprinter message to Secretary Department of Air from Minister for Air, 7 March 1942.

<sup>133</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/808/1, War Cabinet Minute No. 1985, 'Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff', 9 March 1942.



I. Regardless of this background, and unlike many of his colleagues, when he took office Curtin tried to familiarise himself with defence and foreign policy matters. He was, however, in the position of having to deal with a few Australian Labor Party (ALP) members, such as Eddie Ward, who not only opposed militarism but who also believed the war was part of a conspiracy to promote capitalism. Curtin, therefore, was fighting all manner of anti-war beliefs within his own party and had to move very slowly on many Defence initiatives in order to maintain the support of his colleagues.<sup>134</sup> So he found himself in the difficult position of having to satisfy the widely differing factions within his own party, as well as demonstrating to the Australian public that his was a credible government, which put the defence of the country as its first priority.

In keeping with the War Cabinet directive, the meeting between Williams and Curtin took place on 16 March 1942. However, it did not result in any positive action and Williams came away from it with the impression that the Prime Minister was anything but enthusiastic about him filling the CAS position again.<sup>135</sup>

Instead of appointing an RAAF officer as CAS in early March 1942, the War Cabinet decided to follow the precedent set by the previous Government and agreed to ask the British Government if the services of an RAF officer were available (in this case acting Air Marshal Drummond) 'on the same terms and conditions as those applying to the appointment of Sir Charles Burnett'.<sup>136</sup>

Another decision was made at the same War Cabinet meeting. It was agreed that Williams would be appointed as Inspector-General of the RAAF with the same rank and salary as CAS. In this position, he would be responsible directly to the Minister and his functions would parallel those of the Army Inspector-General. Williams was an acting Air Marshal, so given this proposal, it might be reasonable to suspect that Cabinet assumed or expected that the CAS, when appointed, would be an officer holding this rank permanently. The Inspector-General position never came

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<sup>134</sup> Horner, *High Command*, p. 137. Curtin was also aware that renegade Labor politicians (W.M. Hughes and J.A. Lyons) had, on previous occasions, left the ALP and had eventually led Conservative Governments. David Day, *The Politics of War*, HarperCollins, Pymble, NSW, 2003, p. 86.

<sup>135</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 295. After his comments on his meeting with Curtin, Williams added 'but the Minister did not feel that way'. Williams may have been aware of Drakeford's attempts to have him re-appointed.

<sup>136</sup> National Archives of Australia, A2676/1, War Cabinet Minute No. 2005, 'Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff'; 9 March 1942. One wonders whether these terms and conditions initially meant a salary of £3000, the rank of Air Chief Marshal and a one-year appointment followed by a second year.

to fruition. Curtin decided to defer this recommendation for further consideration until a reply to the request for Drummond was received from the UK.<sup>137</sup>

The Government's attempts to secure Drummond were characterised by delays in decision-making and subsequent action. It was not until 20 March 1942 (11 days after the War Cabinet meeting when the decision was made to gain an RAF officer) that Curtin sent instructions to Bruce to begin negotiations, at the earliest possible date, with the Air Ministry for an RAF officer to fill the CAS position. Drummond was quiet clearly the preferred officer as Curtin's instructions included the criteria for the ideal CAS, which began with the following statement, 'It is essential that he should have had extensive experience in active air operations in this war, and be an Australian.'<sup>138</sup> Even at this early stage in the proceedings, one cannot help question why the Australian Government spent so long in the exchange of cables with Britain over issues relative to the appointment of a senior air officer, given that this was a time of a great national security crisis.

Burnett, believing that with the anticipated appointment of Drummond 'the vexed question of my successor has been finalised', provided an option for the employment of Williams. Williams had been sent to London as AOC Overseas Headquarters, in September 1941 to oversee the administration structure for RAAF personnel serving in Britain and the Middle East. He returned to Australia in February 1942. Burnett was not keen to have him back in the country and wrote that he considered it essential, if Williams were to remain with the RAAF, he should be employed outside Australia:

Owing to his seniority, he cannot be placed in this country, and to remain as he has been since his arrival back from the U.K. on the 22nd February. Being officially unemployed leads to gossip which is not good for the Service, and it will certainly make things difficult for both Brett and Bostock if he remains.

My Minister has given me direct orders that Williams is not to work under me at present.

I believe that the Prime Minister is anxious to place a Senior Air Staff Officer in Washington, and I consider that Air Marshal Williams could function

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<sup>137</sup> We may suspect the Inspector-General proposal was intended to establish a sinecure through which Drakeford could ensure the continued employment of Williams.

<sup>138</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 20 March 1942.

satisfactorily in that position, as he has a knowledge of our requirements, and is energetic and hard working.<sup>139</sup>

In March 1942, the British Government agreed to Drummond's transfer to the RAAF.<sup>140</sup> However, Drummond himself had a few reservations and it would appear that he was stalling for time because he approached Burnett with some questions that were pertinent to him accepting the job; namely:

- Would he be paid in Australian or English currency?
- What proportion of his proposed salary was allowances not subject to income tax?
- Why was it proposed to pay him at a lower rate than the Chief of Naval Staff?<sup>141</sup>

On 1 April 1942, Bruce advised Curtin that Drummond had expressed his deep appreciation of the offer and would accept following the clarification of some further details, viz.:

- Would he be principal adviser to the Commonwealth?
- Would he be a member of the local (i.e. Australian Government) Defence Council?
- What would be his relationship with General MacArthur?
- What would be his position vis-à-vis General Brett?<sup>142</sup>

Bruce followed the questions with his own opinion that 'unless in Australia we will be using Drummond's great experience under active war conditions in direct operational sphere, we would not be justified in pressing for his release to us in view of his value in the Middle East'.<sup>143</sup> In the RAAF's divided high command

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<sup>139</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Burnett to Shedden, 17 April 1942. The last phrase of Burnett's signal is written in a patronising style, as though CAS was commenting on the performance of a junior officer. One wonders what Burnett meant by the phrase 'it will certainly make things difficult for both Brett and Bostock if he remains'. Perhaps Burnett was aware that Williams had some influence with Drakeford and would advise the Minister adversely on the plans for the AAF. In his autobiography, Williams described his return to Australia in 1942 and noted that Drakeford had not advised Burnett of the return. Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 292.

<sup>140</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 26 March 1942.

<sup>141</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Burnett to Secretary, Department of Defence Co-ordination, 28 March 1942.

<sup>142</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 1 April 1942.

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*

arrangements, Drummond as CAS would not have been able to use his considerable operational experience. Instead, he would have been placed in a position that was largely administrative in nature.

One cannot study the intricacies of the CAS appointment without speculating or imagining what may have happened, if Williams and Drummond had been appointed to the RAAF's senior positions. We know, from his correspondence with the Air Ministry, that Williams recognised Drummond as a capable officer<sup>144</sup> (as did other Service and political personalities). Therefore, it is likely a good professional relationship could have existed between the two. No RAAF officer had greater experience in managing the Service than Williams, while Drummond had gained considerable experience in operational command. The best outcome (apart from appointing a Commander-in-Chief of the RAAF) would have been for the Australian Government to have followed Drakeford's original proposal. That is, to gain the services of Drummond and appoint him as the AOC Operational Command, then to appoint Williams as CAS. While both officers held the rank of Air Marshal (equivalent to Lieutenant General, which was the rank of the USAAF officer who eventually held the position of Commander AAF), it is possible there would not have been personality problems between the two (at least not to the same degree as occurred between the two officers who were eventually appointed to the positions). However, political interference and inaction ensured that this almost ideal situation did not eventuate.

Burnett now took it upon himself to nominate a successor. He advised Curtin directly that his usefulness with the RAAF was finished and so he wanted to hand over command of the Service to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. Burnett was convinced that in Bostock the Australian Government would have an officer who would safeguard Australian interests within the AAF. Burnett's opinion was that Bostock should be both CAS and AOC 'to allow the discipline and organisation of the Force to function under the Act, in the same way as the U.S.A. Air Corps functions in law under their Commander.'<sup>145</sup> It would appear that Curtin was prepared to go along with Burnett's recommendation but Drakeford told the Prime Minister he

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<sup>144</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 6525, Papers [of Sir Richard Williams], 1919–1967, letter from Williams to Air Chief Marshal Sir Edward Ellington, GCB, CMG, CBE, 2 December 1935.

<sup>145</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, letter from Burnett to Curtin, 17 April 1942. We may assume Bostock was aware of the contents of this letter.

was opposed to Bostock's appointment as CAS and instead he wanted Williams to be appointed.<sup>146</sup>

By this time, Curtin had finally replied to the questions Bruce had asked nearly a month earlier. He told Bruce that Drummond (as CAS) was to be the principal adviser to the Government on air power; he was to be a member of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee; he would have no immediate relationship with MacArthur, unless Brett died and then Drummond would replace him as head of the AAF (MacArthur had made this unlikely statement).<sup>147</sup> Despite Bruce's advice, Curtin did not intend for Drummond to be given any direct operational command responsibilities. On 28 April 1942, the Advisory War Council was told of the Government's decisions: Drummond was to be CAS—if his services were available; Bostock was to be Brett's Chief of Staff; and Williams was to be a representative of the Service Mission in Washington.<sup>148</sup> Curtin deferred Burnett's proposal to abolish the Air Board until after Drummond had been appointed and he told Drakeford to expedite the formation of the restructured RAAF:

Now that the combat forces have been assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, I am particularly anxious that the new organisation be established with the greatest expedition. It is my direction, as Minister for Defence, that the fullest co-operation is to be afforded to the Commander of the Allied Air Forces, and this instruction is to be promulgated to all concerned.<sup>149</sup>

Drakeford's reply to the directive that the fullest cooperation be extended to MacArthur was, in hindsight, quite ironic: 'I have no doubt that it will work most efficiently.'<sup>150</sup> It would appear that Curtin's directive was quickly forgotten or ignored by Drakeford and the officers at RAAF Headquarters.

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<sup>146</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 20 April 1942.

<sup>147</sup> Drummond's appointment as commander of the AAF in the event of the death or incapacity of Brett was, no doubt, a theoretical situation. It is unthinkable that MacArthur or the US Chiefs of Staff would have allowed an Australian to be in overall command of a US Army Air Force.

<sup>148</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings, Volume V, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting, Canberra, 28th April, 1942', Minute (917), 'Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff and Air Force Organisation'. The Council does not appear to have had a contingency plan for the CAS position if Drummond was unavailable.

<sup>149</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'Air Force Organisation', 25 April 1942.

<sup>150</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Air Force Organisation', 29 April 1942.

Drummond's appointment to the RAAF did not happen, partially because of events on the other side of the world and partially because of the seemingly lackadaisical attitude of the Australian Government. On 28 April 1942, Bruce advised Curtin that the RAF Air Staff felt that the Middle East position had altered since the first time Drummond's appointment was raised and they expected the war in that sphere to flare up again. Therefore, it was 'preferable in the common interest that he should remain in the Middle East'. The RAF also considered it unfair to ask Air Marshal A.W. Tedder (AOC Royal Air Force Middle East) to make a change with his deputies. The Air Ministry also blocked the appointment as it considered it would have had great difficulty in replacing Drummond at that time. The Air Ministry asked Bruce to express its regret to the Australian Government.<sup>151</sup>

Curtin was now prepared to accept the appointment of Bostock as CAS on a temporary basis. In a minute to Drakeford on 29 April, Burnett, advised 'the Prime Minister has agreed that I should hand over temporarily the command of the Royal Australian Air Force to the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (A.V.M.) Bostock pending final decision of my successor. I propose, therefore, with your permission handing over on the 4th May, 1942'.<sup>152</sup>

Curtin would not accept the Air Ministry's refusal and he asked Bruce to make further approaches for Drummond's transfer. These were unsuccessful and Bruce again advised Curtin that it was highly unlikely, at that time, the RAF would release Drummond for service in Australia. The Air Staff reiterated their argument for his retention with the RAF—they were not prepared to agree to the Australian Government's request because Drummond's role in the Middle East was vital. Furthermore, they would only release him if the RAAF CAS position would enable him to have a real influence on operations. In a subtle reminder to Curtin that the refusal had been partially of his own making, Bruce pointed out that the Air Staff had postponed all action on Drummond's release until their questions of 1 April 1942 had been satisfied. These questions were not answered until 24 April and in the meantime the Air Staff had given no thought to selecting a replacement for Drummond in the Middle East. We might expect that the Air Staff would have questioned the sincerity of the Australian Government's request, given the delay in providing these replies. In Bruce's opinion, the Air Ministry did not feel that

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<sup>151</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 29 April 1942.

<sup>152</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, inwards signal from CAS to Air Minister, 29 April 1942.

Drummond's exceptional operational experience would be adequately used if he went to Australia. This opinion, together with the increasing activity in the Middle East campaign, led Bruce to advise Curtin, 'It seems to me difficult to contest this view and my judgement is, that much as I regret our not getting Drummond, it is not worthwhile making any further representations.'<sup>153</sup> Curtin was therefore faced with the prospect of selecting an RAAF officer and Bostock was his most likely choice.

While the politicians were deliberating, there was some speculation among senior RAAF officers over who would be CAS and, about a week before the appointment was to be made, Jones had dinner with his close friend and mentor, Bostock. Jones commented that he expected Bostock to be appointed CAS in the next week and Jones would then have to call his friend 'Sir'.<sup>154</sup> This was not to be the case and what actually followed had all the ingredients of a Greek tragedy.

### **The Selection Process**

On 6 and 7 May 1942, Australian newspapers announced acting Air Commodore George Jones had been appointed CAS. This was without doubt the most controversial incident in Jones' eventful life. It was also one of the most controversial administrative appointments made to the senior ranks of the RAAF.

In their autobiographies, both Jones and Williams have speculated why the appointment was made. Neither was privy to the Cabinet's decision-making process. Disappointingly, Jones does not seem to have looked further into the appointment when he compiled his autobiography, even though official government records would have been available by then. Instead, he bases a lot of his speculation

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<sup>153</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Bruce to Prime Minister, 2 May 1942. At this point in time there does not appear to have been any alternative RAF officer under consideration by the Australian Government.

<sup>154</sup> Discussions with Dr Alan Stephens, 5 February 2002. Up until his appointment as CAS, Jones maintained a very good friendship with Bostock and in one interview stated 'He was my friend for 20 years and the moment I got the job, he expected to get the job, and the moment I got it instead of him, his attitude changed'. A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Transcripts Jones, Garing, Bostock?', 'Interview – Air Marshal Sir George Jones'. (This document is undated but data contained in other papers included in Garrison's collection suggest the interview may have occurred post February 1983.) Air Commodore F.M. Bladin, who was appointed DCAS in 1944, commented on Jones and Bostock's friendship, 'I remembered how these two in the early years of the R.A.A.F. had seemed to have more in common with each other than with most of the other officers at Point Cook'. A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Bladin Memoirs', p. 33.

on Williams' account, which was written 11 years before his own autobiography.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, when we look at both accounts we find similarities.

Williams' view of events is that he was aware Drakeford wanted him as CAS, while Burnett wanted Bostock.<sup>156</sup> In fact, there was an expectation among RAAF officers that Williams would be re-appointed CAS after his posting to Coastal Command ended in 1940.<sup>157</sup> In his autobiography, Williams wrote that Drakeford advised him of the proceedings at the War Cabinet meeting of 5 May 1942. Curtin, Drakeford said, had arrived at the meeting and announced he wanted to finalise the CAS appointment and Bostock would not be considered for the position. Curtin had received several representations favouring Bostock,<sup>158</sup> including one from the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie. In Curtin's view, the Governor-General was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and thus was advised of the appointments of Chiefs of Staff by the Government—not the other way around.<sup>159</sup> Consequently, he decided that 'under no circumstances would he agree to Bostock's appointment'.<sup>160</sup> It would appear that, in this account, Bostock was rejected not because of any lack of ability on his part, but because of Curtin's supposed view of Gowrie's position. This seems to be an odd reason for rejecting an officer to a senior appointment.

Drakeford advised he had no intention of recommending Bostock and then submitted Williams' name. Curtin objected just as strongly and a heated discussion followed which resulted in Drakeford walking out and threatening to resign.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 81–83.

<sup>156</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 295.

<sup>157</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland of Campbell, ACT, 12 December 1999; Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 81; A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Williams Papers – Early History; WW II Events; Personal (from Pt Cook)'; and telegram from Group Captain McNamara to Air Vice-Marshal Williams, 12 September 1938.

<sup>158</sup> Jones noted that Bostock's supporters included Menzies and other Conservative politicians. Jones papers, 'I Receive Appointment of Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>159</sup> Recently published works call into question this statement. Curtin was a good friend of Gowrie (even before the former became Prime Minister) and often called on the Governor-General for advice. Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 359; and David Day, *John Curtin: A Life*, HarperCollins, Pymble, NSW, 1999, pp. 406–407.

<sup>160</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 295; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 85.

<sup>161</sup> Jones claims that Curtin's objections may have been based, in part, on Williams' actions at the time of Ellington's evaluation and also because of his disagreements with Goble. He adds 'Curtin may have been aware, too, that many officers had resented Williams' long tenure as Chief of Air Staff, and regarded it as a block to their own promotion'. Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 82. However, one suspects there would have been ample opportunity for promotion with the



To any observer, this would have been an action that would have appeared to be highly irresponsible for a senior Cabinet Minister to pursue at the time of Australia's greatest national security crisis. Curtin persuaded him to return to the meeting and the discussions continued.

Drakeford, according to Williams, was in Canberra without an adviser. So, when he was pressed by Cabinet to nominate another officer, he chose the next person who he claimed to be on a list of personnel selected by the Americans—Air Commodore Jones. Drakeford, however, was mistaken; there had been no selection by the Americans and the list, prepared to show the structure of the combined AAF Headquarters, showed Jones to be the next name after Bostock—that is, Deputy Chief of Staff. It was suspected that, in view of his position on an organisation chart, Jones was mistakenly appointed CAS.<sup>162</sup>

In his autobiography, Jones wrote that he was told later about the discussions in Cabinet when the CAS appointment was considered.<sup>163</sup> Unfortunately, he does not divulge his source. Jones had also heard that Curtin would not consider Williams because of the latter's actions after Ellington's inspection of the RAAF and because of Williams' inability to maintain a harmonious working relationship with Goble. A defence could have been made against the latter point because Goble was, by that time, working in Canada and therefore Williams as CAS would have had no day-to-day contact with him. At the War Cabinet meeting, according to Jones' informant, Drakeford nominated Williams and Curtin vetoed the nomination. Curtin was aware of Williams' reputation for political manoeuvring and had developed a distrust of him. When he asked for the next name on the list, Curtin was advised it was Bostock, to which Drakeford is claimed to have replied, 'Well, I'm not having Bostock. I wouldn't even consider him.' Curtin then asked for the next name on the list and was told it was Jones.<sup>164</sup>

Jones' justification for his appointment was that he was made CAS because he had displayed his ability to organise, a quality required within the Service at that time, and his capabilities had been demonstrated by his role with the EATS.<sup>165</sup>

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rapid wartime expansion of the Service.

<sup>162</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 296. The selection process is also described in Norman Ashworth, *How Not to Run an Air Force: The Higher Command of the Royal Australian Air Force During the Second World War* – Volume 1, Air Power Studies Centre, Fairbairn, ACT, 2000, pp. 115–124.

<sup>163</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 82.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 82–83.

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

He believed that Bostock was not appointed because of:

The animosity he had generated between himself and many other people, more importantly, the Secretary of the Department of Air (Major Mel Langslow), and the Honourable Drakeford, Minister for Air compelled them to seek the next best choice for the Chief of Air Staff.<sup>166</sup>

Jones was certain that Bostock would have been appointed CAS if Menzies or Fadden had remained as Prime Minister. There may have been some impediment to this in the form of the Secretary of the Department of Air. Bostock had been at loggerheads with Langslow for a considerable period of time over a variety of issues and he had become dissatisfied with decisions made by the Air Board (a body he referred to as a 'disorderly rabble'). Langslow also disagreed with Bostock and Brett's initiatives aimed at the integration of the RAAF and USAAF and the abolition of the Air Board.<sup>167</sup>

Alan Stephens has written in several works that the appointment of Jones was a mistake and that Cabinet selected the CAS from the wrong list of RAAF officers. Instead of consulting the *Royal Australian Air Force List*, they looked at a list of appointments to the combined AAF Headquarters, prepared by Brett.<sup>168</sup>

On this list, Bostock was shown as Chief of Staff and Jones was the Assistant Chief of Staff. There is a problem with this account also, because in late April 1942 Drakeford was given a copy of the combined AAF Headquarters list.<sup>169</sup> On 28

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<sup>166</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>167</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, envelope titled 'Transcripts Jones, Garing, Bostock?'; 'Interview – Air Marshal Sir George Jones'.

<sup>168</sup> Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 64; and Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, pp. 116–119. Dr Stephens notes that information about the selection process was provided to him by the late Air Commodore A.D. Garrison. Garrison collected a large amount of papers pertinent to RAAF history, including Jones' time as CAS. These papers are now held by the RAAF Air Power Development Centre in Tuggeranong, ACT and during December 2004 and January 2005 I had the opportunity to examine them. I found no written evidence to support the notion that there had been disagreements at the Cabinet meeting, nor that Jones' name was taken from the 'wrong' list. I expected that as Garrison appeared to have an interest in this subject, he would have documented his part in the events. There is, however, a paper that appears to have been typed by Garrison dealing with the RAAF command situation in 1942. When describing Jones' appointment, this paper contains the significant sentence, 'It has never been too clear exactly how this appointment came to be made'. In this paper, the wrong list scenario is explained as an excuse 'which has been presented by those close to Bostock at the time'. A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Aust. Mil. Leaders'.

<sup>169</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73(1), letter from Brett to Curtin, 25 April 1942. The list showed Bostock as Chief of Staff, Jones as Deputy Chief of Staff, Hewitt as head of

April 1942, he advised Curtin that he agreed with the staffing proposal, with one exception—he asked for Jones to be removed from the list and for him to remain at RAAF Headquarters. His reasoning was that Jones, who was then Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, was undertaking work that was vital to the expansion of the RAAF to a 73-squadron Service. Drakeford told Curtin, ‘I regard it most desirable in the interests of the Service as a whole that Air Commodore Jones’ services should be retained in his present appointment where his long experience and Service background generally are proving very valuable.’<sup>170</sup>

Curtin advised Brett on 30 April 1942 that his Government agreed to all the nominated RAAF officers, except Jones, being posted to AAF Headquarters.<sup>171</sup> We might expect that Drakeford would remember, at a Cabinet meeting seven days later, that Jones’ name was not supposed to be on the AAF Headquarters list. One other hypothetical aspect could be considered regarding the wrong list scenario. That is, assuming Cabinet selected Jones from the wrong list because Drakeford was without an adviser, one would expect that when he returned to his office in Melbourne, Langslow would have told him of the mistake. Drakeford should then have advised Curtin of the situation and asked that Cabinet be recalled to resolve the issue. In short, it is almost unthinkable that his own Department would not have advised Drakeford that a mistake had been made with such an important appointment.

One other theory was that Jones was appointed because he had some influence with the Labor Party. Jones himself rejected this, claiming Drakeford was a complete stranger to him at the time of his appointment. Furthermore, Jones lived in the Federal electorate of Kooyong and made no secret of his political preference—he always voted for Robert Menzies, the sitting member.<sup>172</sup>

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Intelligence, and Hancock as being in charge of Plans.

<sup>170</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/4, ‘Higher Service Direction – Air, Organisation of Allied Air Forces, Australia: Administration and Control of R.A.A.F.’, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 28 April 1942.

<sup>171</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/4, minute from Curtin to Brett, 30 April 1942.

<sup>172</sup> Jones papers, ‘Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff’. At the bottom of the page is a note in Jones’ handwriting stating that he ‘would not have received the appointment had it not been approved by Shedden the Secretary for defence [sic] on whom the Prime Minister depended for advice in such matters.’ One would expect that the astute Shedden would have informed the Prime Minister of a mistake if the wrong list had been consulted. Although Jones remained apolitical during his tenure as CAS, he became openly involved in politics in 1952 when he sought Liberal preselection for the Federal seat of Flinders. Jones resigned from the Liberal Party in 1958 and joined the Australian Labor Party (ALP). He stood as the ALP candidate for the Federal seat of Henty in 1961.

Others have expressed their own reasons for Jones' appointment. Hewitt wrote, because of his hostility towards the Labor Government, Burnett had antagonised Drakeford. Burnett now wanted Bostock to succeed him as CAS. However, because of his position as DCAS and his role as Burnett's adviser, Bostock was unacceptable to Drakeford. The next alternative was 'to appoint the officer next on the gradation list—George Jones.'<sup>173</sup> Bostock's daughter, Mrs G.J. Stewart, put forward another view of the appointment when she wrote 'it was Bostock who recommended Jones' appointment as Chief of Air Staff as he thought that Jones had done an excellent job with the Empire Training Scheme [sic] and would be very suitable.'<sup>174</sup>

If we piece these accounts together, we still only have part of the story. That is, Burnett had antagonised Drakeford sufficiently to ensure that the Minister would oppose Bostock's appointment as CAS. This had a significant impact on the selection process. While it is still a matter for debate, the weight of evidence suggests the following series of events is the course that led to Jones' appointment. The reasons behind the appointment are a lot simpler than those so far presented, and it would appear that it revolved around an exchange of letters rather than an argument at a Cabinet meeting.

Upon receiving Burnett's memorandum advising that he had Curtin's agreement to hand over the CAS position to Bostock on 4 May 1942, Drakeford immediately wrote a long letter to Curtin, disagreeing with the proposed command arrangements, as one might expect he should have done. One cannot help but agree with Drakeford on this matter, and we should question the attitude of a Service Chief who proposes the appointment of his successor before first consulting with, and gaining the support of, the relevant Minister. Drakeford began by telling Curtin that, as he had not been informed by the Prime Minister himself, he would not accept Burnett's memorandum as a correct statement of the new arrangements. Furthermore, if the memorandum was correct, Drakeford continued:

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<sup>173</sup> Air Vice-Marshal J.E. Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, Vic., 1980, p. 28. One wonders exactly what Hewitt meant by the 'gradation list'. Hewitt could not have meant the February 1942 Royal Australian Air Force List because Jones was the ninth-placed Australian officer listed in the General Duties Branch in that document. Two RAF officers serving with the RAAF were also listed senior to Jones. The order of seniority was Burnett (RAF), Williams, Goble, Bostock, Anderson, Cole, McNamara, Wrigley, Boyce (RAF), De La Rue and Jones.

<sup>174</sup> G.J. Stewart, 'Death revives RAAF divisions', in *The Australian*, 8 September 1992.

I cannot regard it as other than a complete overriding of my authority as Minister for Air, as my letter to you of 20th inst. made it clear that I was opposed to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock accepting the position of Chief of the Air Staff.<sup>175</sup>

Drakeford advised that he had not in any way withdrawn his opposition to Bostock's appointment. Drakeford considered the move to be a last-minute attempt by Burnett to secure Bostock's appointment without the Minister's consent. He reminded Curtin that he had not received cooperation from either Bostock or Burnett, and his task as Minister had 'been made not only difficult but almost intolerable as a consequence.'<sup>176</sup> Against this background, it would have been extremely difficult for Drakeford to endorse Bostock's appointment as CAS.

On the practical side, Drakeford argued that Bostock would be fully occupied in his position as Chief of Staff to Brett<sup>177</sup> and would not be able to do justice to the CAS position. One assumes that Drakeford would have been quite happy to have Bostock working for Brett because it meant he would have had less contact with the Minister. Therefore, Drakeford returned to his earlier proposition that Williams be appointed CAS. To this he added the significant recommendation:

If you feel that that officer should be reserved for the contemplated position as Air Representative for Australia at Washington, then I recommend that Air Commodore Jones be appointed as Acting Chief of the Air Staff.<sup>178</sup>

The absence of a harmonious working relationship with Burnett and Bostock had made quite an impression on Drakeford and he issued Curtin with an ultimatum:

Should you feel that you are unable to accept either of my recommendations contained herein, then I ask that you will do me the favour of accepting my resignation of what I regard as a vital post within the War Cabinet. This will

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<sup>175</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, letter from Drakeford to Curtin. Unfortunately, this vitally important letter is undated. We may assume, however, it was drafted either on 29 or 30 April 1942.

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Bostock was appointed Chief of Staff AAF on 2 May 1942. A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Command & Control. Original Docs. Bostock/RAAF CMD etc. Shedden/Cabinet papers', 'Headquarters Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, General Order No. 4', 2 May 1942.

<sup>178</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, letter from Drakeford to Curtin. We may assume that Jones was to act as CAS because the Government was still keen to obtain the services of an RAF officer.

enable me to escape the feeling of frustration of my earnest and conscientious efforts to carry out the responsible duties which you honoured me by asking me to accept.<sup>179</sup>

Curtin accepted Drakeford's opposition to Bostock, but he was initially reluctant to appoint either of the Minister's nominees. Instead, he again cabled Bruce and asked for his advice as to whether it was worthwhile making further representations to the Air Ministry for Drummond's appointment. In this cable, he advised Bruce of the position the Government faced with the RAAF CAS, indicating that he may have to support Drakeford's recommendation that Jones be appointed:

We are faced with the prospect of going well down the seniority list for a selection of one of our own officers as Brett desires Bostock as his Chief of Staff and under the organisation proposed this appointment would give him a good opportunity for operational experience.<sup>180</sup>

Bruce's reply again was negative. Drummond was still needed in the Middle East and the Air Ministry believed that Drummond's exceptional operational experience would not be adequately used if he went to Australia. Therefore, Curtin was faced with accepting one of Drakeford's nominees.

The CAS appointment was on the agenda for the War Cabinet meeting of 5 May 1942. In the relevant agenda paper Curtin advised his Cabinet:

The Minister for Air has recommended that Air Commodore G. Jones, CBE. DFC., whom Lieut.-Gen Brett recommended for appointment as his Assistant Chief of Staff, be appointed as Acting Chief of the Air Staff. As Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett desired to be relieved of his duties on 4th May, I authorised the Minister to arrange for the functions of the Chief of the Air Staff, under the new organisation to be handed over to Air Commodore Jones.

The recommendation of the Minister for Air that Air Commodore G. Jones be appointed Acting Chief of the Air Staff is submitted for decision, and it is recommended that the question of his pay be left to the Minister for Air, the Treasurer and myself.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 30 April 1942.

<sup>181</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, War Cabinet Agendum No 222/1942,

The important point being made here is that, if Curtin had already authorised Drakeford to hand over the CAS functions to Jones, then the decision on the CAS appointment had already been made at the Australian Government's highest level (i.e. by the Prime Minister) and it would only be necessary for the War Cabinet to endorse it. Therefore, it is highly unlikely there were the disagreements between Curtin and Drakeford at the Cabinet meeting or that wrong lists were consulted—Jones had been nominated prior to the meeting and Cabinet's task was to endorse that appointment. One must also question the likelihood of the idea raised by Mrs Stewart, that Bostock recommended Jones' appointment as CAS. Given the animosity between Drakeford and Bostock, it would be quite reasonable to assume that the Minister would disregard any such recommendation made by Bostock.

There is another theory to support Jones' appointment as a deliberate decision. That is, certain factions within the ALP were keen to have men from working-class backgrounds serving as officers in the Australian military forces. This was borne out two years before Jones' appointment, when F.M. Forde (a Labor Member of Parliament then in Opposition) asked a series of questions in Parliament, directed to the then Minister for Air, Fairbairn. Forde took Fairbairn to task over a statement, made by Burnett during his address to the annual dinner of the Old Melburnians, where the Air Chief Marshal stated, 'The Public Schools were the places to produce the "officer class" and others who provide the brains of the fighting services.'<sup>182</sup>

Forde went on to remind Fairbairn that 75 per cent of the officers in the 1st Australian Imperial Force (1st AIF) came from working-class backgrounds, while of the 50 officers in the 14th Battalion from World War I, only two were ex-Public School boys. Forde asked Fairbairn to give assurances that, in considering officer appointments, no preferential treatment would be meted out to those from Public Schools but that every applicant would be considered on his merits irrespective of the school at which he was educated or the social standing of his parents. In reply, Fairbairn assured the Parliament, 'No preferences are shown in defence forces.'<sup>183</sup> After Labor came to power, the Government Ministers had the opportunity to

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'Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff'

<sup>182</sup> To avoid any confusion, it should be explained that the term 'Public School' was applied to schools that existed outside the Government's education regime (also referred to as a Greater Public School (GPS)). Today, they are more commonly known as private schools, while public schools are those managed and financed by the Government.

<sup>183</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Session 1940, Vol. 163, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 15 May, 1940, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1940, pp. 856–857.

promote working-class men to senior positions in the military and public service if they so wished.

Some of the contemporary Government Ministers were from working-class backgrounds—Drakeford had been a railway locomotive driver,<sup>184</sup> as had the then Federal Treasurer, Chifley, while N.J. Makin had been a pattern maker and E.J. Ward a boilermaker's assistant. These people would have seen Jones (who was the son of a miner and who had worked as a turner and as a motor mechanic) as 'one of their own'—a member of the working class, the type of person the ALP was committed to supporting and representing at that time. We also must remember that Williams was Drakeford's first choice for CAS. Williams, too, had come from a working-class background—his father was a copper miner from Moonta, South Australia.<sup>185</sup> Certainly, the ALP might have wanted to be seen that it supported the workers when it came to appointment to important military positions. So there can be little doubt that Bostock's chances for appointment were brought undone by his closeness to Burnett. The RAF officer had made no effort to conceal his disdain for the working-class backgrounds of Drakeford and some of his Labor comrades. Drakeford had especially taken issue with Burnett's practice of bypassing him or not consulting him on important organisational issues, together with Burnett's attitude of superiority and his open association with members of the Opposition political party—the United Australia Party (UAP).<sup>186</sup>

While we now can quite reasonably suggest the reasons for Jones' appointment, we are faced with other mysteries. Why did Drakeford tell Williams the story about the heated Cabinet meeting, the threat to resign (which, in fact, was made in his minute to Curtin) and the list of officers' names, when the selection had been made before the Cabinet meeting? Who told Jones about the proceedings at the Cabinet meeting? No answers appear to be available for these questions.

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<sup>184</sup> Frank Bongiorno, 'Drakeford, Arthur Samuel (1878–1957)', entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 14, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Vic., 1996, pp. 35–36.

<sup>185</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 1.

<sup>186</sup> Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, pp. 116–117.



The War Cabinet met on 5 May 1942 and approved the appointment of Jones as CAS.<sup>187</sup> Curtin then advised Bruce that it had been decided not to press the issue for Drummond and that Jones had been appointed CAS.<sup>188</sup>

George Jones was thus appointed to the RAAF's highest position. Interestingly, Jones was not consulted by the Government at any time prior to his appointment as to whether he wanted to be placed in the CAS position. However, there would not have been any possibility of Jones not accepting the position. He was a very patriotic man whose dedication and loyalty to his Service would not have allowed him to reject the appointment. In publicly announcing the appointment, Drakeford told the press that Jones had a very fine Service record and his appointment placed at the head of the RAAF an Australian airman who possessed intimate knowledge and wide experience of the Service's organisational activities and personnel.<sup>189</sup> The appointment generated comment in the print media with one newspaper editorial, speculating on the appointment and the other possible contenders, expressing surprise by stating that Jones 'was the darkest of dark horses'.<sup>190</sup> Jones was never quite certain what the writer meant by the statement, but he considered it a desirable qualification for the position. *The Herald*, however, was critical of the appointment and one wonders whether a journalist in the paper's employ had access to the earlier phases of the Government's decision-making process. The article reporting Jones' appointment also commented that the Government had failed to take advantage of the RAAF's reorganisation to secure the services, for a high-level operational position, of a senior air officer with experience in air warfare in Europe or the Mediterranean theatres. Such a man, the paper concluded, 'could surely have been obtained from the R.A.F. if not from the Australian force and would have brought to our needs knowledge and qualifications for which there can be no substitute'.<sup>191</sup> The paper did not name any possible officer as being suitable for a high level RAAF position, nor did they nominate anyone who would have been a preferable alternative to Jones.

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<sup>187</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/808/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Minute No. 2130, 'Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff', 5 May 1942.

<sup>188</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 7 May 1942.

<sup>189</sup> 'New Chief of R.A.A.F.' in *The Age*, 7 May 1942; and 'New R.A.A.F. Chief Appointed', in *The Argus*, 7 May 1942.

<sup>190</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>191</sup> 'Air Force Commands', in *The Herald*, 7 May 1942.

With his appointment as CAS, Jones had immediately jumped ahead of eight more senior Australian officers and was raised from a Wing Commander, temporary Group Captain, acting Air Commodore<sup>192</sup> to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. At the age of 45, he was the youngest air commander in the Allied forces.<sup>193</sup>

At the time of the decision, Jones was unaware of the political processes working in his favour and expected either Williams or Bostock to be appointed. In fact, he had suggested to John McEwen (the Minister for Air and Minister for Civil Aviation in the Menzies and Fadden Governments—he succeeded James Fairbairn in holding these Ministries) that either Bostock or Williams should be appointed CAS.<sup>194</sup> Jones had become friends with McEwen when the latter was Minister for Air.

Jones was, quite naturally, caught off-guard when Burnett summoned him to his office in Victoria Barracks Melbourne, and advised that he had been instructed to hand over command. Jones found Burnett sitting at his desk with Jones' personal file in front of him and Bostock standing beside him and smiling. Burnett told Jones, 'I have been instructed to hand over to you.' Jones was stunned by the news.<sup>195</sup> In fact, probably no-one was surprised more than Jones.<sup>196</sup> While he had considered the possibility of occupying the top position, he never expected it to happen so suddenly<sup>197</sup> and in the embarrassment of the situation all he could manage to say was 'This sounds like treachery on my part'. Both Burnett and Bostock assured him that neither of them felt that way about the appointment.<sup>198</sup>

Bostock's attitude in this instance is a mystery. On the surface, we may think that because he was, at the time, a close friend of Jones, he may have been pleased his comrade had been promoted. If Bostock played the part as a mentor to Jones, he

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<sup>192</sup> Royal Australian Air Force List, February 1942.

<sup>193</sup> 'Youngest Air Chief, 45, to lead RAAF—Air Vice-Marshall [sic] Jones, DFC', in *The Bulletin*, June 1942. Jones was made an acting Air Vice-Marshal initially. This rank was made substantive at the end of May 1942.

<sup>194</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'; and Douglas Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p. 477. Gillison described Jones as 'an able and particularly conscientious officer, somewhat shy and reserved'. Gillison commented further, 'It was characteristic of Jones that he had suggested that Bostock should be appointed Chief of the Air Staff'.

<sup>195</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 83.

<sup>196</sup> Discussions with Dr Chris Coulthard-Clark, 29 September 1999.

<sup>197</sup> Jones papers, 'My Experience as a Staff Officer – Director of Training, Director of Personnel Services, Assistant Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>198</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'.

also may have been pleased that he would be in a position to provide CAS with advice and, therefore, be in a position of a de facto Service Chief. It is also possible that Bostock was smiling because he had been appointed Brett's Chief of Staff. He was quite happy going to work at the Allied Air Forces Headquarters because he quite reasonably expected the operational air commander would become the most important position in the RAAF. A less important officer would then be appointed as CAS, tasked with the command of the administration, supply and training regimes.<sup>199</sup> Bostock did not enjoy desk jobs and wanted to be at the front, with the operational arm of the Service.<sup>200</sup> However, he also expected to be appointed CAS. Burnett had advised him that he was to be the RAF officer's successor and he had been promoted twice, ahead of other officers, so that he would have been in a position to take over as CAS but, as noted earlier, his closeness to Burnett proved to be detrimental. Regardless of this relationship, Drakeford still had a high regard for Bostock's abilities but realised a close working relationship between himself and the Air Vice-Marshal would have been impossible.<sup>201</sup> Jones, on the other hand, later wrote that Bostock was the power behind Burnett and this caused much of the friction between Drakeford and CAS.<sup>202</sup> Bostock was also aware that Jones was at the time only acting as CAS. He must have been aware that if he distinguished himself as an operational commander and cooperated with CAS, the Air Board and the Minister, he stood a chance of being appointed CAS sometime in the future.<sup>203</sup>

The RAAF was now in the situation of having two officers of the same rank, one in each of that Service's most important positions and each dependent on the other to undertake the duties of his position. It would be reasonable to believe two commanders could have managed the RAAF—one to head the operational arm of the Service and the other to provide all the support for that operational

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<sup>199</sup> Discussions with Dr Chris Coulthard-Clark, 29 September 1999; and Dr C.D. Coulthard-Clark, 'An Extraordinary Group of People: Personalities from the 1920s to the 1970s', in Alan Stephens (ed.), *Australia's Air Chiefs – The Proceedings of the 1992 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 14 October 1992*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1992, p. 40.

<sup>200</sup> Stewart, 'Death revives RAAF divisions', in *The Australian*, 8 September 1992.

<sup>201</sup> Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, p. 203.

<sup>202</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM MSS1027 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]) d. 1992, 'From Private to Air Marshal', p. 56.

<sup>203</sup> In early September 1942, Bostock met with Air Commodore J.E. Hewitt. By that time, the feud between the two Air Vice-Marshals was well underway. Bostock asked Hewitt for advice on how to deal with Jones. Hewitt advised Bostock to 'go along with him and cooperate to the full'. Hewitt expected the situation to change within two years and Bostock would 'be on top of the whole R.A.A.F. situation, including Jones'. Bostock admitted Hewitt was right but added, 'I can't do it and I won't do it'. Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, p. 37.

arm—if the two officers ‘got on with each other’. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case, as Jones stepped into the position ‘imbued with the way the office of CAS had operated during Williams’ time’<sup>204</sup> and, following his education at the RAF Staff College at Andover, was more an officer in the RAF mould.<sup>205</sup> Thus, he was determined to retain the CAS’s authority, as he had known it. Because he was not consulted, nor a part of the negotiation process, Jones was unprepared for his appointment. He did not expect to be CAS at that time and thus had no vision of how he would command the RAAF. This was to be a big disadvantage for him as he spent more of his time during World War II in managerial rather than leadership roles.

At this point, it is interesting to compare the RAAF’s command situation with that in place in the Australian Army, where the Government had adopted a totally different approach. General Sir Thomas Blamey was appointed Commander of the Allied Land Forces in the SWPA and Commander in Chief (C-in-C) of the Australian Military Forces (AMF). Following his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, the Military Board (Army’s equivalent to the Air Board) was disbanded and its members became the principal staff officers to Blamey—therefore, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) became Blamey’s Chief of Staff. As Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces, Blamey was the Australian Government’s senior military adviser and was responsible for the raising, training and supply of the Australian Army units under MacArthur’s control. As Commander of the Allied Land Forces, theoretically, he controlled all the combat formations of the Allied armies, regardless of whether they were Australian or American. Ideally, Blamey should have been situated in only one of these positions. In practice, however, there were advantages, in that the Australian Government had one military adviser who was also the commander of all Australian troops.<sup>206</sup>

These arrangements worked for the Army because of Blamey’s strength and political aptitude.<sup>207</sup> They could not have worked for the RAAF because Jones was not in the same position as Blamey (i.e. he was not Commander-in-Chief) nor did he possess the same personal characteristics. Rather, his position depended on

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<sup>204</sup> Coulthard-Clark, ‘An Extraordinary Group of People: Personalities from the 1920s to the 1970s,’ p. 40; and discussions with Dr Chris Coulthard-Clark, 29 September 1999.

<sup>205</sup> Interview with Air Vice-Marshal Brendan O’Loughlin, AO (Retd), 14 January 2000.

<sup>206</sup> Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander*, p. 92.

<sup>207</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Four (Civil) – Volume I – The Government and the People, 1939–1941*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1965, p. 441.

support from powerful political entities, such as Drakeford, who, as we shall see in the following chapters, provided some assistance to Jones during his feud with Bostock.



## *Managing the Wartime RAAF*

The problems created by Jones' appointment as CAS remained with the RAAF and the Australian Government for the rest of World War II. One officer, Air Vice-Marshal F.M. Bladin, commented on a general effect on the RAAF of Jones being promoted out of turn: 'Quite a few people were superseded. The anatomy of the Service was traumatically shattered.'<sup>1</sup> However, the major problem was a feud which developed between Jones and Bostock, who quite suddenly ceased being good friends and became the bitterest of enemies.

The situation developed where Bostock would not accept the authority of CAS nor the Air Board, believing that he and the operational arm of the Service—RAAF Command—were responsible only to the Commander AAF. Jones held the view that his organisation—RAAF Headquarters—was the superior body and all units (including RAAF Command) were subordinate to it, except for higher operational matters, which were controlled from AAF Headquarters.<sup>2</sup>

Jones' view of Bostock's role was that he had no real power and was at AAF Headquarters as the senior RAAF staff officer, whose task it was to pass on orders to operational RAAF units:

Bostock was our senior officer; to accept the operational direction of Kenney and to pass them on to our squadrons. He had no actual disciplinary command or any administrative command or anything but he was the intermediate between Kenney and our operational staff.<sup>3</sup>

Both officers had reasonable arguments to support their beliefs about the roles they were to perform, and the structure of the AAF and the indecision on the part of the Australian Government did nothing to clarify matters. Bostock's view was that a Chief of Staff in a government bureaucracy, such as RAAF Headquarters or the Department of Air, had different responsibilities to those of an operational commander in the field. Quite correctly, he perceived there was no room for

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<sup>1</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Bladin Memoirs', p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> John McCarthy, *Defence in Transition: Australian Defence and the Role of Air Power 1945–1954*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1991, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 425/2, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Australian aviators in World War I oral history project, c. 1975, transcribed by Peter Helson, December 2001.

another Australian officer between him and the Commander AAF. This view, however, also allowed for an unfavourable situation to develop whereby Australian forces, except those commanded by Bostock himself, were outside the control of the Australian Government.<sup>4</sup>

As the feud between the two senior RAAF officers worsened it became obvious that Bostock was unprepared to accept directions and orders made by CAS. Jones then turned to the Air Board (of which he was Chairman) as a means of conveying his orders. He reasoned that, as an RAAF officer, Bostock was subject to the direction of the Air Board. Bostock, however, did not accept this reasoning.

To add to the confusion, government directives may have reinforced the view that Jones held of the role of his position. Before Jones' appointment as CAS, it had been agreed that the three Service Chiefs would have direct responsibility to the Australian Government on Australian Defence policy and the administration of the forces under their control. The Chiefs were also directed to attend meetings of the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council<sup>5</sup> when required to report on their respective Service's operations. Such a requirement would have suggested to Jones that the Chiefs were responsible for the administration and operations of their respective Services.

One other directive, not made by the Australian Government, was also relevant. The US Government's directive to MacArthur stated, 'You are not responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command.'<sup>6</sup> If the Australian Government had taken this directive seriously from the time MacArthur had established his headquarters in Australia, the feud may have been easily solved by any of the initiatives considered by the Government or the Air Board. Instead, as we shall see, MacArthur's style of command countered the directive, in that he either overrode the Government's attempts to solve the divided command problem or provided Curtin with negative advice on the issue.

Despite the directives, there was still confusion initially over who should represent the RAAF at high-level committee meetings, and six days after Jones' appointment

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<sup>4</sup> McCarthy, *Defence in Transition*, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Drakeford was not a member of the Advisory War Council and Jones found himself at meetings being required to answer questions on all manner of issues relating to the RAAF without the Minister present.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, Machinery for Higher Direction of the War Consequent upon Appointment of Supreme Commander, paper titled 'Changes in Machinery for Higher Direction of War'; 9 April 1942. One wonders how seriously either MacArthur or the Australian Government took this directive.



the Australian Government asked MacArthur whether the new CAS was considered eligible to attend meetings at the Combined Operational and Intelligence Centre. MacArthur replied that CAS was in exactly the same position as the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) and should certainly attend meetings on operations; otherwise he would not be in a position to discharge his duties as the Australian Government's air adviser. He also expected Jones to maintain an exchange of information with the Chief of Staff to the Commander AAF.<sup>7</sup>

### **Jones' Tasks as the Chief of the Air Staff**

At the end of May 1942, Curtin, Drakeford and Chifley had agreed to Jones' promotion to the substantive rank of Air Vice-Marshal and his annual salary of £1750.<sup>8</sup> Under this arrangement Jones received the same annual salary as Williams but was paid more than Bostock, who received £1500 per annum.<sup>9</sup>

Almost one month after Jones' appointment, the Government finally documented their expectations of him in the divided Service. Drakeford spelled out Jones' duties as CAS in amendments to the Air Force Regulations, gazetted on 4 June 1942. The amendments stated:

- (a) The Chief of the Air Staff [is] to be the senior Air Member of the Air Board, and to be responsible for the administration of business of the Air Board relating to the organisation, fighting efficiency, collective training, and works services of the Air Force.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, 'Minutes of Prime Minister's War Conference, Melbourne, 11th May, 1942; Minute No. 20, 'Chief of the Air Staff – Access to Information on Operations'. Such a request suggests the Government was out of touch with Service command arrangements. They should have insisted that Jones attend such meetings, especially where the other Service Chiefs were attendees.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Curtin to Drakeford, 30 May 1942. Jones received the same annual salary as Williams, which was considerably less than the Chief of the Naval Staff (£3000 p.a.) or the Chief of the General Staff (£2262 p.a.). DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from Secretary, Department of Air to CAS, Air Member for Personnel, Finance Member, 8 May 1942.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute by Minister, 'Pay, Chief of the Air Staff', 28 May 1942.

<sup>10</sup> Office of Air Force History file, 'Constitution of the Air Board', minute from Secretary of the Air Board to Air Member for Supply and Equipment, 5 June 1942.

Specifically, the Minister assigned Jones the following responsibilities:

- (i) All questions of Air Force policy other than [those] concerning operations;
- (ii) Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force;
- (iii) Fighting efficiency, except as to units under the control of the Commander Allied Air Forces;
- (iv) Collective training of the Royal Australian Air Force;
- (v) Inspection of the Royal Australian Air Force;
- (vi) Communications;
- (vii) Schemes for certain phases of air-force development and air defence;
- (viii) Liaison with Navy, Army and Civil Aviation;
- (ix) Provision and maintenance of works and buildings;
- (x) Mobilisation plans for the Air Force;
- (xi) Selection of air-force stations and aerodromes;
- (xii) Meteorological services; and
- (xiii) Security and censorship.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the tasks listed above, Jones was also a member of government advisory bodies such as the Defence Committee (DC). The Defence Committee comprised the three Service Chiefs (as well as a senior member of the Department of Defence to serve as its secretary). Committee membership also included, on occasions: the Controller-General of Munitions, the Controller of Civil Aviation, and the Chairman of the Principal Supply Officers Committee. The Defence Committee advised the Minister for Defence on all matters pertaining to defence policy.<sup>12</sup> Jones was also a member of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), which was created on 4 September 1939. This body comprised the three Service Chiefs and provided advice to the War Cabinet on operational matters and strategic appreciations.<sup>13</sup> When talking about the other Defence Chiefs, Jones states that he found Admiral Sir Guy Royle, RN, Lieutenant General John Northcott and Sir Frederick Shedden easy to work with but in the postwar years he came into conflict

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<sup>11</sup> Office of Air Force History file, 'Constitution of the Air Board,' 'Amendments to Air Force Regulations,' 4 June 1942, Appendix B.

<sup>12</sup> Joan Beaumont, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume VI – Australian Defence: Sources and Statistics*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> David Horner, *High Command: Australia's Struggle for an Independent War Strategy, 1939–1945*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1992, p. 18.

with Royle's successor, Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton, RN, over issues such as the formation of the Fleet Air Arm.<sup>14</sup>

The directive, made by the Menzies Government, whereby CAS was required to brief the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council on Service-related matters, remained in place under Curtin. Jones initially was diffident towards the politicians, which caused him to be the butt of criticism for any problems relating to the RAAF that came before Cabinet. His friend, Country Party politician John McEwen, provided him with some advice for dealing with the politicians—that was to answer them in the same manner they spoke. McEwen assured him 'they will take it'. Jones found McEwen was right and a few sharp exchanges with W.M. Hughes, J.A. Beasley and E.C.G. Page followed.

Perhaps the most difficult time Jones had with the War Cabinet was following a Japanese raid on Darwin on 2 May 1943. The three RAAF Spitfire squadrons based in the North-Western Area intercepted the Japanese aircraft after they had dropped their bombs. In the ensuing combat the RAAF lost 13 fighters—five were shot down, five ran out of fuel and three had engine problems. Jones flew to Darwin to investigate the debacle and, on his return to southern Australia, reported to Cabinet. The discussion on the engine problems became quite technical and Jones perceived it to be beyond the understanding of the politicians. He told Curtin, 'I don't think further discussion on this highly technical matter in this elementary way, will achieve anything'. Curtin agreed but Beasley stood up and exclaimed, 'You can't come here and talk to us like that! You can go to your Air Force units with your brass hat, and throw your weight around, but you can't talk to us like that'. Jones turned to Beasley and replied, 'Go on, you're talking like a big kid'. The discussion finished at that point.<sup>15</sup>

Despite being promoted to the head of his Service, Jones generally displayed an uncomplicated view of his duties and responsibilities. There can be no doubt he would have served loyally under Bostock if the latter had been appointed CAS and it is highly likely the friendship between the two officers would have continued, with a possible outcome being that Jones would have been promoted to a senior position in time. Jones considered that his greatest asset as an RAAF officer was his skill as an organiser.<sup>16</sup> This would have been very useful in a small air force or one

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<sup>14</sup> Jones papers, 'Experiences with the Defence Committee, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Cabinet and Advisory War Council'.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Stephens, Alan, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones conducted in Melbourne on 31

that had the training of aircrew for service in Europe as its main task. Unfortunately, by the time Jones was appointed CAS, the RAAF was engaged in EATS training for the RAF, conducting operations as part of the AAF, and defending Australia, and it required more than organisational skills to lead the Service. While he may have been a good organiser, Jones was seriously lacking in personality, especially when compared with some of the officers ahead of whom he was promoted.<sup>17</sup> He did not relate well to other people, nor did he socialise frequently with his fellow officers.<sup>18</sup> During the course of Jones' term as CAS many subordinate officers would have problems when dealing with him. He was aware, however, that he was regarded as a competent and conscientious officer but he also recognised he lacked the flamboyance that he believed he would have needed had he been a senior officer in any Service other than the RAAF.<sup>19</sup>

### **Jones and the Management of the RAAF**

In his autobiography, Jones claims one of the first things he did after his appointment was to get the Air Board functioning again. He stated that the Air Board had not met for several weeks prior to his appointment because its members could not agree 'on a variety of urgent measures.'<sup>20</sup> This is incorrect, as the Air Board, under the chairmanship of the Air Member for Organisation and Equipment (AMOE), was meeting on a regular basis up until Jones' appointment.<sup>21</sup> Jones himself had reported to the Air Board on a few occasions during his time as Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment. Items scheduled for the Air Board's attention

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October 1989; transcript of interview.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Stephens, 'Interview with Air Commodore Colin Rex Taylor conducted in Melbourne on 21 February 1990', transcript of interview.

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 24 October 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>20</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 84. Such a comment does not say much about the capabilities of individual Air Board members. In hindsight, it is difficult to understand how the senior management body of a Defence Service could not agree on urgent measures at the time of the Nation's greatest security crisis!

<sup>21</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'The Air Board: Williams occupied the position of Air Member for Organisation and Equipment between 11 March 1940 and 7 September 1941. He was succeeded by Air Commodore (acting Air Vice-Marshal) W.H. Anderson. Jones became Air Member for Organisation and Equipment (in addition to CAS) on 15 May 1942 and remained in both positions until 4 June 1942 when the AMOE was replaced by the Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance (AMEM). The occupant of this latter position was Wing Commander (acting Air Commodore) E.C. Wackett.

during the time prior to Jones' appointment included construction of RAAF bases, radio installations, unserviceability of training aircraft, supply of cylinder barrels for Cheetah engines, and numerous other non-operational matters. The Air Board continued to meet following Jones' appointment (with Jones as Chairman) and continued to consider non-operational matters, such as the supply of hand tools, supply of blue serge material, the supply of clothing to the WAAAF, and the purchase of six Dornier DO-24 flying boats from the Royal Netherlands East Indies Air Force. In an attempt to raise the level of subjects debated by the Air Board, Jones tabled a paper at a meeting on 8 May 1942 titled 'Proposed Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force to Meet Expansion Approved by the War Cabinet on 2nd March 1942'.<sup>22</sup>

In this paper, he proposed a reorganisation of the RAAF that would permit decentralisation of functions from RAAF Headquarters, so that the Headquarters would be able to concentrate on major policy matters. Despite this good intention, little happened and the Air Board continued to have on its agenda items for discussion, such as the purchase of razor blades (4 500 000 at a cost of £28 000), the supply of pillow cases, the distribution of toilet rolls and the allocation of underwear to the WAAAF.<sup>23</sup> We may question why Jones, as Chairman of the Air Board, was unable to enforce his own directive.

When we look at Air Board meetings during World War II, we find agenda items rarely appeared to discuss high level organisational or policy issues. Instead, the most senior officers at RAAF Headquarters directed their attention towards trivial matters, such as the supply of duplicating paper and the allocation of uniforms to the Air Training Corps (ATC).<sup>24</sup> Without doubt, more junior administrative and technical officers could have dealt with these issues, thus freeing up the time of CAS and the Air Board for more serious matters, such as high-level strategic planning and the development of air power theory and practice. As the Commander AAF occasionally attempted to negate Air Board decisions, we may wonder how much power the Air Board really would be allowed to exercise in the divided command structure. As we will see, some attempts by the Air Board to transfer senior RAAF officers were blocked by Lieutenant General Kenney, the Commander AAF, and

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<sup>22</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Agenda 3944, 8 May 1942.

<sup>23</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Agenda 3901–4000, various agenda items.

<sup>24</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Agenda 5001–5100.

on at least one occasion, MacArthur vetoed the Air Board's attempts to acquire a certain type of aircraft.<sup>25</sup>

Following the transfer of the Service's operational elements to RAAF Command, Jones reorganised the Air Board to reflect RAAF Headquarters' role. The Air Members became responsible for the functions associated with raising, training and sustaining the Service.<sup>26</sup> The Air Board, from 4 June 1942 comprised Jones as CAS, the Air Member for Personnel (Air Commodore H. Wrigley), the Air Member for Supply and Equipment (acting Air Commodore G.J.W. Mackinolty), the Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance (acting Air Commodore E.C. Wackett), the Finance Member (Mr E.C. Elvins) and the Business Member (Mr W.S. Jones). Over the years, some of the personalities would change but the Air Board would remain with this structure until January 1948.<sup>27</sup> One would expect that the structure or membership might have changed to reflect the progress of the Allied prosecution of the war, or would have changed soon after the end of the war to reflect the incorporation of the operational units back under RAAF Headquarters. This, however, did not happen.

Melville Cecil Langslow, the Secretary of the Department of Air, was an ex officio member of the Air Board but he seldom attended meetings. Jones believed this was because he would be committed to the Board's decisions and this, in turn, would have weakened his position with any advice he tendered to Drakeford. During his time as Minister for Air, Drakeford frequently disagreed with the Air Board, particularly on financial matters. Jones believed this opposition originated from advice provided by Langslow.<sup>28</sup> Jones was later to comment that he never quarrelled with Drakeford, except on occasions when the Minister took advice from Langslow. Jones claimed Langslow had Drakeford:

eating out of his hand, because Drakeford had no conception really of what the Air Force problems were and Langslow didn't have much either but at least he had a strong will and thought he knew all about it. That was a

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<sup>25</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Agenda 5069. The Air Board sought to acquire Westland Lysander aircraft for use in New Guinea in 1943. MacArthur opposed the acquisition so the plans were abandoned.

<sup>26</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/296/3, Royal Australian Air Force, 'Australian Air War Effort', 1 November 1942, p. 4.

<sup>27</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'The Air Board'.

<sup>28</sup> Jones papers, 'Experiences with the Defence Committee, Chiefs of Staff Committee, Cabinet and Advisory War Council'.

difficult situation and really sometimes I really thought he was working for the enemy!<sup>29</sup>

Jones maintained a difficult relationship with Langslow. He believed the Secretary disliked Bostock because of the latter's involvement with the plan to disband the Air Board and to integrate the RAAF and USAAF into a combined headquarters.<sup>30</sup> One might expect that this would have made Jones and Langslow allies in the feud with Bostock but this was not the case. Jones had numerous disagreements with Langslow, usually over financial matters. This largely came about because of the conflicting nature of the roles of the CAS and the Secretary of the Department of Air. Langslow's principal role, as Secretary, was to ensure the most economical expenditure of public money; while uniformed members of the Air Board were more concerned with procuring the best available materiel for the RAAF in order to defeat the enemy. Langslow gained a reputation for his uncompromising stance on the financial aspects of every Air Board decision and this ensured that he became unpopular with senior RAAF officers, including Jones.<sup>31</sup> Jones claimed that every time he put forward a proposal to expand the RAAF during World War II, Langslow would oppose it. Things reached a head when, at a meeting in Drakeford's office in Parliament House, Canberra, Jones threatened to hit Langslow. Drakeford stepped in and separated the two protagonists.<sup>32</sup>

### **Jones, Kenney and Dissension**

Jones was not in office for long before he experienced a minor conflict with AAF Headquarters. The matter started simply enough at the Advisory War Council meeting on 13 May 1942, where he was questioned on air operations during the Battle of the Coral Sea. Jones was unable to answer the questions and sought advice from AAF Headquarters. Brett took up the issue with Curtin, pointing out that Jones had no responsibility pertaining to operations and so questions on the subject placed him in a disadvantageous position. Brett suggested:

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<sup>29</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Transcripts Jones, Garing, Bostock?', 'Interview – Air Marshal Sir George Jones.'

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Richard Kingsland, 'Langslow, Melville Cecil (1889–1972)'; entry in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 15, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, Vic., 1999, pp. 58–59.

<sup>32</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Transcripts Jones, Garing, Bostock?', 'Interview – Air Marshal Sir George Jones.'

... in these meetings the question of proper methods of employment of aircraft is to be discussed, either I or my Chief of Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, be requested to be present, in order that those who are charged with operations may have the opportunity of answering questions which may arise out of the discussions concerning the handling of these forces.<sup>33</sup>

Curtin agreed with Brett but decided to consult with MacArthur.<sup>34</sup> The Prime Minister was now setting a precedent that became his means of dealing with any major decision involving the RAAF for the remainder of his term in office. On many occasions he would not make a decision on matters relevant to the RAAF high command until he had first gained MacArthur's opinion. In this instance, he referred to Brett's letter but offered alternatives to MacArthur. That is, either the Supreme Commander or one of his deputies attend Advisory War Council meetings, or the Service Chiefs be provided with information on operations to enable them to brief the Council meetings.<sup>35</sup> MacArthur replied that he had no knowledge of Brett's letter to Curtin and thus did not concur with its contents. Obviously, MacArthur would have found it an imposition to take time away from his headquarters to fly from Brisbane to Canberra or Melbourne to attend Council meetings on a weekly basis, so he advised Curtin he considered it was 'essential that the Australian Chiefs of Staff be completely coordinated with the general plans and operation of the various forces', and their operational knowledge should have been more than sufficient to brief the Council. If there was a requirement for highly detailed information, this would be conveyed directly from MacArthur to Curtin. In this reply, MacArthur also stressed the need for top-level communication to continue to be directly between himself and Curtin, without involving subordinates.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps it was because MacArthur made this point in a reply dealing with CAS that Curtin interpreted the message to mean that all matters dealing with the RAAF's command structure should be referred to the Supreme Commander. In spite of MacArthur's statement that the Australian Chiefs of Staff should be familiar with plans and operations, Jones remained dissatisfied with the level and quality of information passed to him by MacArthur's headquarters and

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<sup>33</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, letter to Curtin from Brett, 14 May 1942.

<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, memorandum for Shedden from F.A. McLaughlin, 15 May 1942.

<sup>35</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, letter from Curtin to MacArthur, 23 May 1942.

<sup>36</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1598/2, letter from MacArthur to Curtin, 25 May 1942.



RAAF Command throughout the war, and occasionally was unable to fulfil his responsibilities to senior government committees.<sup>37</sup>

Unfortunately for Brett, the relationship between himself and MacArthur (and some of MacArthur's staff officers) was not a happy one.<sup>38</sup> MacArthur had a very low opinion of the USAAF and blamed the Service for a lack of discipline and fighting spirit, which he believed contributed to the loss of the Philippines to the Japanese. In MacArthur's eyes, Brett represented that same USAAF and was therefore to blame for all the faults the USAAF may have had.<sup>39</sup> Following adverse reports by MacArthur and Major General Robert Richardson (a US Army officer who, in 1942, investigated the command arrangements for US forces in Australia), Brett was replaced as Commander AAF by Lieutenant General George C. Kenney.<sup>40</sup>

George Churchill Kenney was a career military officer who joined the US Army Air Corps in 1917 and flew combat missions in France during World War I. Following the end of the war, he remained in the Service, where he developed innovative theories on attack aviation. At the outbreak of World War II he was commanding the USAAF's Fourth Air Force, based in California. Kenney was posted to Australia in late July 1942, and took command of the Allied Air Forces on 4 August. There had been no consultation with the Australian Government over Brett's replacement

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<sup>37</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/814/1, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting'. On several occasions during 1942 Jones told the Advisory War Council that he was unable to provide reports or briefings due to an absence of information.

<sup>38</sup> Brett's situation was also complicated by the fact that the US had no separate air force. Up until 1947, the USAAF was part of the US Army. Nicola Baker, 'A Higher Plane: Land/Air Operations in the South West Pacific 1942–1945', in Jeffrey Grey and Peter Dennis (eds), *From Past to Future: The Australian Experience of Land/Air Operations – Proceedings of the 1995 Australian Army History Conference*, Department of History, University College, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1995, p. 71. Brett's relationship with MacArthur had reached such a low level that the latter had allowed his Chief of Staff, Major General Sutherland, to dictate practically every action of the Air Force. George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, Office of Air Force History, USAF, Washington, DC, 1987, pp. 47–48.

<sup>39</sup> Walter J. Boyne, *Clash of Wings: World War II in the Air*, Touchstone, New York, NY, 1997, p. 234. The US forces in the Philippines included the Far East Air Force (FEAF), equipped with Boeing B-17 bombers and Curtiss P-40 and Seversky P-35 fighters. MacArthur had the strongest American air force outside the United States. It comprised 277 aircraft and included 35 heavy bombers and approximately 100 fighters. The Japanese, however, had almost twice the number of aircraft, flown by experienced pilots. Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, UK, 1987, p. 108. While the fighter aircraft were amongst the most modern in the US arsenal, their performance was inferior to their Japanese counterparts. Thus when the fighting started, the FEAF was unable to make any significant impact on the Japanese forces.

<sup>40</sup> Horner, *High Command*, pp. 207–208 and 353; and Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, pp. 9–10.

and, at its meeting on 13 August 1942, the Advisory War Council expressed its concern at these arrangements. It was noted that the Australian Government had assigned its forces in the SWPA to MacArthur and the question was raised as to whether those forces were to be commanded by an officer who could be dismissed or replaced without consultation with the Government.<sup>41</sup> Curtin took up this issue with MacArthur on 18 August. MacArthur told the Prime Minister that it was the US Chiefs of Staff who were responsible for replacing Brett but he agreed the Prime Minister would be consulted about future high command appointments.<sup>42</sup> A few weeks later, MacArthur gained Curtin's agreement to the appointment of Admiral Carpenter as Commander, Allied Naval Forces, South-West Pacific Area.<sup>43</sup> As we will see, Curtin maintained a reciprocal arrangement and refused to make any change to the RAAF high command without first consulting MacArthur.

In August 1942, the USAAF in Australia was in a disorganised state and Kenney moved quickly to rectify this situation.<sup>44</sup> He scrapped what he considered to be a chaotic organisation and created clear lines of authority. Faced with severe shortages of aircraft and equipment, he instituted new supply and maintenance programs. Kenney switched from Brett's defensive strategy to a highly offensive campaign (that complemented MacArthur's overall strategy) within three days of his arrival in Australia. Through his implementation of efficient administrative regimes and his development of unique air power strategies, Kenney became the USAAF's most innovative air commander of the war.<sup>45</sup>

Right from the time of his arrival in Australia, Kenney built up a good working relationship with MacArthur (this was essential if he was to be able to command his air forces with the confidence of the Supreme Commander and without interference

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<sup>41</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/46/814/1, Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings, Volume V, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting, Melbourne, 13th August, 1942', Minute (1032), 'Appointment of Commanders of Allied Forces in Southwest Pacific'.

<sup>42</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/46/814/1, Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings, Volume V, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting, Canberra, 27th August, 1942', Minute (1051), 'Appointment of Commanders of Allied Forces in Southwest Pacific Area'.

<sup>43</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/46/814/1, Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings, Volume V, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting, Canberra, 9th September, 1942', Minute (1058), 'Appointment of Admiral Carpenter as Commander, Allied Naval Forces, Southwest Pacific Area'.

<sup>44</sup> Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, pp. 45–48.

<sup>45</sup> Herman S. Wolk, 'George C. Kenney: MacArthur's Premier Airman', in William M. Leary (ed.), *We Shall Return: MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan, 1942–1945*, University Press of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1988, p. 88.

from MacArthur's staff). This proved successful and MacArthur became justifiably proud of his air commander and wrote, many years later, of Kenney's aggressive vision, mastery of air tactics and strategy, and ability to exact the maximum in fighting qualities from both men and equipment.<sup>46</sup> Kenney's innovative approach suited MacArthur's strategies for the defence of Australia, the subsequent campaign to regain the Philippines, and the eventual defeat of the Japanese.

Kenney then set about reorganising the AAF, which (at the time of his arrival in Australia) was an organisation of integrated Australian and US units created by Brett and Burnett. Kenney found Brett had gone to extremes with the idea of Allied unity, in that he had mixed Australian and US aircrew aboard the same aircraft, in spite of differences in training methods, leadership style and technical vocabularies. Brett had also reorganised USAAF units so they were like RAAF squadrons. The resulting set-up bewildered many US officers, including Kenney.<sup>47</sup> Kenney dispensed with Brett's plans for an integrated Australian/US headquarters and, without consulting Jones, established two separate warfighting organisations—a USAAF and an Australian operational command.<sup>48</sup> The USAAF, along with No 9 Operational Group RAAF,<sup>49</sup> was designated the Fifth Air Force and allocated responsibility for operations in the north-eastern part of the Australian continent and Papua and New Guinea.

The Fifth Air Force was a tactical unit with command, communications, combat and service elements.<sup>50</sup> Kenney initially was commander of both the AAF and the Fifth Air Force but he devolved some of his command functions to Brigadier General Ennis C. Whitehead, whom he appointed as deputy commander and placed him directly in charge of the Fifth Air Force, Advanced Echelon (ADVON)

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<sup>46</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, Heinemann, London, 1964, p. 157. Kenney, MacArthur wrote, through his extraordinary capacity to improvise and improve, took a substandard force and welded it into a weapon so deadly as to take command of the air whenever it engaged the enemy, even at apparent odds.

<sup>47</sup> Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory: The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Random House, New York, NY, 1993, p. 169.

<sup>48</sup> Alan Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 119.

<sup>49</sup> David Horner, 'Strategy and Higher Command', in Alan Stephens (ed.), *The RAAF in the Southwest Pacific Area 1942–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1993 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 14 October 1993*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1993, pp. 56 and 60. No 9 Operational Group comprised seven RAAF combat squadrons under the command of Air Commodore J.E. Hewitt.

<sup>50</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54 81/2/10, letter to Curtin from MacArthur, 11 January 1943.

at Port Moresby. This move allowed Kenney the freedom to manage the AAF and to provide advice to MacArthur.<sup>51</sup> There was to be flexible movement of units between the Australian operational command and the Fifth Air Force, for the conduct of operations, as and when required.<sup>52</sup> To oversee the AAF, there was to be a combined headquarters staffed by officers from the participating air forces. However, this last initiative disappeared quickly, as Bostock noted, ‘The combined staff arrangement is retained, in principle, at Allied Air Headquarters only.’<sup>53</sup> Shortly after his arrival in Australia, Kenney met Bostock, whom he described as tough and gruff but ‘he impressed me as being honest and I believed that, if he would work with me at all, he would be loyal to me.’<sup>54</sup> Kenney’s judgement proved correct and, as the war progressed, Bostock’s loyalty was directed more towards the Commander AAF than to the head of his own Service and the Australian Government.

Kenney first met Jones at RAAF Headquarters. In his account of the Pacific War, Kenney refers to the Jones-Bostock feud and noted that apart from the feud ‘which sometimes was a bit of a nuisance, I liked the situation as it was. I considered Bostock the better combat leader and field commander and I preferred Jones as the RAAF administrative and supply head.’<sup>55</sup> On the surface, this may be seen as a compliment from a great air commander to Jones’ organisational and administrative capabilities, but we must question why a commander who, in a short space of time, was able to eliminate so many bottlenecks from within the organisation of his own Service, was content to allow a problematic situation to remain in another part of the AAF. We may question whether Kenney viewed the feud as a problem or

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<sup>51</sup> Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II – Volume Four – The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1965, p. 99.

<sup>52</sup> George Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p. 8.

<sup>53</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, ‘RAAF Command – Organisation’, Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock, 3 January 1942 [sic]—the date shown on this reference is incorrect; although it is shown as 3 January 1942, the year actually should read 1943, not 1942.

<sup>54</sup> Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, p. 33.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 80. Interestingly, as a career air force officer, Kenney would have witnessed an unsuccessful divided regime within his own Service. The US Army Air Corps had a divided command during the US involvement in World War I (1917–1918) and suffered from this form of management again during the 1930s. During the latter period, the Service was divided into two independent elements—the General Headquarters Air Force (which controlled the combat elements) and the Air Corps (which looked after supply and training); a situation not dissimilar to that which existed in the RAAF. The two elements were amalgamated towards the end of the decade due to the deteriorating world situation. Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 19.

as an advantage, which he could exploit to control the RAAF in any manner he chose. This may be considered in light of Kenney's own situation, whereby he was responsible to General MacArthur but was dependent on General H.H. Arnold for the supply of personnel and materiel. This situation was managed well for most of the war.<sup>56</sup>

Jones objected to Kenney's plan to split the AAF in two on the grounds that the new structure abrogated the Government's earlier agreement regarding the RAAF. Jones now took this opportunity to suggest to Kenney, in August 1942, that the reorganisation of the AAF provided an opportunity to reunify the RAAF under one single officer and, as he was CAS, he quite correctly believed he should be that officer. It was Kenney's and Bostock's rejection of this suggestion which started a drawn-out series of hostile exchanges between RAAF Headquarters and the Australian Government on one side and AAF Headquarters on the other.<sup>57</sup> It was the beginning of a defence mounted by Jones against every attempt by Bostock to take over functions and powers exercised by CAS. Bostock sought to have what he termed to be the necessary powers for administration transferred to his headquarters. In opposing this demand, Jones managed to protect the integrity and independence of the RAAF from a complete takeover by Kenney (ably assisted by Bostock).

Jones did not, in fact, admire Kenney, whom he found to be a very difficult man to deal with. For Jones, Kenney was always hostile, or 'tough'—in the American vernacular—as opposed to Brett who had been 'too gentlemanly'. Jones generally tolerated Kenney's manner because he did not want to create a scenario that would lead to conflict between Curtin and MacArthur,<sup>58</sup> but Jones had several acrimonious discussions with Kenney over their respective responsibilities, which culminated in a serious argument on Morotai Island late in the war.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas E. Griffith, Jr., *MacArthur's Airman: General George C. Kenney and the War in the Southwest Pacific*, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS, 1998, p. 238.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>58</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'.

<sup>59</sup> Jones papers, 'Working with General MacArthur and General Kenny [sic]'.

### **Jones, Kenney, Bostock and RAAF Command and Control Arrangements**

The Coastal Command AAF was constituted by AAF General Order No. 47 on 5 September 1942 and Bostock was appointed as Air Officer Commanding (AOC).<sup>60</sup> The bulk of the RAAF operational units (including operational headquarters), along with a handful of USAAF and Dutch units, were incorporated into it. As AOC, Bostock was tasked with exercising operational control over certain RAAF and US units assigned to the AAF.<sup>61</sup> He set up his headquarters in Brisbane, close to Kenney's AAF Headquarters. Jones anticipated that with the title 'Coastal Command', the RAAF would be given a secondary role in the SWPA and quickly took action to rectify this. He wrote at once to Shedden expressing his great concern that the RAAF would be denied an equal share of operations outside Australia.<sup>62</sup> Jones also approached the Prime Minister, suggesting the title could lead to a situation in which the RAAF's units would be used in defensive or secondary roles, such as defending mainland Australia and patrolling its coastline, and not participating in the main offensive against the Japanese.<sup>63</sup>

Curtin reacted by writing to MacArthur seeking his assurances that Coastal Command would receive modern aircraft types and that RAAF units would be given the same opportunities for participating in operational activities as the Fifth Air Force. Otherwise, he argued, RAAF personnel would regard their Service as a second-line force and their morale would suffer accordingly.<sup>64</sup> Curtin got a result, as did Jones. MacArthur agreed to renaming the RAAF operational command<sup>65</sup> and

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<sup>60</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54, Allied Air Forces General Order No. 47, 5 September 1942. The Order specified that the establishment of Coastal Command RAAF did not alter the functions and responsibilities of RAAF Headquarters. In some documents the RAAF operational unit is referred to as Coastal Defence Command. This latter title may have been the reason for Jones' opposition to the naming of the unit.

<sup>61</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'Higher Direction of R.A.A.F. Following upon Organisation of United States Fifth Air Force and Establishment of R.A.A.F. Command – September 1942, File No. 1'; letter from MacArthur to Curtin, 4 September 1942.

<sup>62</sup> Dr John Mordike, 'RAAF Organisation, Command and Politics', in John Mordike (ed.), *The Home Front: Mainland Australia and the Southwest Pacific Area 1939–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1995 RAAF History Conference Held in Canberra on 27 October 1995*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, p. 14.

<sup>63</sup> Jones papers, 'Working with General MacArthur and General Kenny [sic]'; and 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff'. One wonders whether Bostock formed the same view of the role of his command.

<sup>64</sup> Mordike, 'RAAF Organisation, Command and Politics', p. 14.

<sup>65</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, 'Higher Organisation of RAAF – Difficulties in Control', minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 28 May 1945, 'Higher Organisation of the R.A.A.F.'

on 21 September 1942, the 'Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces' was redesignated 'Royal Australian Air Force Command'.<sup>66</sup> What is important to note here is that RAAF Command was not created by the Commander AAF but by the Minister for Air, CAS and Bostock. Even though his appointment was not specifically requested by MacArthur, Bostock became the AOC RAAF Command and it is also important to note that this title was not designated by the US authorities but was strictly in accordance with RAAF and RAF titles of appointments of similar character. In relation to the RAAF high command, MacArthur also advised Curtin that he did not propose asking for Bostock be named to head RAAF Command; that command would rest with CAS. Bostock's role was to exercise operational control over certain RAAF and USAAF Squadrons.<sup>67</sup> Throughout the remainder of the war, MacArthur's advice seems to have been ignored, forgotten or misinterpreted by most of the people who were caught up in the Jones-Bostock feud.

The responsibility of RAAF Command was the defence of mainland Australia and to mount reconnaissance and bomber operations flown from the North-Western Area (NWA) against the Japanese in the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>68</sup> However, such a limited role was not the intention behind the formation of the two separate organisations. As MacArthur explained to Curtin, RAAF Command would largely contain Australian units but might include any number of Fifth Air Force squadrons and RAAF squadrons might operate with the Fifth Air Force.<sup>69</sup> Craven and Cate's official history of the USAAF during World War II noted that this arrangement was not inflexible and 'RAAF squadrons were attached to the Fifth Air Force and repeatedly participated in its operations, while the Fifth frequently furnished units to its ally on request'.<sup>70</sup>

Kenney justified his decision to separate the USAAF and RAAF units to Jones by arguing that, in the event of the USAAF moving forward from Australia, the RAAF organisation would remain intact (a move that, in hindsight, seems consistent

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<sup>66</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54, Allied Air Forces General Order No. 53, 21 September 1942.

<sup>67</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 28 May 1945, 'Higher Organisation of the R.A.A.F.'

<sup>68</sup> Peter Helson, 'The Forgotten Air Force—The Establishment and Employment of Australian Air Power in the North-Western Area, 1941–1945', Master of Arts (Hons) thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, p. 33.

<sup>69</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, letter from MacArthur to Curtin, 4 September 1942.

<sup>70</sup> Craven and Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II – Volume Four – The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*, p. 99.

with MacArthur's strategy to retake the Philippines). Separate organisations, Kenney claimed, eliminated the difficulties in framing common instructions for USAAF and RAAF units. Kenney further argued that separation would reduce to two the number of subordinate commanders he had to deal with, Whitehead and Bostock.<sup>71</sup> When related to modern air power theory, the Australian Government's and Kenney's approach had merit as it was consistent with such air power tenets as unity, concentration and economy of effort.<sup>72</sup>

Curtin and Drakeford were more concerned that the AAF's reorganisation and structure would lead to a total loss of Australian control over the RAAF. They saw it as serving Australia's interests to ensure the Commander AAF was only given control of the Service's operational units and had no control over the logistics, administration and maintenance functions.<sup>73</sup> Their attitude was quite understandable and the divided command structure was their way of maintaining some degree of national control over the Service. In practice, however, this proved to be an extremely inefficient means of maintaining national control.

Within a week of the formation of RAAF Command, Curtin directed the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) to report on the RAAF's organisation, operational efficiency, machinery for command, and administration. Jones was a member of COSC and we may expect the Committee was guided by his advice, so it is hardly surprising the divided command was viewed unfavourably. The COSC was the first body to tell the Prime Minister that the divided command was not conducive to the RAAF's maximum efficiency and it was not possible to separate operational and administrative control without a loss of efficiency. The COSC report recommended there should have been a unified operational and administrative control, vested in CAS, but his operational responsibility should be subject to AAF Headquarters direction and exercised through the AOC RAAF Command (this recommendation would have placed Bostock under Jones' authority). It was hoped such measures, if adopted, would allow for the fast resolution of administrative matters and preserve a unified control of the RAAF. Having CAS as the overall authority would counter the difficulties COSC foresaw arising in the event of differences of opinions between the two commanders. In such instances, the COSC reasoned there would

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<sup>71</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1969/100/6/320/5CI, 'Organisation Allied Air Forces', letter from General Kenney to CAS, 27 August 1942, 'Organisation Allied Air Forces'.

<sup>72</sup> Alan Stephens, 'The Command of the RAAF', in Mark Lax (ed.), *Air Power Presentations 1995*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, p. 43.

<sup>73</sup> Griffith, *MacArthur's Airman*, p. 62.



be no-one within the Service with the power to make an authoritative decision. It was also reported the Service's operational efficiency would suffer if the RAAF were only employed in a defensive role, thus reinforcing Jones' opposition to the title of Coastal Command. In accepting the establishment of RAAF Command, the COSC recommended that it was desirable that the unit should be established along similar lines to the Fifth Air Force.<sup>74</sup> With this report, Jones could formally present his views to the Government on an appropriate structure for his Service.

Drakeford accepted the findings at once and regarded it to be of the utmost importance that RAAF Command did not function independently but was part of the whole RAAF organisation, which would ensure a unified control of all Service formations. Drakeford also supported the recommendation that RAAF Command be organised in a similar manner to the Fifth Air Force, under the unified control of CAS. He advised Curtin that RAAF Command should be concerned directly with the conduct of operations, rather than have RAAF units transferred to the Fifth Air Force.<sup>75</sup> Despite Ministerial approval, Jones' views were overridden by MacArthur, who had the final say and told Shedden it was best to leave Bostock as AOC RAAF Command because he would be free to move forward with the Allied advance against the Japanese, while CAS should remain in Australia because of the nature of his duties. These seem to be rather flimsy reasons and it could be argued that Bostock could still remain in his position in a unified RAAF, but Curtin accepted the American's argument and deferred any decision on the report until other Australian Service command issues had been resolved.<sup>76</sup>

RAAF Command had its headquarters in Brisbane, while RAAF Headquarters was located in Melbourne. In order to maintain administrative contact with RAAF Command's headquarters and General MacArthur's headquarters, Jones established a unit in Brisbane on 9 September 1942 known as Forward Echelon,

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<sup>74</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'Division of Allied Air Force into Fifth Air Force and Coastal Defence Command, Allied Air Force: Report by Chiefs of Staff', 26 September 1942; and Douglas Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p. 587.

<sup>75</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 14 October 1942.

<sup>76</sup> Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, p. 589.

RAAF Headquarters.<sup>77</sup> Forward Echelon, although criticised by Bostock,<sup>78</sup> provided a vital function for Jones—it meant that he did not have to communicate directly with Bostock. Jones controlled the RAAF's administrative procedures for addressing correspondence and thus, through a counterproductive and inefficient process, managed to slow down the flow of written communication to and from RAAF Command. The process he put in place directed that all correspondence to or from either RAAF Headquarters or RAAF Command (with the exception of operational and intelligence matters) had to pass through Forward Echelon. Both organisations had to address correspondence to Forward Echelon and attach a duplicate copy, which the Echelon would send on to the recipient. Thus, the RAAF Command staff were denied direct access to RAAF Headquarters staff on matters that may have been of operational significance. Bostock, however, could and did bypass this process and write directly to the Air Board about matters that aggrieved him.<sup>79</sup>

Jones continued with his aim of reunifying the RAAF and approached Bostock, in November 1942, with the argument that Kenney had made changes to the AAF structure without prior consultation with the Australian Government.<sup>80</sup> Because of this, Jones felt free to propose that RAAF Command be made a unit under the control of RAAF Headquarters. Bostock's reply tactfully steered clear of commenting on the AAF restructuring but, instead, advanced his own idea, which consolidated administrative and operational authority under RAAF Command. Bostock would demand varying forms of control over the RAAF's administrative structure for the remainder of the war. His argument was that the administrative structure was an integral part of the RAAF's operational arm, which could not function efficiently without it. Jones quite correctly resisted Bostock's demands. Had Bostock succeeded in gaining control of the RAAF's administrative infrastructure he would have become a quasi-CAS, with most of the SWPA-based personnel under his (and thus USAAF) control.

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<sup>77</sup> David Wilson, 'Commander in the Shadow: Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock 1942–1945', Master of Defence Studies sub-thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, p. 10; and interview with Air Commodore A.D. Garrison (Retd), 11 October 1995. Despite the criticism, liaison between the lower ranking officers employed at both RAAF Command and Forward Echelon was quite productive.

<sup>78</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Edge of Centre: The Eventful Life of Group Captain Gerald Packer*, RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Vic., 1992, pp. 61–62. Bostock's argument was that Forward Echelon staff were the administrative staff who should have been provided to RAAF Command.

<sup>79</sup> Leigh Edmonds, 'Hardware, software and wetware: seeing the Royal Australian Air Force during the war in the Pacific as a cybernetic system', in *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 24, April 1994, p. 18.

<sup>80</sup> Griffith, *MacArthur's Airman*, p. 62.

Following Bostock's negative response, Jones' next move (through the Air Board) was to propose to bring RAAF Command under the control of RAAF Headquarters through the establishment of the Directorates of Operations, Intelligence and Communications in Brisbane. These Directorates were to be placed under the control of RAAF Headquarters, and RAAF Command staff were to be posted to them. Bostock opposed the proposal and told Kenney he had been placed in an untenable position, whereby he would be unable to discharge his responsibilities as AOC RAAF Command, because his administrative support was being withdrawn. His comment to Kenney that 'a director of the central headquarters of a fighting service' (i.e. Jones) could not exercise command, demonstrates how he viewed CAS's position. Bostock told Kenney that Jones' proposals were impractical and displayed a lack of appreciation of the true functions of command.<sup>81</sup> Kenney directed Jones to take no further action on the formation of the Directorates until the proposal had been discussed further. At the same time, he told Bostock:

The last thing I want to do is to relieve you of your present job and I will quarrel with you on that score. I not only sincerely believe you the best qualified officer in the R.A.A.F. to handle operations but am especially desirous of having you on my side all the way to Tokyo.<sup>82</sup>

The Jones-Bostock feud reveals Jones as having the stronger personality of the two protagonists. There are numerous instances where he, through direct approaches or through the Air Board, sought to unify the RAAF and preserve its independence. In most instances, Jones does not seem to be motivated by anything other than dedication to his Service. His relationship with Drakeford seems to be that of a Service Chief keeping the Minister informed of his decisions and issues concerning the RAAF's high command. Rarely does he seek the Minister's assistance to take action against Bostock. Bostock, on the other hand, frequently turned for assistance to Kenney, who did not always fully support him. We may question why Kenney, aware of Bostock's problems relevant to control of administrative staff, and in a position where he thought he could direct CAS and the Air Board, did not insist that Jones hand over control of staff he considered to be vital to the successful conduct of RAAF Command operations. We may also wonder why Bostock, in so many instances, was unprepared to argue his case with Jones, instead turning

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<sup>81</sup> Douglas Gillison, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume I – Royal Australian Air Force, 1939–1942*, p. 590.

<sup>82</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, letter from Kenney to Bostock, undated but possibly c. 29 November 1942.

to others for assistance. Perhaps he realised that Jones was, in some instances, correct, and if he agreed with Jones he would undermine his own position and its relationship vis-à-vis CAS. Jones, as CAS, was the head of the RAAF. Bostock was an RAAF officer and, as such, owed his loyalty to his Chief. He should have taken up the issues he had, over the way the Service was managed, with Jones and not with Kenney or MacArthur. He did himself and the RAAF a disservice by allowing foreign military commanders to become involved in matters that should have been handled by the RAAF or the Australian Government.

On 5 December 1942, Jones made his next attempt to define high command responsibilities through Air Force Confidential Order (AFCO) No. 391. This order reiterated the division of the RAAF as per AAF General Order No. 47 and also stated that the formation of RAAF Command was a temporary measure to facilitate the operational control of RAAF units assigned to the Commander AAF and, when control was relinquished, 'the staff now known as R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces, shall revert to R.A.A.F. Head-Quarters as Directorates of Operations, Intelligence, and Communications respectively'.<sup>83</sup> The staff were to be responsible to the Commander AAF for operational control of RAAF units assigned to the AAF, while all administrative, policy, supply, training and maintenance matters were the responsibility of RAAF Headquarters. The order concluded with the direction that the RAAF staff working with the AAF were to offer advice to RAAF Headquarters on all operational matters.<sup>84</sup>

One might think that this order would satisfy Bostock's demands for his own administrative staff and at the same time allow RAAF Headquarters to maintain control over non-operational personnel. This was not the case and Bostock opposed the order, claiming it to be 'a confusion of ideas' that failed to enunciate the responsibilities of the AOC RAAF Command. Bostock also pointed out that changes to the AAF organisation would only occur if there was a change to government policy or the war ended and, thus, to state that RAAF Command was a temporary measure was misleading. The absence of any mention of the AOC RAAF Command in the order, Bostock wrote, led to a picture of a complicated and impractical structure, for which there was no justification. He suggested the order be withdrawn and a more suitable one published.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Force Confidential Order No. 391 – 'Organisation of Royal Australian Air Force – Operational Control', pp. 1–2.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>85</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Bostock to Secretary, Air Board, 12

Jones took issue with this response, claiming Bostock had referred to AFCO No. 391 'in terms which [he considered] cannot be overlooked'. Jones told Drakeford that the submission of a letter (such as the one received from Bostock) by a senior officer to the headquarters of his Service could only be regarded as a very serious matter, indicating an unwillingness to cooperate within the terms of the organisation laid down by the competent authority. Jones again reminded Drakeford that since his appointment to the AAF, Bostock had constantly endeavoured to gain control of certain aspects of the RAAF's administrative organisation and had displayed great resentment when he was unsuccessful. Bostock, Jones claimed, had allowed his attitude to be known throughout the Service and the effect this had on discipline and morale had assumed serious proportions. Jones concluded his letter:

In view of the position which has now arisen, I find myself forced to recommend that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be relieved of his present appointment and posted to some other appointment where his well known ability can be used to advantage but in which he will not be able to cause further friction between the different sections of the Service and our Allies.<sup>86</sup>

### **The Conflict Escalates**

Curtin tried again to sort things out and called for a meeting between himself, Jones, Drakeford and Bostock.<sup>87</sup> Jones, in the meantime, tried another approach. On 28 December, the Air Board agreed that Bostock's attitude regarding AFCO No. 391 was a challenge to both its and CAS's position and authority, while an organisation he proposed was inconsistent with AAF General Order No. 47. It was argued that the organisation would give Bostock complete control over all administrative and associated units. Such a move was unnecessary, as the Air Board had already delegated appropriate administrative responsibilities to Area AOCs. Therefore, a further command headquarters (such as that proposed by Bostock) would have been established by transferring the whole or part of the Air Board's and CAS's powers and responsibilities to such a command. This was seen as unnecessary duplication that would lead to a hopeless state of confusion because, in order to serve any useful purpose, such a command would inevitably

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December 1942.

<sup>86</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 16 December 1942

<sup>87</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, telex message from Drakeford to Bostock, 24 December 1942.

become the RAAF's superior headquarters. Any change, they resolved, should be to reunite the RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command staff to the same status they held before the arrival of US forces, because any move to divide the RAAF into two sections not wholly under the same controlling authority would seriously weaken the fighting value of the Service, and would do very great harm to discipline and morale. The Air Board proposed a unification plan in which the AOC RAAF Command would be replaced by the DCAS, who would be posted to the headquarters of the Commander AAF, where he would accept operational directions as the representative of CAS. Under the plan, it would then be necessary to create a new appointment of Assistant CAS who would represent CAS at Air Board meetings. The Air Board agreed this organisation would be in accordance with the Chiefs of Staff Committee recommendations.<sup>88</sup> One assumes that DCAS would be promoted from Air Commodore to the rank of Air Vice-Marshal, otherwise he would have been in a position whereby he was giving orders to officers of the same rank as himself.

At the same Air Board meeting Jones proposed three possible placement options for Bostock:

- to command No 9 Operational Group in New Guinea,
- to command the Western Area, or
- to be Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.

In his advice to Drakeford, Jones predicted that Kenney would oppose option (a) because Bostock was senior to the Fifth Air Force officers in that part of the world, although such opposition, Jones argued, would be based on unsound reasoning because RAAF ranks had no significance relative to USAAF ranks and vice versa. Jones acknowledged that option (b) was impractical because the position of AOC Western Area hardly called for an Air Vice-Marshal. The final option, Jones claimed, was satisfactory from the point of organisation but CAS needed to be a rank higher than Bostock and Bostock should be prepared to carry out loyally the policy laid down by the Air Board and CAS.<sup>89</sup> Surprisingly, Jones and his colleagues did not propose an overseas posting for Bostock. A reasonable option might have been to arrange for Bostock to be posted to an operational position

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<sup>88</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Board Paper 225/1942, 'Higher Organisation of Royal Australian Air Force'. Included in this paper was the unlikely comment that the present structure was working well!

<sup>89</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 28 December 1942.

in the RAF, on the pretext that he was being sent to Europe or the Middle East to gain greater experience. It could have been argued that such a move was beneficial to his career and Kenney would be seen as hindering Bostock's advancement in the RAAF if he opposed the posting. Perhaps Jones was not cunning enough to progress this option.

Curtin, in the meantime, referred the divided command problem to the Defence Committee (DC), another body of which Jones was a member. On this occasion, Bostock participated in the process by submitting a written statement and attending the Defence Committee meeting on 7 January 1943. The central argument of Bostock's long statement was that, as AOC RAAF Command, he had no authority to order administrative action, he could only make a request to RAAF Headquarters.<sup>90</sup> He told the meeting he was in an untenable position because of his inability to control the administrative functions needed by RAAF Command and in light of this he asked for full powers of command.<sup>91</sup>

The Defence Committee made recommendations that were more of a temporary remedial nature, rather than major decisions.<sup>92</sup> It recommended that:

- RAAF Command should be an RAAF unit to exercise operational control only over RAAF units in the SWPA;
- administrative requirements should be met through the existing RAAF infrastructure (it was noted that this would require the closest cooperation between both parties);
- CAS was to provide suitable advisory staff for the AOC RAAF Command;
- the AOC RAAF Command was to keep CAS informed on operational planning; and
- CAS was to keep the AOC informed on relevant organisation and administrative matters.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, Draw 4, untiled folder, paper titled 'Excerpts: Summary from a (typed) book called THE R.A.A.F. COMMAND SCANDAL (stamped SECRET)'

<sup>91</sup> Horner, *High Command*, p. 356.

<sup>92</sup> The Defence Committee reasoned that it would be impractical to make recommendations that would lead to permanent solutions because there was a review of the Australian Army's command structure occurring at that time and any recommendations made by this review might have had some impact on the RAAF.

<sup>93</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, Draw 1, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', 'Minute by Defence Committee at Meeting held on Thursday, 7th January 1943'.

Bostock agreed with the conclusions and Curtin gave them his approval on 11 January 1943.<sup>94</sup>

Oddly enough, with similar advice from three senior Defence bodies, Curtin rather than acting on their advice forwarded the Defence Committee recommendations to MacArthur. While they were a good solution to the Defence Committee, to the American, however, they violated sound military principles. The term 'sound military principles' was a reason that MacArthur could use to nullify any decision made by the Australian Government, if he chose to do so, because Curtin and his colleagues were not in a position to disagree with him. As noted earlier, the members of Curtin's Government had little knowledge or experience in military matters, so they would have known nothing of 'sound military principles' and could not disagree with MacArthur. Based on sound military principles, MacArthur also opposed the Chiefs of Staff Committee decision (referred to by the Defence Committee), which recommended that the RAAF should be unified with Jones at its head. Instead, MacArthur advised that Bostock should 'have full legal command of his organisation, with the responsibilities, authorities and limitations prescribed by regulations and customs of the Service.'<sup>95</sup> This reply was passed back to the Defence Committee, which on 23 February 1943 decided that RAAF Command was unnecessary and should have been disbanded, while the Commander AAF should have exercised operational control through the existing RAAF organisation. The Defence Committee recommended that if RAAF Command were retained it should be controlled by CAS.<sup>96</sup>

Curtin, however, was unwilling to adopt the committee recommendations and pursued his own agenda for a resolution to the divided command problem, which was to appoint an AOC RAAF, who would be an officer holding a rank higher than both Jones and Bostock.<sup>97</sup> He tried several times during his term as Prime Minister to appoint an AOC RAAF and these efforts will be examined in Chapter 11.

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<sup>94</sup> Horner, *High Command*, p. 357.

<sup>95</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, Draw 1, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', 'Notes on Paper Related to R.A.A.F. Command Referred to Defence Committee on 23rd February 1943'

<sup>96</sup> Horner, *High Command*, p. 357.

<sup>97</sup> In forming this view, Curtin gained support from Blamey who was in a similar position to the proposed AOC—i.e. an 'absolute' head of his Service. Curtin asked Shedden to approach Blamey for advice (perhaps suspecting any opinion he received from anyone connected with the RAAF would be biased towards either protagonist). The Prime Minister sought Blamey's opinion on whether the command problem could be solved if an AOC RAAF was appointed as the overall head of the Service and if the Air Board was abolished (i.e. a similar situation to the Australian Army, where Blamey abolished the Army Board, appointed its members as his staff officers and,



The conflict between Jones and Bostock was starting to become known beyond the RAAF, AAF and the War Cabinet. At the Advisory War Council meeting on 17 February 1943, Opposition politician Percy Spender inquired whether the divided command was working satisfactorily, and referred to statements that had been made to him concerning the friction between CAS and the AOC RAAF Command. It would be reasonable to believe that Curtin and Jones would suspect that Bostock or another officer working at RAAF Command had made these statements to Spender or to other members of the Opposition. Jones replied for the Government and told the meeting that, although difficulties existed, he had loyally abided by the decisions reached and had tried to make the organisation a workable one. Curtin referred to the special position arising from the Commander AAF being a USAAF officer and he told the meeting that it was necessary that there should be the fullest cooperation with Kenney, while at the same time ensuring the RAAF was not relegated to a minor operational role. Curtin acknowledged the divided command involved difficult problems, which he advised were under review.<sup>98</sup>

As a result of the Advisory War Council discussions, Curtin directed Jones to meet with Bostock and sort out their problems.<sup>99</sup> The meeting was held at the Forward Echelon in Brisbane on 18 February 1943 and the two protagonists discussed the relationship between their respective commands. At the outset of the meeting, Bostock denied he had been canvassing support from anyone, including politicians. He then accused Jones of setting up the meeting in order to ridicule him.<sup>100</sup> The minutes of the meeting show the hostility that existed between the

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as Commander-in-Chief, exercised both administrative and operational control). Blamey agreed, stating he was sure it would be impossible to bring the full weight of the Service to bear against the Japanese until an AOC RAAF was appointed and the Air Board abolished. In his view, it was impossible to separate operational and administrative command, since the whole object of the Service's administrative organisation was to ensure that the maximum operational capacity was directed against the enemy. Blamey also suggested the AOC position should be similar in nature to his own as head of the Australian Army. Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945* – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – *Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 16; and Horner, *High Command*, p. 357.

<sup>98</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/814/2, Minutes of Advisory War Council Meetings, Volume VI, 'Minutes of Advisory War Council Meeting, Canberra, 17th February, 1943', Minute (1142), 'Reports by Chiefs of Staff on Operations. War Cabinet Agendum No. 87/1943 and Supplement No. 1 – Weekly Progress Reports by Chiefs of Staff (No. 159 – Week Ended 13th February, 1943)'.  
<sup>99</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford. 19 February 1943.

<sup>100</sup> RAAF Museum, Sir George Jones box file, 'Notes of a Meeting Between Air Vice-Marshal G. Jones and Air Vice Marshal Bostock in C.A.S.'s Office at Forward Echelon, Brisbane, at 0930

two officers, with Bostock stating that RAAF Headquarters did not realise he was serving two masters. Kenney had created his position and he required certain powers in order to carry out his responsibilities within the AAF. Jones, of course, took issue with this statement.<sup>101</sup> Bostock complained about orders being given and decisions made without consulting him, and that he was not receiving the support he needed to conduct the RAAF's part of the Allied war effort. Jones' reply was that Bostock's disagreement with the existing administrative arrangements was insubordination.<sup>102</sup>

Jones now abandoned his previous methods to bring RAAF Command back into the RAAF structure and, instead, tried a different approach and sought a means to appease Bostock. On his return to Melbourne, he told Drakeford that Bostock's attitude at the meeting proved to be extremely difficult but '[h]e accepted the view that if an order is issued forming an R.A.A.F. Command, with himself as Air Officer Commanding, there should be a satisfactory basis for future relations.'<sup>103</sup> Jones advised the Minister that such an order, which would formalise Bostock's position, might smooth out some of the difficulties but would be regarded by Bostock as an interim measure only. Jones also proposed a long-term means of solving the problem:

I regard it as the final effort of which I am capable to gain this officer's co-operation. Success will depend on whether the Government indicates in such a way as to leave no room for doubt – who they regard as head of the R.A.A.F. The most satisfactory way to do this is to promote to Air Marshal the officer

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hrs. 18th Feb. 1943', p. 1. While the meeting may have been convened with good intentions, the notes taken during its course reflect just how deep the conflict between the two officers and their 'supporters' had become. For example, the notes begin with, 'A.V.M. Bostock arrived at Forward Echelon and commenced with a rather hostile attitude'. The remaining text is clearly slanted against him.

<sup>101</sup> Jones papers, 'Shock Appointment of Jones as the Chief of Air Staff' and 'I Receive Appointment of Chief of Air Staff'. Jones believed Bostock, as an RAAF officer, was still subordinate to CAS and the Air Board. His role was to pass on Kenney's orders to RAAF units in the AAF, as contemporary belief was that a foreign (i.e. US) military officer could not give an RAAF member a lawful command unless CAS's authority backed it. Bostock exercised this authority under a delegation from CAS.

<sup>102</sup> RAAF Museum, Sir George Jones box file, 'Notes of a Meeting Between Air Vice-Marshal G. Jones and Air Vice Marshal Bostock in C.A.S.'s Office at Forward Echelon, Brisbane, at 0930 hrs. 18th Feb. 1943', p. 1. Little came from the meeting, apart from an agreement for each Air Vice-Marshal to speak with staff at the other's headquarters. As it turned out, Jones spoke with the senior officers at RAAF Command but Bostock did not travel to Melbourne to speak with staff at RAAF Headquarters.

<sup>103</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 19 February 1943.

so regarded. Once they do this, details of the organisation will cease to bear the importance previously attached to them, and many aspects currently causing confusion can be cleaned up.<sup>104</sup>

We might assume that, with this ultimatum, Jones expected to gain some advantage as he would have had reasonable grounds to anticipate that he would be the one to be promoted to Air Marshal. If this were the case, with the higher rank, he would be in a position to exert control over RAAF Command and to maintain the integrity of the RAAF.

The whole issue of the divided command and the failure to implement solutions developed by various parties during the course of the war do not reflect well on Curtin's ability as a leader. By March 1943, MacArthur had told him that an acute and dangerous situation was developing and Curtin claimed that he was worried where the feud would take the RAAF. He feared the Service would be viewed in a bad light by the USAAF command and this would impact both on the supply of aircraft and how Kenney tasked the Australian units under his command.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, he continued to procrastinate and seek advice from General MacArthur, and in many cases MacArthur's advice (despite his expressed concerns about the acute and dangerous situation) countered every attempt made by the Government to rectify the situation. On the few occasions when MacArthur appeared supportive, Curtin still failed to take decisive action.

Not only was the divided command system not working, it had also created confusion between the two protagonists as to their exact roles. RAAF Headquarters, the Minister for Air and the War Cabinet were well aware of this and continued throughout the war with their attempts to rectify the situation. Jones himself went as far as approaching MacArthur personally with a plan for a formalised structure for RAAF Command and a clearly defined demarcation between it and the units commanded by RAAF Headquarters. He met with the Supreme Commander on 23 March 1943 and sought his agreement to a proposal that would have had the RAAF operational and ancillary units assigned to the AAF organised into an expeditionary air force for service outside Australia. Under Jones' proposal, the AOC of the expeditionary air force was to be responsible to the Commander AAF for operations and responsible to RAAF Headquarters for administration, but to overcome the existing problems, the AOC was to be delegated limited appropriate

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<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 16

administrative powers by RAAF Headquarters (including discipline, personnel, promotions and supply).<sup>106</sup> When the expeditionary air force moved beyond Australian territory, the full control of air forces allocated to the defence of Australia was to come under the command of CAS.<sup>107</sup> Jones found MacArthur receptive to the proposals and so drafted a minute recording their discussions, which he forwarded to the Supreme Commander for his endorsement.<sup>108</sup> In this latest proposal, Jones had changed his ideas from his previous attempts to reorganise the RAAF and now supported the divided command, telling MacArthur that while there were strong arguments in favour of a unified command of the RAAF under one officer, Jones considered it would have been difficult for this officer to discharge his operational responsibilities, his administrative responsibilities, and be available to provide advice to the Australian Government.<sup>109</sup> Perhaps he had come to think that if the RAAF was reunified under a single officer he might be replaced as CAS and so, in one way, the divided command worked in Jones' favour in that it allowed him to remain as CAS, at least until the Government found a replacement CAS or an AOC RAAF.

Viewed in the light of subsequent events, it was highly likely that Jones and the Air Board could have been using the proposed expeditionary air force as an attempt to replace Bostock. A possible scenario could have evolved as follows. Had MacArthur agreed to the proposal, the Air Board could have started to form the expeditionary air force, albeit well before MacArthur and the AAF departed from Australia. The units allocated to the existing RAAF Command could have been transferred to the expeditionary air force, which would have its own AOC (who, no doubt, would have been an Air Board appointee). Without its own units, RAAF Command would have become superfluous, existing in name only, and the Air Board could recommend its disbanding and the transfer of its AOC, possibly to some position where Bostock would come directly under their administration. The expeditionary air force could then take over RAAF Command's role.

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<sup>106</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', 'Statement of Administrative Responsibilities of A.O.C. Expeditionary Force, and the Description of the Curtailment of Such Responsibility as Necessary, whilst the Command Headquarters is Located in Australia'.

<sup>107</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1587/1/288A, 'Historical Division, General Headquarters, South West Pacific Area – Operational and Organisational Control of the Royal Australian Air Force'.

<sup>108</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 92; and Jones papers, 'Working with General MacArthur and General Kenny [sic]'.

<sup>109</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', minute from Jones to MacArthur, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F.'

MacArthur forwarded Jones' minute to Bostock for advice. We may assume MacArthur expected this advice would be negative. Bostock replied that he considered Jones' proposals to be ambiguous and they would have allowed the contemporary situation to continue until an expeditionary air force was formed and the AAF left Australia (at a time still to be determined). Bostock pointed out that when the expeditionary air force left Australia, the continent's air defence would no longer be MacArthur's responsibility and this would be an impossible situation while MacArthur was Supreme Commander SWPA.<sup>110</sup> In addition, Jones' proposal did not consider the role of RAAF units in the North-Western Area (NWA), which while they were based in Australia were carrying out defensive operations to protect that part of Australia and offensive operations over the Netherlands East Indies. If these units had come under Jones' control there still would have been a reason for conflict between himself and Bostock. We might expect the two would have fought over the deployment of the units and the nature of the operations.

Bostock advised MacArthur that under Jones' proposals a dangerous situation would evolve, whereby CAS would have been responsible to the Government for Australia's air defence but would have no direct responsibility to the Supreme Commander SWPA for the fighting efficiency of the expeditionary air force. Furthermore, CAS would still control the supply and personnel functions for the units defending Australia as well as the expeditionary air force. The consequence would be two independent operational formations within the SWPA without a coordinating commander responsible for the allocation of units and resources between the expeditionary air force and the defence of Australia, a situation that could easily have become as unwieldy as the extant situation. Bostock concluded by telling MacArthur, 'I believe that if a final solution is now sought, the whole of the RAAF in the SWPA must be organised as a single command under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA.'<sup>111</sup> Perhaps Bostock had good reason to oppose the proposal because he must have realised if CAS became responsible for Australia's air defence, Jones would have to either form additional combat and support units (a difficult task, given the scarcity of combat aircraft at that time), or withdraw existing units from RAAF Command. Both Bostock and Kenney, no doubt, would have opposed the latter proposition and if new units were formed it would be reasonable to expect Jones to transfer experienced personnel from RAAF Command to the new units. We may ask the question how the two feuding RAAF

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<sup>110</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1587/1/288A, 'Operational and Organisational Control of the Royal Australian Air Force'.

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

officers would have agreed on the allocation of units, personnel and materiel to either the expeditionary air force or home defence.

Based on Bostock's advice, MacArthur sent a negative reply to Jones:

I have received and read with interest your memorandum on the organisation of the RAAF. My views differ quite materially from those you attribute to me. I do not believe that the suggested outline submitted by you is comprehensive enough to be used as a basis for further discussion. I hope, however, that ways and means may shortly be found to settle definitely the issues involved.<sup>112</sup>

Despite his claims that he had a good relationship with MacArthur, Jones must have been disappointed with some aspects of the American General's style of command. He claimed the contents of his minute did not differ from the discussions and he took the whole incident as a warning that MacArthur was not above distorting the facts to suit his own purpose—and that MacArthur's real purpose for rejecting the proposal was because he did not want to include RAAF units with his forces when he invaded the Philippines.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 92; and Jones papers, 'Working with General MacArthur and General Kenny [sic]'. Jones expressed the opinion that Bostock opposed the proposal because he would lose operational control of the RAAF units remaining on Australian territory. If the aim of the proposal was for RAAF Headquarters to gain control of RAAF units in the territories, then Bostock had every reason to oppose it, as New Guinea was an Australian territory up until the 1970s, and therefore it was possible that all RAAF units in New Guinea would come under the control of RAAF Headquarters.

## *A Tremendously Patient Man*

By April 1943, the Air Board members, dissatisfied with the Government's inaction in solving the divided command situation, decided to act on their own. On the 6th of that month, without Curtin's knowledge or consent, they devised a solution to the problem. The answer was to transfer Bostock to the position of AOC North-Western Area (NWA). Air Commodore J.E. Hewitt would replace him as AOC RAAF Command, while Air Commodore F.M. Bladin would be appointed AOC Southern Area, and Group Captain W.H. Garing would temporarily command No 9 Operational Group (pending the return of acting Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole from overseas).<sup>1</sup> The AOC North-Western Area at that time was Bladin, who had occupied the position since March 1942.

The North-Western Area comprised the Northern Territory and small parts of Queensland and Western Australia. During 1943, the number of RAAF units in the area was steadily building up but actual combat with Japanese forces was declining. Darwin, which had started the war as a vital port, was becoming a backwater, while the strategic role of the RAAF in the North-Western Area was to cover MacArthur's left flank during the New Guinea campaign and the advance to the Philippines. The day-to-day activities of the operational units based in the North-Western Area included shipping patrols, bombing raids on Netherlands East Indies islands that were within range of the RAAF's under-equipped bomber force, and the occasional fighter sortie against Japanese reconnaissance aircraft.<sup>2</sup> Appointing an officer with Bostock's experience as AOC North-Western Area would have been a serious waste of talent.

The proposal ran into difficulties almost immediately as Jones received opposition from Langslow, Drakeford, Curtin and Shedden. Shedden directed that no action should be taken at that point and the Air Board's recommendations should have been submitted for formal consideration by the Ministers for Air and Defence,

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Board Minute, Board Paper No. 269, 6 April 1943.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Helson, 'The Forgotten Air Force—The Establishment and Employment of Australian Air Power in the North-Western Area, 1941–1945'; Master of Arts (Hons) thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, various chapters; and Alan Powell, *The Shadow's Edge: Australia's Northern War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Vic., 1992, Chapter 6.

as concurrence of the Minister for Defence was required for changes in higher command appointments.<sup>3</sup>

Jones immediately convened a meeting of the Air Board to reconsider their position. The basic issue that faced them was how to remove Bostock and replace him with a more accountable officer, and this conditioned the Air Board's decision-making. In a minute to Drakeford, the Air Board argued that the changes were essential in the interests of the Service and without them the administration of the RAAF could not be carried out efficiently. The Air Board made the questionable statement to support their decision: 'In addition it was ascertained that General MacArthur would offer no objection to a change provided the officer filling the post were efficient.'<sup>4</sup> Jones also used existing Service regulations to support the proposal, stating that RAAF Command was constituted by Air Force Confidential Order A44/1943 and, thus, was a separate unit directly administered by RAAF Headquarters and the personnel posted to it were subject to the same control and administration as personnel in every other unit. Jones believed he was acting within his rights to put forward this proposal because he and the Air Board were:

unaware of any custom, practice, direction or order which would require proposed postings to be submitted to and approved by higher authority before being put into effect.<sup>5</sup>

There was a heated exchange of correspondence between Drakeford and the Air Board after the Minister rejected Jones' argument,<sup>6</sup> with the Air Board claiming the good of the Service transcended any personal consideration and that the

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<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Most Secret minute from Secretary to CAS, 7 April 1943.

<sup>4</sup> We may wonder what approaches were made by the Air Board to MacArthur to ascertain his agreement in this instance, as there appears to be no mention of such an initiative among the documents on the relevant files.

<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Board Minute, 'Changes of Command,' Board Paper No. 269, 7 April 1943. At the time the postings were proposed, the Air Board claimed it was unaware that such matters had to go to the Ministers for Defence and Air. It was further claimed that the relevant document, titled 'Changes in Machinery for Higher Direction of War' (referred to by Drakeford when rejecting the postings), was never communicated to the Air Board nor filed in its records. The Air Board, therefore, assumed its lawful authority to effect postings was untrammelled by any such policy and notification of such decisions would be communicated to the Minister in the normal manner as per Air Force Regulation 29 (f).

<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Most Secret minute from Drakeford to CAS, 7 April 1943.



action it took was necessary for the proper administration of the Service.<sup>7</sup> Jones also suggested that Drakeford should inform Curtin that the insubordinate attitude of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock had created an intolerable situation and was causing misunderstanding between RAAF Headquarters and US commanders.<sup>8</sup> Drakeford continued to reject the proposal on the grounds that, in accordance with the recognised practice for the three Service departments since their establishment, all changes to higher command appointments had to receive approval of the Minister for Defence.<sup>9</sup> This was a message that Jones either could not understand or refused to accept because he again claimed the postings were made in pursuance of Air Force Regulations, which he may have suspected overrode directions from the Minister for Air and the Prime Minister. Despite ministerial rejection, Jones did not give up and, instead, deferred the postings until Monday 19 April 1943.<sup>10</sup>

Bostock naturally objected to the plans, writing to the Air Board and pointing out that Hewitt was, at the time of the proposed transfer, AOC of No 9 Operational Group, which was a formation assigned to the AAF and, therefore, a subordinate formation within RAAF Command, as was the North-Western Area. Bostock's concern was that the officer commanding a subordinate formation would supersede him, while he remained within the RAAF Command organisation in a position now subordinate to that organisation's AOC. Bostock considered that under the proposed arrangements his professional reputation in the RAAF would suffer severely and he reminded the Air Board:

Satisfaction with the manner in which I have carried out my duties has been expressed to me by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, who is the only authority to whom I am directly responsible for duties arising out of my present appointment.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Board Minute No. 2, 'Board Paper 290 – Changes of Command', 7 April 1943.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Most Secret minute from Jones to Drakeford, 8 April 1943.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Most Secret minute from Drakeford to Jones, 'Board Paper No. 290/1943 – Changes of Command', 8 April 1943.

<sup>10</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Air Board Minute No 3, Board Paper No. 290, 9 April 1943. Here we have a curious situation in that the Air Board is complaining about the behaviour of a senior officer but, at the same time, its members are disobeying an instruction given by their own Minister!

<sup>11</sup> Office of Air Force History, 44/501/32, 'A.V.M. Bostock W.D. Complaint by, Re – Posting', letter from Bostock to Air Board, 10 April 1943. There is no mention of any plan to promote Hewitt to Air Vice-Marshal among the papers on this file. We may wonder whether the Air Board seriously

We may question why the Air Board, an organisation that was using regulations to reinforce its decisions, was prepared to allow a situation to develop where an officer would be placed under the command of someone of a lower rank. Did the Air Board members believe that Drakeford and Curtin were so ignorant of Service matters that they would have agreed?

Bostock appealed to Kenney who, in turn, telephoned Jones and advised him that he was adamant Bostock would continue to head RAAF Command and if CAS did not agree, Kenney would take the matter further with the Australian Government. Kenney then sent a signal to the Air Board, a body over which he had no authority, expressing his surprise at the transfers and pointing out that such a drastic move was not one that could be made by the Air Board alone. He suggested the posting order be recalled.<sup>12</sup> It has been claimed in one account that the matter ended here, with considerable embarrassment to Jones.<sup>13</sup> This was not the case, as Bostock's letter and Kenney's signal were considered by the Air Board, which then decided to take no further action on their own but, instead, forwarded the matter to Drakeford for a decision.<sup>14</sup> Word of the proposed postings also reached MacArthur, who disagreed and advised Curtin that 'Air Commodore Hewitt was not an adequate replacement for Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.'<sup>15</sup> Bostock's approach to the matter can be considered from another angle. That is, while he was no doubt concerned about his career, he was refusing to accept a decision made by the Air Board, the body to which he as an RAAF officer was responsible, and he turned to Kenney to assist him in countering its orders. Bostock's aims in taking this sort of obstructive action are a matter for conjecture. It would appear that Jones' aim was to reunite his Service, to preserve its integrity by placing it, as a single body, under the command of CAS and the Australian Government. Bostock, on the other hand, made many attempts to stop this happening and to preserve a difficult command structure. Given his

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believed it could place an Air Commodore in a position over an Air Vice-Marshal. We may also wonder how a working relationship between Hewitt and Jones would have developed because of the personalities involved.

<sup>12</sup> David Wilson, 'Commander in the Shadow: Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock 1942–1945', Master of Defence Studies sub-thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997, pp 18–19.

<sup>13</sup> Alan Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 122.

<sup>14</sup> Office of Air Force History, 44/501/32, Air Board Minute, 14 May 1943.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/68(1), 'Formation of New Units & Changes in Higher Command Appointments', letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'R.A.A.F. – Changes in Appointments and Organisation', 24 November 1943.

reaction to many of Jones' proposals to reunite the Service, it is reasonable to claim that Bostock's actions were not always in the RAAF's best interests.

On 15 April 1943, Drakeford finally took the posting proposals to Curtin who rejected them and told Drakeford to discuss the matter with Kenney. Curtin reminded Drakeford of the government policy associated with senior Defence appointments, whereby both the Australian Government and MacArthur had to agree to such appointments:

The Australian Government shares a responsibility for the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area. An arrangement exists with General MacArthur whereby any changes in the appointments of Commanders of the Allied Naval, Land and Air Forces, will only be made in consultation with the Australian Government. Accordingly, any change in the appointment of the officer responsible for the operational control of the R.A.A.F. should be subject to the approval of the Commander-in-Chief, South-west Pacific Area.<sup>16</sup>

Drakeford met Kenney in Brisbane on 28 April and found that the American was aware of the approaches to the British Government for the loan of Drummond 'to serve in the capacity of Air Officer Commanding R.A.A.F.'<sup>17</sup> Kenney suggested Drummond might want to make his own changes to the RAAF's command structure after his arrival in Australia. Therefore, he considered it was desirable for the Air Board's proposal to be deferred until Drummond had arrived and familiarised himself with the RAAF. Drakeford told Kenney that he had no objection if the AOC RAAF position was filled quickly, but due to delays being experienced in obtaining an RAF officer he would not agree to postpone some of the recommended changes indefinitely. He advised Kenney that Bostock's proposed transfer was necessary to ensure the 'complete understanding and co-operation, as well as the amicable relationship which should exist between Air Force Head-Quarters and R.A.A.F. Command'. On his return to Melbourne, Drakeford asked Curtin for an immediate decision on the request for Drummond or another suitable RAF officer. He told the Prime Minister that if the officer was not forthcoming, the changes to the higher command appointments should not be deferred. He based this advice on his discussions in Brisbane:

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<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Most Secret letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'Changes in Higher Command Appointments – R.A.A.F.', 17 April 1943.

<sup>17</sup> The Australian Government's drawn-out attempts to appoint an AOC RAAF are discussed in Chapter 11.

I might here add that both Lieutenant-General Kenney and myself finally agreed that, whatever be the result of our negotiations with the United Kingdom Government concerning the loan of a R.A.F. officer, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock would relinquish appointment as A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Command, for duty in some other capacity.<sup>18</sup>

While in Brisbane, Drakeford paid a courtesy call on MacArthur, who asked about RAAF appointments. Drakeford told of his talks with Kenney and he reported to Curtin, 'General MacArthur appeared to be in agreement with them.'<sup>19</sup>

As we will see in a following chapter, the Australian Government failed to secure Drummond and MacArthur opposed attempts to appoint two other RAF officers—Joubert and Longmore. In June 1943, MacArthur suggested to Curtin that, as an RAF officer was not available, the present divided command arrangements should remain and he proposed another meeting between Jones and Bostock (this time Curtin also stated that Sutherland and Kenney should attend) to determine the best ways to eliminate the difficulties. Drakeford agreed to the meeting and told Curtin that he supported any proposal that would remove difficulties but considered transferring Bostock to another post 'would be a very important influence in their solution'. Drakeford expressed surprise at MacArthur's and Kenney's change of attitude regarding Bostock's transfer and assured Curtin:

I wish here to re-affirm that both officers did agree then that, whatever the outcome of our negotiations for the loan of a R.A.F. officer be, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock would relinquish the appointment as A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Command, for duty in some other capacity.<sup>20</sup>

One wonders about the seriousness of all concerned to solve the problems of divided command because on 13 November 1943 (five months after the initiative was proposed) Curtin advised MacArthur that the conference between Jones and the other senior officers had not been held but there had been numerous conversations between Jones, Bostock, and Kenney which had resulted in the

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<sup>18</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Changes in Higher Command Appointments – R.A.A.F.', 1 May 1943.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'R.A.A.F. Command – Proposal for Appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, R.A.A.F.', 24 June 1943. The proposed meeting, had it taken place, would have been stacked against Jones, with three of MacArthur's officers attending.

satisfactory resolution of some problems.<sup>21</sup> Curtin conveyed this information to Drakeford and added that, while various problems had been resolved to Kenney's satisfaction, MacArthur had stated there were still numerous points of difference between Jones and Bostock, and some of these related to the RAAF's internal organisation, which had an important bearing on the Service's efficiency.<sup>22</sup> Drakeford was curious about these numerous points of difference and asked Jones for a report of his conversations with Kenney and Bostock.<sup>23</sup>

Jones reported that the discussion had been initiated by Kenney at Bostock's insistence and consisted mostly of complaints by Bostock that his recommendations on policy and organisation were not always accepted, and that undue delays had occurred in replying to his correspondence. Jones dismissed these issues as relatively trivial. Bostock also claimed RAAF Headquarters had adopted a policy of passive resistance, which Jones denied. Jones found that he was unable to discuss items in detail at the meeting because he did not have the relevant files with him. He did, however, assure Bostock and Kenney of his fullest desire to meet the operational needs of RAAF Command. Kenney stated that it should have been possible for RAAF Headquarters to give wider administrative powers to RAAF Command in the same way the Fifth Air Force received its power while remaining subordinate to USAAF Headquarters in Washington, DC. Jones replied that such a situation was not possible for units located in mainland Australia without delegating all of RAAF Headquarters' power to RAAF Command. He told Drakeford that neither Kenney nor Bostock could suggest any solution to the difficulties that would inevitably arise from interposing another headquarters in the channels of supply, maintenance, postings and promotion. Jones described the situation that applied to RAAF units outside Australia, which were treated as expeditionary forces, the commander of which had all the powers necessary to carry out his responsibilities. Jones claimed that Bostock made it quite clear he wanted greater control of RAAF organisation and policy, and that he resented any refusal on Jones' part to accept his recommendations. When questioned further, Bostock agreed that very few of his recommendations had been rejected and he accepted that responsibility for

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<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Curtin to MacArthur, 'Organisation of R.A.A.F.', 13 November 1943.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'Organisation of R.A.A.F.', 13 November 1943.

<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Organisation of R.A.A.F.', 25 November 1943.

organisation and policy rested with CAS. Jones advised Drakeford that nothing could be gained by pursuing the matter further so the discussion ended.<sup>24</sup>

Curtin met with Bostock in Brisbane in December 1943. During their discussions Bostock cited instances of unsatisfactory performance on the part of RAAF Headquarters. He told the Prime Minister that he had asked for additional radar stations but had been advised the request could not be fulfilled because there were insufficient personnel to operate them. He had then been advised that RAAF Headquarters was in the process of creating Wing Headquarters, which were organisations that Bostock deemed to be unnecessary. Bostock also drew Curtin's attention to construction work that was proceeding and using vital manpower and materiel, even though this work was based on out-of-date operational plans and, thus, was no longer necessary.<sup>25</sup> In this last instance, we may wonder what mechanisms Bostock had put in place to ensure RAAF Headquarters received the very latest operational plans, so that wasteful or unnecessary construction projects did not proceed in the future. Jones complained about the flow of information from RAAF Command and we may suspect that one consequence of Bostock's headquarters not keeping him well informed was the commencement of construction projects that were no longer necessary.

The next major clash in the feud started on 2 February 1944, when Drakeford received an urgent signal from Bostock:

At direction of Minister for Defence request early interview with you on urgent matter concerning basic RAAF organisation and control. Without immediate clarification impossible to continue in present circumstances. Could wait on you at Melbourne or Canberra. Bostock.<sup>26</sup>

The urgent matters referred to in Bostock's signal related to two incidents where RAAF Headquarters had issued problematic orders to RAAF operational units. In the first instance, Bostock advised that RAAF Headquarters had issued an order relevant to the operational procedures for radar, which contradicted Bostock's own order on the matter. The second incident was even more serious and quite provocative. RAAF Headquarters had issued an order relating to submission of

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<sup>24</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 'Higher Organisation of R.A.A.F', 27 Nov 1943.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'Notes of Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Brisbane, 29th November to 1st December, 1943', p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, telex from Bostock to Drakeford, 2 February 1944.

returns from combat squadrons concerning their efficiency for war operations. The order forbade these forms from being sent from No 9 Operational Group to RAAF Command, even though No 9 Operational Group was a subordinate formation within RAAF Command and Kenney held Bostock responsible for advice on the state of efficiency of RAAF units. The new order made it impossible for him to fulfil this responsibility. Bostock complained about this to Kenney who issued an instruction countering RAAF Headquarters.<sup>27</sup> The legitimacy of an American officer ordering an RAAF unit to disobey a directive made by RAAF Headquarters might be questioned.

The two orders may seem to be of a minor nature, but it is the means through which Bostock sought to counter them that is noteworthy. Following the issue of the two RAAF Headquarters orders, MacArthur received a request from Bostock, asking that he be relieved of his appointment as AOC RAAF Command because he considered he was unable to discharge his responsibilities to the Commander AAF effectively due to the existing state of the RAAF. One would expect that if Bostock wished to be relieved of his command, he should have approached the Minister for Air or the Air Board with such a request, and we would have every reason to expect that the Air Board would have agreed to his request. Instead, Bostock turned to MacArthur, knowing that the Commander-in-Chief would exert pressure on the Australian Government. In this instance, Bostock's request was another means of getting his own way when it came to opposing an Air Board order.

MacArthur passed Bostock's request to Shedden and asked for Curtin to personally review the situation urgently because of planned operations.<sup>28</sup> Shedden passed MacArthur's letter to Curtin, who told Bostock to take the matter up with Drakeford.

Bostock's signal was a surprise to Drakeford, who questioned this unorthodox course. Bostock attempted to justify his action by stating he had taken up his problem with MacArthur, and that it was the General who had referred it to Curtin. At a subsequent meeting with Drakeford, Bostock later expressed the view that:

since the A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces, is appointed by the Commander-in-Chief, S.W.P.A., and derives all authority from the latter,

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<sup>27</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F.', 16 February 1944. Bostock noted that both these incidents had occurred while Jones was overseas on an aircraft procurement trip to the US and Britain.

<sup>28</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, teleprinter message from Brisbane Secretariat to Minister, 5 February 1944.

through the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and since the A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Command is accorded no authority of any sort by the Minister, the proper channels of communication on matters which affected operational efficiency are through the Commander-in-Chief, S.W.P.A.<sup>29</sup>

The issue for Bostock was that the existing basic organisation had become unworkable following an incident, which unmistakably indicated an open refusal by RAAF Headquarters to cooperate with RAAF Command. 'The untenable position which has developed could only be possible under the present system which is fundamentally unsound.'<sup>30</sup> Drakeford and Jones met with Bostock in Melbourne to discuss this latest crisis on 8 February 1944. Drakeford asked Bostock why he had made a direct approach to MacArthur instead of, first of all, taking the matter up with RAAF Headquarters or himself as the Minister for Air. If this process was not followed then the Prime Minister became a recipient of complaints that rightly fell under Drakeford's jurisdiction and decision.<sup>31</sup> Drakeford advised that he did not accept Bostock's view that it was necessary to make the approach through MacArthur and told Bostock that, when differences arose in RAAF matters, he was at liberty to approach him as the responsible Minister.

Bostock told Drakeford that, as an operational commander, he should have been given administration and supply responsibilities commensurate with his command, and that the contemporary organisation, which divorced him from these responsibilities, was unsound. His view was that, in the divided command situation, the operational commander should be the 'dominating partner' rather than the officer responsible for administration because the RAAF had been established for operational purposes. Under most circumstances, it would have been hard for Jones to disagree with that point of view but in this case it again became obvious to Jones that Bostock's demands would have placed most of the RAAF under his, and therefore AAF, control. In this case, as Jones correctly pointed out, there would have been duplication of roles because two sets of administrative organisations would be needed. One would be there to cater for the needs of RAAF Command,

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<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F', 16 February 1944.

<sup>30</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, signal from Bostock to Drakeford, 3 February 1944.

<sup>31</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F', 16 February 1944.



while the other would look after the extensive training organisation, which was still a major undertaking.<sup>32</sup> Bostock appeared to have no answer to this logic.

After the meeting, Drakeford told Curtin that Bostock's views raised the question of who should command the whole RAAF. One wonders how often Curtin needed to be told this. This was the fundamental question underpinning the whole issue of the divided command and it was the very question that Curtin kept backing away from answering. Drakeford then made another attempt to gain the Prime Minister's support for change and told Curtin that the officer responsible to the Minister for matters of policy, organisation and supply must have the ultimate power, which could not be given to the operational commander, unless that person was appointed to command the whole RAAF and made responsible to the Minister. Even at this stage, Drakeford still believed the divided command would have worked if cooperation had existed between RAAF Command and RAAF Headquarters, but CAS had always held the view that there should not be any division of operational control from that of administration, training and supply. This was an interesting statement to make, given Jones' refusal to hand over administrative functions to RAAF Command. Drakeford proposed that RAAF Command be merged into the RAAF making the Service a self-contained organisation as it was before RAAF Command formed. Under this plan, Bostock would be moved away from RAAF Headquarters and, in order to use all his experience, would be given a new command (to be known as Northern Command), comprising Nos 9 and 10 Operational Groups in New Guinea. This would form the RAAF Field Force. In his new position, Bostock would control operations and administration and would command all ancillary units, while CAS would be the direct link between the RAAF and AAF Headquarters.<sup>33</sup>

Curtin replied that the proposal to merge RAAF Command into the RAAF had been the subject of recommendations by the Defence Committee and Chiefs of Staff Committee, and had been considered by the War Cabinet (as we know, Curtin had not followed these recommendations but, instead, had allowed MacArthur to advise against them). This time, Curtin stressed the desirability of re-integrating the

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<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* Under Drakeford's new plan, CAS was to proceed to Brisbane and work in close association with Kenney for a period of time sufficient for him to establish a complete understanding between the RAAF and AAF. He was also to devise the best organisation for the RAAF to ensure cooperation between the two air forces. While CAS was in Brisbane, DCAS would act at RAAF Headquarters in his absence. However, CAS would be available to attend Advisory War Council and War Cabinet meetings.

RAAF but pointed out that it could not happen because it had not been possible to appoint an AOC RAAF. He noted that Drakeford's proposals would put Bostock in a subordinate status to CAS, in relation to operational control of RAAF. As we will see in Chapter 11, Drakeford had, in December 1942 and January 1943, made recommendations to the Prime Minister that Jones be promoted. Curtin was not prepared to support these recommendations at that time because they involved the supersession of Bostock and he would still not agree to such a move. The Prime Minister was about to set off on a trip to the USA and Britain, and during that time he would again attempt to solve the RAAF's command problems, as he told Drakeford:

I am inclined to revert to our original idea that the only solution is for me to discuss in London the possibility of obtaining a suitable officer as Air Officer Commanding, R.A.A.F.<sup>34</sup>

Drakeford drafted a reply that, because of Curtin's imminent departure from Australia, was not sent. Nevertheless, it is worth noting the level to which Drakeford was prepared to go in order to solve the problem. In his letter, he reminded Curtin that back in December 1942 he recommended Jones be given acting Air Marshal rank while holding the CAS position. Since then CAS's responsibilities had increased as a consequence of the growth of the RAAF. Based on this, the Minister made the ridiculous suggestion that acting Air Marshal rank be given to both Jones and Bostock. The reason in the case of the latter officer was because of his responsibilities in operational control of RAAF units.<sup>35</sup> All concerned should be grateful this letter was not sent. Promoting one officer would have solved the problem. Promoting both would have solved nothing.

### **Jones and Operational Efficiency: Fighter Sector Headquarters**

It was not long before Bostock took up Drakeford's offer of access in the event of an issue that would affect operational efficiency. On 2 March 1944, less than a month after his last formal meeting with the Minister and Jones, he wrote to Drakeford about proposals for the clarification of the RAAF's fighter organisation, which he submitted to RAAF Headquarters on 15 December 1943. The proposal was

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<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F.', 1 April 1944.

<sup>35</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 'Organisation of the R.A.A.F.', 4 March 1944.

designed to improve the efficiency of air defence and to meet RAAF Command's plan for the operational control of fighters, while offering economy in personnel. Bostock stated that CAS's reply of 14 February 1944 rejected the submission and that, without consultation, Jones had imposed his own organisation, which was unsuitable to Bostock's operational requirements. In his reply to Bostock, Jones wrote that he was not prepared to give the proposal any further discussion or consideration. Bostock disagreed with Jones' proposal and asked Drakeford to direct that there be no change to the RAAF fighter organisation until a decision had been reached concerning the basic organisation of the RAAF, which Drakeford had under review.<sup>36</sup> Drakeford passed Bostock's letter to Jones, who objected to its contents and advised the Minister:

This letter is cleverly designed to confuse the real issue which is that he is not prepared to accept my decision on a matter of organisation on the Service plane, made within the ambit of my responsibility, and after careful study of the subject.<sup>37</sup>

Jones believed Bostock was trying to create an intolerable situation to force change. He also objected to the manner in which the letter was written:

Under other circumstances, the measure of insubordination shown in his letter could only be remedied by charging the officer concerned with an offence, or by removing him from his position.<sup>38</sup>

Jones claimed that the real issue was the organisation for administration and operational control of fighter squadrons, which he had discussed frequently with Bostock and the AOC North-Western Area during the previous 18 months. Jones added that he had accepted Bostock's views on the issue twice, only to find they were unsatisfactory and that Bostock himself had made changes. He added, 'However, I would emphasise that the merits of my decision are not a matter which a subordinate officer has the right to challenge in this way'. Jones' final advice to the Minister was that Bostock needed to be told he must accept CAS's decisions on matters that were the responsibility of CAS and, although his recommendations were required and would be given full consideration, he was committing a serious

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<sup>36</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Bostock to Drakeford, 2 March 1944.

<sup>37</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 6 March 1944.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

breach of discipline in challenging such decisions once they were given.<sup>39</sup> Drakeford, instead, directed Jones to meet with Bostock and to resolve the issue.

Documents on the official file dealing with these matters show that at about this time Drakeford started to seek greater advice from Langslow on matters pertaining to Service administration. In this instance, he was still concerned about the Fighter Sector Headquarters issue and sought advice from Langslow, who told him that Bostock's plan would make it responsible for both the administrative and operational control of units. Such a reorganisation would have been suitable only for a fighter organisation and would be unworkable where the RAAF had composite organisations (i.e. bomber, reconnaissance, fighter and ancillary units together). In Langslow's opinion, it was very important that a Fighter Sector Headquarters should confine itself to operations and not be cluttered up with administrative work. Consequently, the existing structure seemed not only more logical in manpower, but was also the most logical and efficient for the conditions under which the Service was operating in New Guinea and on mainland Australia. Langslow told Drakeford he understood the existing organisation had functioned efficiently in New Guinea since its inception 12 months earlier.<sup>40</sup> Drakeford replied to Bostock, telling him that RAAF Headquarters was responsible for determining detailed organisation of the RAAF but, in view of the importance Bostock placed on the matter, the Minister had given it quite a bit of thought. Unfortunately, he was unable to offer any view on what would best suit Bostock's needs and, therefore, he was sending Group Captain Hely to RAAF Command to discuss the matter.<sup>41</sup>

In the meantime, RAAF Headquarters issued Air Force Confidential Order (AFCO) B.84/1944, which changed the name of Fighter Sector Headquarters to Mobile Fighter Sector Headquarters.<sup>42</sup> This provoked an angry telephone call from Bostock to Drakeford's Private Secretary. Bostock said that he had not received a reply to his letter of 2 March and complained that, even though he had asked Drakeford to stop all action on the issue, RAAF Headquarters had issued AFCO B.84/44. He asked whether Drakeford would reply to his letter and what action the Minister

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<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 11 March 1944.

<sup>41</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Drakeford to Bostock, 14 March 1944.

<sup>42</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from the Director of Organisation to RAAF Command, 'Fighter Sector Headquarters – Change of Name', 20 March 1944. The letter concluded with the sentence, 'CAS has directed that RAAF Command's attention be drawn to this.'

intended to take.<sup>43</sup> Drakeford took the call seriously and told RAAF Headquarters to defer action on the AFCO. He also made inquiries on Hely's discussions with Bostock. This latter point became a source of disappointment to the Minister because, despite his directive and subsequent demands, Hely did not travel to Brisbane until 23 March and his report on the discussions was not prepared until 30 March. Drakeford was quite concerned about the delay and directed Langslow to tell Jones of his:

extreme disappointment that Group Captain Hely's report on his discussions with Air Vice-Marshal Bostock concerning the Fighter Headquarters Organisation has not yet been furnished, a week already having elapsed since he proceeded to Brisbane specifically for that purpose.

The Minister wishes me to add that he considers that that delay reflects a lack of consideration for his directions, and he cannot but take a serious view of the delay.<sup>44</sup>

Hely's brief report was sent to Drakeford on 30 March under a covering minute from Jones who, despite its origin within his own Headquarters, rejected the report on the grounds that it showed a considerable confusion of thought. Jones further claimed that Bostock's ideas to be contrary to basic principles of Service organisation and contrary to earlier organisation proposals.<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime, Bostock wrote to Drakeford again and stated this time that the divided command and responsibilities presented a serious threat to the success of future operations. Bostock was planning offensive air operations within the area of the responsibility of his command. Planning for these operations, quite naturally, was done in secret, and Bostock made a valid point concerning the difficulties he was experiencing:

Under the existing organisation of the R.A.A.F., I am required to "sell" my operational requirements to the C.A.S., who, while he has no authority over, or responsibility for, the conduct of operations, has the final determination of the form of the organisation and administrative arrangements which I must use. This procedure necessitates voluminous and protracted correspondence

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<sup>43</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Private Secretary to Drakeford, 17 March 1944.

<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Jones, 'Group Captain Hely's Report – Fighter Sector Organisation', 30 March 1944.

<sup>45</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 30 March 1944.

and staff discussion and frequently terminates in the C.A.S. declining to meet my requirements in the form best suited to my plans.<sup>46</sup>

Bostock continued by saying he found it impossible to achieve thoroughness in planning and the preservation of security. The forthcoming operations called for the highest degree of coordination of all parts of the RAAF but he was convinced a unified effort was impossible under existing conditions. His major problem was explained in vague terms as the cumulative effect of many minor inefficiencies (each relatively unimportant in itself) that were almost certain to lead to failure with the inevitable loss of life, materiel and morale. Therefore, Bostock was extremely loath to command his forces in hazardous operations under adverse conditions, which he considered to be avoidable and so unsatisfactory as to be unworkable. He claimed he had no alternative other than to request that the basic organisation of the Service be placed on sound military lines as a matter of urgency and as an essential prerequisite to the successful participation of the RAAF in the impending offensive operations.<sup>47</sup> Drakeford, in his reply expressed concern that a unified effort was impossible to achieve and asked Bostock for details of the minor inefficiencies so that he could take action to correct them. He directed Bostock to meet with Jones (yet again) in Melbourne to discuss the RAAF Command requirements for operations. He asked for a report on the discussions, signed by both Air Vice-Marshals.<sup>48</sup>

Bostock met with Jones in Melbourne on 10 April. While the meeting appears to have been conducted without incident, their subsequent work was another cause for disagreement between the two officers. Bostock wrote to Drakeford and told him that at the meeting it was agreed Jones would draft a report on fighter control and would send it to Bostock for further work. Instead, Jones sent it straight to Drakeford, without Bostock's input. Bostock claimed that this was the second occasion when Jones had failed in a verbal agreement made with the AOC RAAF Command and that the report Jones drafted was misleading because it evaded vital considerations (i.e. 'Training of Aircrews in Reserve Pools' and 'Fighter Organisation') and selected only minor aspects which were presented as the main issues. Bostock went on to outline his views of these two issues. He concluded his letter by telling the Minister that he was sensitive to the embarrassing situation in

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<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Bostock to Drakeford, 22 March 1944.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* Bostock concluded the letter with the advice that a copy had been passed to MacArthur.

<sup>48</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Drakeford to Bostock, 30 March 1944.

which Drakeford was placed because of contradictory information and he deeply regretted the necessity of it and apportioned blame to Jones:

However, while the unhelpful attitude of Air Vice-Marshal Jones persists towards R.A.A.F. Command, I can see no hope of a solution until the basic organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force is placed on sound military lines.<sup>49</sup>

Jones received a copy of this letter and, as might be expected, immediately took exception because it was offensive and highly defamatory. Jones was clearly incensed and it would appear from the ultimatum he sent to Drakeford that his patience was at an end:

It is an extremely grave matter when a senior officer of a Service writes of another in this strain. If statements of the kind in question are true, the officer concerning whom they are written is unworthy of his office; if they are untrue, the officer making them is guilty of a serious Service offence.

In these circumstances, I feel compelled to request from you as the addressee of the communication, an expression of your confidence in me as the holder of the office I occupy, and an intimation that you will advise the writer of the letter accordingly, and that any future communications are to be couched in fitting terms and submitted through the proper channels.

Should you not see your way clear to accede to this request, I shall feel that you do not possess that degree of confidence in me as your principal professional adviser which should exist, and I shall feel constrained to initiate such Service or other action as may be necessary to refute the imputations which have been made against my personal integrity and my professional ability and reputation.<sup>50</sup>

Jones, however, was not above admitting his errors and later in his life acknowledged he had been wrong about the training of aircrew in reserve pools but, at the time, he claimed RAAF Headquarters could not maintain both combat and training units in New Guinea, where the majority of RAAF combat operations were being flown. In hindsight, he thought it might have been better for the aircrew if they had received training in the area in which they would be operating.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Bostock to Drakeford, 15 April 1944.

<sup>50</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 26 April 1944.

<sup>51</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Transcripts Jones, Garing, Bostock?', 'Interview – Air

### **The Personal Conflict Deepens**

Jones and Bostock remained in their respective positions and continued on their destructive feud, the next part of which began late in 1944 when Jones established the Directorate of Operational Requirements (DOR). One disturbing tendency which emerged as the feud continued was the more offensive nature of the correspondence between the two protagonists. While both officers may have had legitimate reasons for the stands they took, by this time the situation had degenerated to an almost juvenile level, and it is difficult for someone studying some of these incidents 60 years later to feel any sympathy for either Jones or Bostock. In the case of the Directorate of Operational Requirements, Bostock told Jones, 'Considerable unnecessary confusion and inefficiency is resulting from the improper dabbling, by staff of your Headquarters, in matters relating to operational requirements of R.A.A.F. Command, A.A.F.' Bostock went on to say that the new Directorate was attempting to exercise improper control over the operational efficiency of RAAF Command and that it was his role to determine aircraft and weapons requirements. Therefore, he told Jones that CAS had no place in this part of the decision-making process:

Non compliance of my requirements in this regard, by the Chief of the Air Staff can only be justified by administrative inability to implement. The Chief of the Air Staff (in the R.A.A.F., as at present organised), who has no authority or responsibility for the conduct of operations, has no right – particularly no moral right – to dispute, on operational or tactical grounds, operational requirements demanded by the Air Officer Commanding R.A.A.F. Command, A.A.F.<sup>52</sup>

The tone of Bostock's letter became quite hostile as, once again, he told Jones that as AOC RAAF Command he derived his authority from the Commander AAF and that his appointment entailed no responsibilities whatsoever to CAS, who he claimed was purely an administrative authority. He had attempted on numerous occasions to explain the situation regarding operational requirements to RAAF Headquarters staff only to have received evasive or indefinite replies. This, he told Jones:

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Marshal Sir George Jones'

<sup>52</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, letter from Bostock to Jones, 12 January 1945.



indicates either a lack of appreciation of the situation or a further manifestation of the attitude of non-co-operation and unhelpfulness which has characterised your policy towards R.A.A.F. Command (and to me in particular, as Air Officer Commanding), since the inception of the existing higher organisation of the Service.<sup>53</sup>

Because of the atmosphere of non-cooperation, Bostock stated that progress towards operational efficiency had been an unnecessarily laborious and tedious task.<sup>54</sup>

Bostock continued by telling Jones that the Director of Operational Requirements was a member of a non-operational headquarters and was not in a position to form sound and balanced opinions on operational questions. He claimed that Jones was taking advice on operational matters (which were not his responsibility) from relatively junior officers in preference to accepting Bostock's representations. He had been reliably informed that the Director of Operational Requirements was a Group Captain and had a staff of 20–30 experienced officers, which Bostock considered to be a disturbing waste of valuable manpower urgently needed to establish efficient field units. No doubt Jones would have argued that staffing at RAAF Headquarters was his responsibility and not something that should concern Bostock. Bostock concluded his letter with a statement to the effect that the Directorate of Operational Requirements introduced another obstruction against the development of the RAAF into an efficient fighting organisation.<sup>55</sup>

Drakeford made another attempt to reorganise the command arrangements in February 1945. This time, he recommended to Curtin that RAAF Command move to New Guinea or another advanced area and take over control of all RAAF units in the advanced areas, while operational units on the Australian mainland (apart from those in the North-Western Area) would be controlled by RAAF Headquarters. In his letter to the Prime Minister, Drakeford noted the favourable progress of the war and the idea that the possibility of an attack on the Australian mainland was very remote. More importantly, he pointed out that Kenney had moved his headquarters to Leyte but RAAF Command had remained in Brisbane. Given the progress of the war, it seemed obvious to Drakeford that RAAF Command should be placed in

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<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*

an area closer to operational activities.<sup>56</sup> With the Minister's agreement, Jones met with Kenney on 20 February and proposed that RAAF Command should move from Australia to a location where it could exercise command of RAAF units in active combat areas. As part of this proposal, Jones included the units in Northern Command, the First Tactical Air Force and a new group to be formed from units based in North-Western Area that were to be used in future operations. At the same time, the other units based on mainland Australia would come under the control of RAAF Headquarters, which would be responsible to Kenney for their deployment.

Jones' proposal was for RAAF Command to become an expeditionary air force, with its commander having both operational and administrative control over its units. In this instance, Jones recognised the issue of conflicting demands for operational resources between RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command and stated that the disposal of all RAAF operational units would remain Kenney's prerogative.<sup>57</sup> Given the discussion in the past and all the arguments put forward by both sides, it would appear that Jones' proposal was a compromise that should have been satisfactory to RAAF Command. However, this was not to be the case.

When the proposal reached the AAF, Bostock opposed it because he claimed it was based on unsound Service advice. He sent a reply to Shedden in which he stated that the high level changes would cause confusion and have a detrimental effect on the forthcoming Borneo operations, which, in turn, could lead to unnecessary casualties or even defeat. MacArthur sent his own opposition to Curtin, pointing out that a large number of WAAAF personnel were employed at RAAF Command and, because of Australian Government policy, they could not leave Australia. Therefore, the Headquarters could not move until the WAAAFs were replaced by their male counterparts. We may wonder why Bostock rejected a proposal that would have allowed him command of a self-contained organisation with operational and administrative control. This was the type of control Bostock had been demanding ever since RAAF Command was formed. Perhaps it was because he saw the position of AOC of an expeditionary air force as one that would have been under the control of CAS.

Bostock again asked for the opportunity to put his case to the Government. Curtin declined to meet with him and instead sent him to a meeting of the Defence Committee on 6 March 1945. The Defence Committee, which included Jones,

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<sup>56</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 7 February 1945.

<sup>57</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', minute from Jones to Kenney, 20 February 1945.

again agreed the divided command should end but also agreed with Bostock's view that it would be unwise to make any change to the command structure until after the Borneo operations. Curtin accepted the Committee's decision and advised MacArthur, who replied he was 'in entire agreement with the decision'.<sup>58</sup> The Defence Committee had made a similar recommendation several years earlier and MacArthur had rejected it. This time, he agreed but with the proviso that it be postponed until after the completion of the next major operation involving the RAAF.

Drakeford was still trying to sort out the command problem in April 1945. The solution this time was to appoint Bostock to a new position. In late April, Jones communicated to Drakeford that he had met with Kenney and the latter had suggested a training appointment for Bostock. In Jones' view, the posting could have been arranged and MacArthur would accept Kenney's guidance and allow it to happen.<sup>59</sup> Kenney's agreement to the posting proposal seems rather curious in light of all the preceding events and the planned *Oboe* Landings on the island of Borneo. The posting did not come to fruition, possibly because the Minister and the Air Board found themselves involved in a drawn-out conflict with Bostock over a change to his title and the events on Morotai Island.

### **Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command**

The final major conflict in the Jones-Bostock feud started on 25 April 1945, when Headquarters Allied Air Forces SWPA issued the following General Order No. 2:

#### ANNOUNCEMENT OF COMMAND

Air Vice Marshal William D BOSTOCK, C.B. O.B.E., is announced as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces, SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC AREA, effective from this date.

A.G. 210.31.

By Command GENERAL KENNEY

D.R. HUTCHINSON

Brigadier General

CHIEF OF STAFF<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> George Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, pp 438–439.

<sup>59</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP288/12/0/5, Papers of Arthur Drakeford, Cypher Message from 9 Ops Group (NODECO), For Minister for Air from CAS, 22 April 1945.

<sup>60</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, Headquarters Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific

On the surface, this appeared to be just a change in Bostock's title from AOC RAAF Command to AOC-in-Chief RAAF Command. The reason for the change of title appears to be that Bostock was the AOC RAAF Command but he had, as subordinates, a number of Area AOCs. The new title would distinguish him from the subordinates.<sup>61</sup> What is important is how it created a major confrontation between RAAF Headquarters and the Australian Government on one side and RAAF Command on the other.

In the days following the issuing of the General Order, Bostock sent a signal informing the RAAF Area AOCs and other operational commanders of the title change.<sup>62</sup> For some reason, Bostock neglected to inform RAAF Headquarters, so the first that staff there knew of Bostock's title change was when the Pacific Echelon<sup>63</sup> advised that Bostock wished to tell the media in Manila of his new title. Pacific Echelon requested urgent advice on whether the designation was authorised.<sup>64</sup> This information was passed to Jones, whose interpretation of the order was that it implied Bostock was the Commander-in-Chief of the RAAF in SWPA. His immediate response was to advise Bostock of the Australian Government's role in decisions on titles of appointment and to state that the proposed designation was not approved.<sup>65</sup> In his signal, he added:

The approved title of the Officer Commanding RAAF CMD is quote Air Officer Commanding RAAF CMD unquote. No variation of this title is to be used throughout the RAAF until approved by the Government and promulgated by RAAF HQ.<sup>66</sup>

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Area, General Order No. 2, 'Announcement of Command', 25 April 1945. A copy of this order was passed to Langslow on 28 May 1945.

<sup>61</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 439.

<sup>62</sup> Jones was of the opinion that Sutherland had sanctioned Bostock's signal. Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988', transcript of interview.

<sup>63</sup> Pacific Echelon was a forward element of RAAF Headquarters established in December 1944 and located with MacArthur's General Headquarters SWPA. It moved forward with that headquarters, initially to Leyte and then Manila.

<sup>64</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, 'Higher Organisation of R.A.A.F., Adoption by A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Command of the title "A.O.C. R.A.A.F. Commanding in Chief, R.A.A.F. Command"', signal from Pacific Echelon to RAAF Headquarters, 21 May 1945.

<sup>65</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, pp. 95–96.

<sup>66</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from RAAF Headquarters to RAAF Command, 22 May 1945. Jones claimed, in an interview many years later, that Bostock's signal stated he was

As far as Jones was concerned, Bostock's role at AAF Headquarters did not include the right to make changes to his own title. Jones was quite correct in rejecting the title change.<sup>67</sup>

Bostock retaliated with a signal to RAAF Headquarters and the operational commanders in which he presented his view and, quite incorrectly, stated that RAAF Command was a formation designated by the Commander AAF, not RAAF Headquarters, and the title AOC RAAF Command was designated by the Commander AAF, not RAAF Headquarters, in September 1942. Bostock was incorrect in this statement, because RAAF Command was constituted pursuant to Air Force Confidential Order (AFCO) A44/1943. Furthermore, any change of command title had to have the approval of the War Cabinet and the Minister for Defence. The US commanders had no power to designate titles or nominate appointments.<sup>68</sup> Bostock continued by stating that it was the Commander AAF who authorised the new title in April 1945 and, therefore, 'The appointment of the officer who commands RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, his title and responsibilities, are not matters which concern RAAF Headquarters'. Bostock was wrong again in this statement—RAAF Headquarters was responsible for the titles of all RAAF officers. Bostock concluded by instructing that the title Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief was to be used in all references to the officer who commanded RAAF Command until such time as a change of the title was authorised by the Commander AAF. According to Bostock, CAS had no authority to countermand the orders of the Commander AAF.<sup>69</sup> Once again, a drawn-out exchange of hostile correspondence ensued.

Naturally enough, Jones and the Air Board did not allow this signal to go unanswered. At its meeting on 26 May 1945, the Air Board discussed the issues pertinent to the title change and considered them to:

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to be known as the Commander-in-Chief of the RAAF in the Pacific. He added, 'Well I couldn't stomach that'. Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>67</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>68</sup> In so far as the command of RAAF Command was concerned, nothing had changed the position from that in 1942 when MacArthur had told Curtin he did not propose to request that Bostock be named to command RAAF Command but that command would rest with CAS and Bostock was to exercise operational control over certain RAAF and USAAF Squadrons.

<sup>69</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal No. A.915, from RAAF Command to RAAF Headquarters, RAAF Command Advanced Headquarters, North-Eastern Area, North-Western Area, Eastern Area, Southern Area, Western Area, Northern Command, First Tactical Air Force and RAAF Pacific Echelon, 25 May 1945.

involve fundamental questions affecting the constitution of the R.A.A.F., the powers of the Minister and the Air Board, and the interpretation of the Assignment of the Australian Forces to the Supreme Command so far as the Air Force is concerned.<sup>70</sup>

The Air Board considered that Bostock's signal was incorrect because, pursuant to Air Force Confidential Order A.44/43, the Air Board set up RAAF Command as a separate unit to be administered directly by RAAF Headquarters, and posted Bostock as its AOC. In light of this, the Air Board judged the change of title to be a matter that fell within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Air, and itself. Therefore, based on this judgment, Bostock's actions in issuing signals of the title change were unauthorised and unconstitutional. The Air Board concluded:

Such action, if allowed to stand, will seriously imperil the authority of the duly constituted authorities empowered to administer and control the Air Force, and will create a precedent whereby basic matters of organisation and administration will be taken out of the control of the authorities constitutionally responsible thereof.<sup>71</sup>

Drakeford sought advice on the matter from Langslow, whose explanation of the title put Bostock's proposed appointment in a different light. Langslow reminded the Minister that, contrary to Bostock's claims, RAAF Command was not created by the Commander AAF but by the Minister for Air, CAS and Bostock himself. The title 'AOC RAAF Command' was not designated by US authorities but was strictly in accordance with RAAF and RAF titles of appointments of similar character. Langslow also explained that the title 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command' was a very important departure from long established practice. In the RAF, he continued, such a title was for very senior officers commanding huge commands, such as Bomber Command, Coastal Command etc., which comprised hundreds of units and thousands of personnel. The AOC RAAF Command, in comparison, commanded a much smaller organisation, with a lesser number of units, with a lower rank and with operational responsibility only. Langslow considered the adoption of the title would be very embarrassing to the upper echelons of the RAN and Australian Army authorities as it would create a

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<sup>70</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 26 May 1945.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*

precedent, which could have serious repercussions in those Services. It was most inappropriate for an officer having only operational responsibilities to be granted a title of AOC-in-Chief, because in the RAF the title Commander-in-Chief was given to an officer with administrative as well as operational responsibilities for forces under his control.<sup>72</sup> In light of this last piece of advice, we may suspect that Bostock orchestrated the title change as a mischievous means of gaining control of the RAAF's administration infrastructure.

Drakeford, after meeting with the Air Board and acting on its and Langslow's advice, instructed Mulrooney (Secretary to the Air Board) to direct Bostock to cancel his signals.<sup>73</sup> Bostock now raised the ante by telling Mulrooney:

I regret that as a subordinate commander, appointed by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, I am unable to comply with your request to countermand the orders of the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces.<sup>74</sup>

The Air Board considered its next move. It noted that Bostock had been asked to repeal some signals, not countermand one of Kenney's orders. His refusal at this point could have been the opportunity that Jones and the Air Board were looking for to have him replaced as AOC RAAF Command and, hopefully, bring the divided command conflict to an end. The Air Board decided that Bostock's refusal to comply with the direction constituted a wilful defiance of lawful authority as constituted by the Minister and the Air Board. 'Such conduct can only be regarded as mutinous in nature and calls for appropriate and prompt action in the interests both of Service administration and discipline and duly constituted authority.' In this case, prompt action could have taken two forms—disciplinary or administrative.<sup>75</sup> We should note the use of the word 'mutinous' in the Air Board's advice and ask whether, if allowed, Jones would have pursued a course of disciplinary action against Bostock for the crime of mutiny.

It was here that the Air Board encountered a few problems. Disciplinary action may have proved to be a difficult option against Bostock because it would be very difficult to find other officers of suitable rank and seniority to conduct a court

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<sup>72</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 'Higher Organisation of the R.A.A.F.', 28 May 1945.

<sup>73</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, letter from Mulrooney to Bostock, 29 May 1945.

<sup>74</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, letter from Bostock to Mulrooney, 30 May 1945.

<sup>75</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 31 May 1945.

martial. Assuming a minimum of four officers would be needed to sit on a court martial, Williams would have had to be brought back from Washington and Goble from Canada. Perhaps senior officers could have been coopted from the other Australian Services, or the RAF. Langslow was concerned about the overall repercussions on the Service as a whole if disciplinary action was taken, and he advised Drakeford that CAS was aware of Bostock's intention to refuse to obey the Air Board order against the adoption of the title. If Bostock disobeyed the order, Jones planned to charge him and this would mean attaching Bostock to RAAF Headquarters to enable disciplinary action to be taken against him (i.e. a court martial). Bostock's refusal to comply would leave him open to such a charge and the Air Board was committed to take action against him. Langslow considered that 'the repercussions would obviously be serious, though the Air Board must insist on retention and observance of its authority in such matters'. He told Drakeford that, as Kenney alone authorised the title change without power or authority to do so, he should be informed of the position and also that changes in RAAF appointments and designations were administered by the Australian Government. Langslow expected that Kenney would arrange for the cancellation of the General Order after the issues were explained.<sup>76</sup>

Administrative action was seen as the best option and it was agreed that:

The Board considers that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's conduct in refusing to comply with its clear and express direction in a matter of such fundamental importance requires his immediate removal from the appointment of A.O.C. Headquarters, R.A.A.F. Command.<sup>77</sup>

The Air Board directed that Bostock should be called upon 'to show cause why his appointment as an officer of the R.A.A.F. should not be terminated'.<sup>78</sup>

The action proposed by the Air Board would have given Drakeford another opportunity to solve the command problem, although it is highly likely that Kenney would have objected. Instead, Drakeford told the Air Board to direct Bostock to comply with the earlier instructions.<sup>79</sup> In the meantime, Drakeford briefed Beasley (the acting Minister for Defence) on the issue and asked that it be taken to higher

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<sup>76</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 30 May 1945.

<sup>77</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 31 May 1945.

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute by Minister, 1 June 1945.



authority. Drakeford told Beasley the promulgation of the order without seeking the agreement of the Australian Government, together with Bostock's attitude, raised questions pertinent to the fundamental powers of the War Cabinet, the Minister of Defence, the Air Board, the Constitution of the RAAF, as well as the interpretation of the Directive to MacArthur, in so far as the RAAF was concerned. Drakeford also reminded Beasley that MacArthur had been given operational control of Australian units—he was not responsible for their internal administration, and appointments to higher Australian command positions were to be submitted to the War Cabinet through the Minister for Defence. In this instance, Headquarters AAF had exceeded its authority and Drakeford, therefore, asked Beasley to make representations to MacArthur and request the order be cancelled. Drakeford concluded his briefing with the following statement:

The attitude adopted and the obvious misunderstandings of the position expressed by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock in his signal No. A.915, dated the 25th May, are to be much regretted.<sup>80</sup>

The briefing was followed on 1 June 1945 by a meeting between Beasley, Drakeford, Shedden, Langslow and Jones. It was unanimously agreed that Kenney had no authority to alter Bostock's title. In addition, it was also agreed that the attitude adopted by Bostock in refusing to obey Air Board directions was irregular as he was subject to Air Board Orders. Therefore, the action taken by the Air Board was correct but there was still a problem in so far as what to do with Bostock. It was agreed that, in view of Bostock's seniority, the relationship between Commonwealth Government and MacArthur, and the publicity that might be given to any drastic action against Bostock, Drakeford was to direct Bostock to withdraw his signal. If the signal was not withdrawn, then disciplinary action would be considered. Langslow directed Mulrooney to tell Bostock to comply with Air Board directions. As Bostock was in Melbourne at that time, the necessary facilities were to be made available to him so that he could comply.<sup>81</sup>

Bostock next approached Drakeford with the patronising suggestion that the Minister might not have been aware of the full details of the position and of the conditions underlying Bostock's appointment. This, under any circumstances,

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<sup>80</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Drakeford to Beasley, 'Designation of Air Officer Commanding, R.A.A.F. Command', 1 June 1945.

<sup>81</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute by Secretary Department of Air, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', 1 June 1945.

would be an outrageous statement for Bostock to make, given that Drakeford had been Minister for Air for nearly four years and had been instrumental in the formation of RAAF Command. The Minister told Bostock that he was under no misunderstanding and that all high command appointments and designations were quite definitely the sole responsibility of the Commonwealth Government. Bostock finally agreed to the directions given to him and, noting Drakeford's involvement, sent a signal to the operational AOCs countering his earlier signals:

By direction of the Minister for Air, my signals A.286 26 Apr and A.915 25 May are hereby cancelled and no further action is to be taken thereon. Title AOC RAAF Command remains as promulgated.<sup>82</sup>

It might be reasonable to expect the whole matter would have ended right then but this was not the case. The Air Board disagreed with Bostock's interpretation of who gave the direction to rescind his earlier signals. This latest signal, they concurred, did not comply with the directive.<sup>83</sup> Mulrooney was tasked with telling Bostock to send a revised signal stating that the Air Board, not the Minister, gave him the order.<sup>84</sup>

The Air Board discussed the issue again on 4 June 1945. Bostock had not issued his revised signal by this time and it was agreed that his failure to take advantage of the opportunity given to him to acknowledge his responsibility to the lawfully constituted authority could be regarded as persistence in his former attitude. Once again, disciplinary action was considered. This time, it was not only recommended that Bostock be removed from his position but that he be replaced by Air Commodore Bladin.<sup>85</sup>

At the same meeting, the Air Board made another significant recommendation. It was that the acting rank of Air Marshal be granted to CAS. This was seen, quite

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<sup>82</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from RAAF Headquarters to RAAF Command, RAAF Command Advanced Headquarters, North-Eastern Area, North-Western Area, Eastern Area, Southern Area, Western Area, Northern Command, First Tactical Air Force and RAAF Pacific Echelon, 1 June 1945.

<sup>83</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 1 June 1945.

<sup>84</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from Secretary Air Board to AOC RAAF Command, 1 June 1945.

<sup>85</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 4 June 1945.

reasonably, to be essential if the Government's decisions and the Air Board's directions were to be carried out in future. The Air Board concluded:

Unless this action is taken, a further insistence by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock upon his formed attitude towards Air Board's directions will cause serious practical difficulties having regard to the fact that he is the senior officer in rank and seniority in the R.A.A.F. in Australia.<sup>86</sup>

In the meantime, Bostock signalled Drakeford stating that he wished to appeal to the Minister for Defence on the grounds that he had complied with the Board's directive and:

- (b) The direction contained in the Air Board signal C.428 can have no purpose but to attempt to humiliate me in the eyes of my subordinate commanders to the serious detriment of my prestige and control of operations.<sup>87</sup>

Drakeford, Jones and Air Commodore Harry Winneke, an RAAF legal officer who was advising Jones and the Air Board on this matter, discussed the matters raised by the Air Board with Beasley, Shedden and Langslow in Canberra on 4 June. At the meeting, Jones laid out his and Bostock's signals on the table in front of all present and explained the sequence of events. Beasley asked who the senior authority in the RAAF was, to which Shedden replied, 'The Air Board'. The Minister for Defence then stated, 'Well, Bostock is to be ordered to immediately rescind all his previous signals.'<sup>88</sup> The outcome of the discussion was that the Air Board was told to send another signal to Bostock.<sup>89</sup>

The signal to Bostock was sent under the name of the Minister for Air and told him that he had no right of appeal to the Minister for Defence. Rather, it was his duty to comply with the orders of the Air Board, 'which is your superior authority'.<sup>90</sup> Bostock complied and a signal was sent stating that his previous signals were

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<sup>86</sup> *ibid.* Documents on the official file make no mention of the proposal to give Jones the acting rank.

<sup>87</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from AOC RAAF Command to Minister for Air, 2 June 1945.

<sup>88</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 96.

<sup>89</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute by Minister, 5 June 1945.

<sup>90</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from Minister for Air to Bostock, 5 June 1945.

cancelled by direction of the Air Board.<sup>91</sup> Bostock was in Melbourne at the time. He walked into Mulrooney's office and exclaimed, 'Here's your bloody signal! I'm not going to do my job over it.'<sup>92</sup> Jones later wrote in the autobiography that 'this, at last, settled the question of authority, and I had no further trouble from either Bostock or Kenney on this account.'<sup>93</sup> This was one of the few clashes that formed part of the Jones-Bostock feud from which Jones emerged as a clear winner.

The matter, however, did not end there and we now see Jones at his most vindictive. The Air Board met on 8 June 1945 and decided that, notwithstanding Bostock's last signal, his earlier 'persistently maintained attitude of disobedience and defiance', which he communicated to all RAAF AOCs, 'renders his prompt removal from his present appointment essential in the opinion of the Air Board for the smooth and efficient functioning of the R.A.A.F.'. The Air Board considered such action was necessary to nullify the hostility that had developed between itself and RAAF Command.<sup>94</sup> Ironically, one reason given by the Air Board seems to be a reflection of a point raised earlier by Bostock himself:

- (c) To counteract the loss of confidence and respect which area commanders must have experienced in Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's judgement and direction as a result of his conduct.

The Air Board again recommended that Bladin replace Bostock.<sup>95</sup> At the same meeting, Jones set in train another 'paper war' by suggesting some sub-paragraphs in the RAAF's Operational Policy Directive No. 2 be changed. One change was to show that RAAF Command was responsible to the Air Board for 'the war training

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<sup>91</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, signal from RAAF Command Advanced Headquarters to RAAF Headquarters, RAAF Command, Headquarters North-Eastern Area, Headquarters Eastern Area, Southern Area, Western Area, North-Western Area, Northern Command, Headquarters First Tactical Air Force and RAAF Pacific Echelon, 6 June 1945.

<sup>92</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'.

<sup>93</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 96.

<sup>94</sup> An interesting digression at this point is a briefing note prepared by Mulrooney titled 'Note for Secretary' and dated 13 June 1945 (i.e. eight days after Bostock's signal cancelling his earlier messages). The final paragraph on this note begins with, 'The Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.A.A.F. Command, Allied Air Forces, is therefore responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, for the conduct of operations of R.A.A.F. elements of the Allied Air Forces, S.W.P.A.' Mulrooney's use of the incorrect title appears to have gone unnoticed. Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, 'Note for Secretary', from Mulrooney, Secretary Air Board, 13 June 1945.

<sup>95</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 8 June 1945, submission to the Minister for Air.

of R.A.A.F. operational units that are assigned to the C.-in-C., South-West Pacific Area.<sup>96</sup> In doing this, he was complying with a request made by Bostock over a year earlier.

Drakeford replied to the Air Board's recommendation on Bostock's replacement 11 days later, stating that he had discussed the matter with the Acting Prime Minister and the Acting Minister for Defence. The Air Board was told the Government agreed that, as Bostock had eventually followed the Air Board's instruction, no further action should be taken.<sup>97</sup> In fact, the Government would not replace Bostock because he was required to command Allied air units during the next phase of the Borneo operations.<sup>98</sup> Drakeford also asked to be advised of any future instances of Bostock questioning or disobeying any Air Board direction. The following day, Drakeford advised the Air Board:

I have now received a letter, dated 20.6.45 from Mr Beasley, to the effect that a communication has been forwarded to General MacArthur, asking that Allied Air Forces General Order No. 2 of 1945 be cancelled, and that I will be advised further, upon receipt of General MacArthur's reply.<sup>99</sup>

The Air Board now sent Bostock details of the changes to Operational Policy Directive No. 2.<sup>100</sup> RAAF Command did not agree with amendments to paragraph 2, as it was believed that the facts it contained in its unamended form were correct.<sup>101</sup> The Air Board discussed this latest turn of events and considered the response from RAAF Command to be contentious and in need of further examination.<sup>102</sup> A handwritten note, by Mulrooney, on the Air Board's reply to Bostock reads, 'Matters referred to above were in the course of examination when termination of War and disbandment of R.A.A.F. Command rendered decisions unnecessary.'<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 8 June 1945.

<sup>97</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute by Minister, 19 June 1945.

<sup>98</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/74, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 28 Jan 1946.

<sup>99</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute by Minister, 20 June 1945.

<sup>100</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute from Mulrooney to AOC RAAF Command, 26 June 1945.

<sup>101</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute from RAAF Command to Secretary Air Board, 21 July 1945.

<sup>102</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Paper No. 676, 'Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force', Air Board Minute, 27 July 1945.

<sup>103</sup> Office of Air Force History, 36/501/620, minute from Mulrooney to AOC RAAF Command, 27

Jones and Bostock fought each other for the duration of the Pacific War without a clear winner emerging. Bostock had his allies in MacArthur and Kenney, while Jones had the support of the Air Board, which he chaired and whose decisions reflected his thinking. It would not be accurate to say that Jones had the support of the Australian Government because, as we have seen in this chapter, his decisions (or those of the Air Board) were, on occasion, opposed by the Government. Instead, Jones had to fight largely on his own, in a fight that he really could not win. At best, he could hope for a stalemate or a compromise to most of the clashes between himself and Bostock. He could not win because Bostock would turn to Kenney, or even MacArthur, for assistance in overriding orders made by RAAF Headquarters and, as we have seen, MacArthur had considerable influence over Curtin and thus over the Australian Government. Was Jones successful in his oversight of the RAAF during World War II? He was not totally successful because he failed to reunite the RAAF under the command of the CAS (a task that would have been very difficult for most officers, given MacArthur's influence). He did, however, manage to keep some of the RAAF under the control of the Australian Government, which was probably the best he could do in the wartime situation. Jones' situation was summed up by Scherger who said that Jones was in an intensely difficult situation during World War II because of the running battle between himself and Bostock. Scherger stated, 'I thought he was a tremendously patient man.'<sup>104</sup>

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July 1945.

<sup>104</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger, 13 November 1973.

# *Jones, Curtin, MacArthur and the Imperial Connection*

Having appointed George Jones to the RAAF's top position, the Australian Government, disenchanted with the problems of the divided command structure and the associated bickering, spent a lot of time trying to replace him. While it would appear that a simple way around the problem would have been to promote either Bostock or Jones to the rank of Air Marshal, the Government, for various reasons, would not do this. One reason was that neither Air Vice-Marshal was held in high regard by some members of the Government—the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V. Evatt, on a trip to Britain in July 1943, confided to Stanley Bruce (Australian High Commissioner) that 'both Jones and Bostock were hopeless'.<sup>1</sup> Another reason, as we will see, was MacArthur's opposition to any initiative that would result in changes to the status quo.

There were two other ways the Australian Government could have overcome the divided command problem. They were to integrate RAAF Command back into the RAAF (as discussed in the previous chapter), or appoint an officer senior to both Jones and Bostock as head of the RAAF (either as Chief of the Air Staff or Air Officer Commanding RAAF). This possible appointment (which appears to be the solution most favoured by Curtin), together with Drakeford's unsuccessful attempts to promote Jones, will be examined in this chapter. Unlike the attempts to re-integrate the Service, there appears to have been only a few attempts made to promote Jones.

## **Promotion?**

The attempts to promote Jones started at the end of the year he was appointed as CAS. In December 1942, Drakeford raised the issue of Jones' rank with Curtin and recommended that he be promoted. The correspondence on file associated with this initiative is important because it provides further evidence to reinforce the proposition that Jones' appointment was a deliberate decision, not a mistake.

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<sup>1</sup> Document 237, 'Note by Bruce of Conversation with Evatt [London], 6 July 1943'; in W.J. Hudson & H.J.W. Stokes (eds), *Department of Foreign Affairs, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–49*, Volume VI: *July 1942 – December 1943*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1983, p. 453.

In his minute to Curtin, Drakeford pointed out that the rank of Air Vice-Marshal was not commensurate with the duties and responsibilities of the CAS position. Furthermore, he explained that Burnett was granted the acting rank of Air Chief Marshal while he was CAS, and Williams (when he was CAS) was an Air Vice-Marshal at a time when the RAAF was a considerably smaller force, that is, before the outbreak of the war. He reminded Curtin that the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) and the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) held higher ranks.<sup>2</sup> Drakeford acknowledged that, while other RAAF officers were senior to Jones (Williams, Bostock and Goble) and five other officers (including two serving with the RAF) held the acting rank of Air Vice-Marshal, there needed to be some means whereby the CAS (regardless of who was in the position) was a higher rank than all other RAAF officers.<sup>3</sup> Drakeford continued by stating it was desirable that appropriate status be granted to CAS to facilitate his administration of the RAAF, and it would also be beneficial when he was dealing with higher-ranking officers of the other Australian Services as well as those from the US forces. He recommended Jones be granted the temporary rank of Air Marshal from 1 January 1943, but that he should continue to be paid his present salary and allowances. The acting rank would be for command and status rather than remuneration. Drakeford summed up his proposal with praise for Jones:

In making this recommendation, I would like to add that Air Vice-Marshal Jones is carrying out his duties in a very satisfactory manner and is, in my opinion, well worthy of the promotion proposed.<sup>4</sup>

Curtin was not forthcoming with a decision; rather, he told Drakeford to give the proposal further thought:

While your proposal would not appear to affect the first named [i.e. Williams], it seems to me that it would be tantamount to a supersession of Air Vice-Marshals Goble and Bostock.

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<sup>2</sup> In December 1942, CNS 1942 was Admiral Sir Guy Royle, RN (a four-star officer—equivalent to an Air Chief Marshal), while CGS was Lieutenant General John Northcott (a three-star officer—equivalent to an Air Marshal).

<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/57/301/156, 'Pay of Chief of Air Staff', minute from Minister for Air to Minister for Defence, 'Pay of Chief of Air Staff', 18 December 1942. It would be reasonable to believe that Drakeford's proposal to promote CAS was sent with Jones' knowledge and Langslow's concurrence.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*



As Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was specially selected for his present position of Chief of Staff to the Commander Allied Air Forces, and has operational command of the R.A.A.F. Squadrons allotted to the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, the relative position of this officer has not been dealt with in your letter, and I would ask you to give further consideration to the matter.<sup>5</sup>

Drakeford responded with his opinion that he considered the supersession of Goble and Bostock justified. Goble, he pointed out, had been in Canada since mid-1940 and thus had not been actively associated with policy, organisation or other developments connected with the RAAF. In relation to Bostock, Drakeford argued:

War Cabinet approved of my recommendation for the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Jones as Chief of the Air Staff in preference to the former. In making that recommendation, I was firmly of the opinion that Air Vice-Marshal Jones was more suitable and qualified for that post, and events that have transpired since have reinforced that opinion.<sup>6</sup>

Promoting Jones, Drakeford argued, would not affect Williams, as he too was serving overseas and it was not expected that he would experience any administrative or Service difficulty from the proposal. Drakeford went on, explaining that he did not consider it sound in principle that CAS should have the 'status junior to that of an officer holding a subsidiary, although important command'. That is, Williams was an acting Air Marshal occupying a position that was of a lower status and with considerably less responsibility than that of CAS. Drakeford added that the responsibilities of CAS justified the recommended promotion, which would greatly assist Jones in the administrative control of the RAAF. Drakeford does not appear to have considered the argument Jones used later, that RAAF Command was a subordinate unit of RAAF Headquarters. It surely would have provided a logical

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<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/57/301/156, minute from Minister for Defence to Minister for Air, 11 January 1943.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 13 January 1943. At this point we may recall the debate over Jones' selection for the CAS position and ask: If Jones' appointment had been a mistake, as some have speculated, and if the wrong list had been consulted, would Drakeford have argued, at this point, that Cabinet had approved his recommendation for Jones' appointment, or, would he have argued that when he made the recommendation he was of the opinion Jones was more suitable and qualified for the position? Once again, we can dismiss the story that Jones had been appointed by mistake. Interestingly Drakeford did not use Bostock's rapid promotions (noted earlier in Chapter 8) to justify his proposal to promote Jones.

argument for Drakeford to point out that in a hierarchical structure, such as the RAAF, it was essential for the officer in command of that Service to be of a rank higher than subordinate commanders.

Curtin remained obdurate, stating that he could not agree to the supersession of Bostock. It might be considered a rather strange argument, given the accounts of Curtin's supposed opposition to Bostock's appointment as CAS. Curtin then made another comment that confirmed the decision-making process that led to Jones' appointment:

I regret that I am unable to concur in your view that War Cabinet, in approving of your recommendation for the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Jones as Chief of the Air Staff, did so in a manner which expressed or implied any consideration warranting the supersession of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. The appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Jones was made in deference to your own personal preference for this officer. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was selected for the other important post of Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Allied Air Forces.<sup>7</sup>

Promotion of either officer was not the option Curtin favoured. Instead, he was keen to pursue the appointment of an AOC RAAF, and in his reply to Drakeford he said that he considered it unwise to change the ranks of senior officers until other issues relating to the overall RAAF organisation were resolved (i.e. the appointment of an AOC RAAF and the future of the Air Board). One can only be very disappointed with the Prime Minister's reaction. He had numerous opportunities to solve the problem his Government's decision had created. Promoting either Jones or Bostock to the rank of Air Marshal might have alleviated the RAAF command problems in the SWPA (even if it was only an interim arrangement, pending the appointment of an AOC RAAF). The issue of Williams' rank and position could have been resolved at the end of the war (assuming that he remained overseas for the duration of the conflict). In light of the arguments to support Jones' promotion, it is interesting to compare the situation of CAS with CNS. On the basis of numbers of personnel, the RAAF exceeded the RAN by almost 400 per cent. At its peak strength during the War, the RAN had about 337 ships and 40 000 personnel. Not all were serving in the Pacific but the CNS still had administrative responsibility for them.<sup>8</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/239/15, minute from Curtin to Drakeford, February 1943.

<sup>8</sup> Despite his senior rank, in SWPA matters Admiral Royle came under MacArthur's naval deputy, Vice Admiral Carpenter.

RAAF at its peak strength comprised in excess of 7000 aircraft and over 155 000 personnel. All CNS, from Hyde in the late 1930s, through Colvin, Royle and Hamilton until 1948, were four-star Admirals.<sup>9</sup> One might think that in terms of the overall number of personnel for whom he was responsible (when compared with the numbers in another Service), CAS should have been a higher rank than Air Vice-Marshal.

However, one also wonders if Jones had been promoted whether it would have made much impact on Bostock other than to injure his pride and further upset the Service practice of seniority. As we have seen, Bostock frequently claimed he was answerable to Kenney, not to CAS or the Air Board or to RAAF Headquarters and, no doubt, he would still have maintained this belief and still taken orders from the Commander AAF before CAS. It is possible that promoting Jones may have complicated matters further as Bostock may have referred all his requests for support from RAAF Headquarters through Kenney to ensure what he wanted was supplied in a timely manner and without a perceived interference from Jones. There is one other issue we should consider; that is, Curtin referred all matters relevant to the command of the RAAF to MacArthur for approval. In which case, Curtin would have referred Jones' promotion to MacArthur and it is quite possible that the American, keen to maintain the divided command and acting on Kenney's advice, would have vetoed the promotion. As we saw in the previous chapter, Drakeford tried unsuccessfully again in 1944 to promote Jones.

### **Air Officer Commanding, RAAF**

It was noted earlier that Curtin preferred the appointment of an officer holding the title 'Air Officer Commanding, RAAF' to be in overall command of the Service and he put forward a series of recommendations to this effect to the War Cabinet meeting on 15 April 1943. The War Cabinet approved Curtin's recommendations for the future structure of the RAAF's high command. Cabinet agreed to the adoption of unified operational and administrative control for the RAAF as recommended by the Defence Committee and the appointment of an AOC RAAF, who was to be responsible to the Commander AAF for the operational control of the RAAF and to the Minister for Air for all other matters. Cabinet further agreed that the unified control initiative would come about following the appointment of the AOC RAAF.

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<sup>9</sup> Information supplied by Dr David Stevens, 15 March 2005. It is uncertain whether there is a reason why they were four-star officers during the war, other than that Colvin, Royle and Hamilton were seconded from the Royal Navy and came to Australia with that rank.

In the interim, Cabinet directed that the procedures recommended by the Defence Committee in January 1943<sup>10</sup> be put into effect 'to the highest degree possible'.<sup>11</sup> The function and status of the AOC and the Air Board was to be considered by the new AOC following his appointment and after he had the opportunity to examine the management of the RAAF. The War Cabinet directed Curtin to ask Bruce to obtain the services of a suitable (i.e. an officer with considerable operational experience) Australian officer serving in the RAF.<sup>12</sup> In the meantime, the status quo continued.

The following day (16 April 1943), Curtin advised Bruce of the War Cabinet's decisions, and reminded him that a critical issue in the previous negotiations for a new CAS was the fact that he did not exercise any control over operations. Curtin gave the assurance that this would change under an altered command structure. Curtin added that, in view of the representations made by General MacArthur, the appointment of an AOC RAAF was a matter of great urgency and that Drummond was still preferred for appointment to this position.<sup>13</sup> Bruce made the appropriate inquiries but, once again, the British would not release Drummond. We know that the Air Ministry wanted to retain Drummond within the RAF because they regarded the work he was undertaking and the positions he held to be vital to the Allied war effort. Whereas, it was suspected that his expertise would have been wasted if he had been appointed to the RAAF CAS position.<sup>14</sup> We may question whether the Air Ministry was reluctant to release him (or any other capable officer) for service in Australia because of the advice they received from Jones. At some time during the negotiations, Jones wrote to the Air Ministry and told them of the

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<sup>10</sup> As was noted in Chapter 9, on 7 January 1943, the Defence Committee made the following recommendations: RAAF Command should be an RAAF unit to exercise operational control only over RAAF units in the SWPA; administrative requirements should be met through the existing RAAF infrastructure (it was noted that this would require the closest cooperation between both parties); CAS was to provide suitable advisory staff for the AOC RAAF Command; the AOC RAAF Command was to keep CAS informed on operational planning; and, CAS was to keep the AOC informed on relevant organisation and administrative matters.

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/809/1, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume XIII, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 15th April, 1943', (2782) Agendum No. 107/1943 and Supplement No. 1 – Organisation of R.A.A.F'

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/10/1/200, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 16 April 1943.

<sup>14</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/10/1/200, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 20 April 1943. Bruce advised Curtin that Drummond had returned from the Middle East to the position of Member for Personnel on the Air Council and was, therefore, unavailable for the AOC RAAF position.

divided command and the unfavourable environment in which an RAF officer could expect to be working in, if he was appointed to head the RAAF.<sup>15</sup> Based on this advice, the Air Ministry delayed appointing a suitable officer by asking pertinent questions about the role of the AOC RAAF.

Curtin, perhaps at last realising the importance of the RAAF's situation, sent a pleading cablegram to Bruce stating that unless a capable officer was appointed and took control of the Service there was a danger that the RAAF's effort 'may become prejudiced in the eyes of the Americans'. Curtin explained that he did not want to upset the Americans because the RAAF needed MacArthur's support for aircraft acquisition from the US and because he wanted to ensure that the RAAF continued to undertake significant operations as part of the Allied war effort. Curtin then made a patriotic appeal stating that Drummond's appointment as AOC RAAF was in the interests of Empire and Australian defence:

it is considered that the United Kingdom Government should even inconvenience itself to provide us with an outstanding officer who would be invaluable not only in the present, but in the future when offensive action is taken against Japan.<sup>16</sup>

The pleading was in vain but, as an alternative to Drummond, the Air Ministry nominated other officers and Bruce advised Curtin accordingly and expressed his preference for two of them—Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore and Air Marshal Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté.<sup>17</sup> In his initial cablegram, Bruce advised that he could not make a definite recommendation but later expressed a preference for Joubert.<sup>18</sup> Shedden had his views on who should command the RAAF and advised Curtin of his preference for Longmore because he was Australian born (Joubert was of French extraction) and had a more distinguished war record.<sup>19</sup> Aside from

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<sup>15</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, 'Interview – Air Marshal Sir George Jones'.

<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Australia, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 29 April 1943. It would appear that Drummond had no objection to serving in Australia. In this cablegram Curtin noted that Drummond had approached Lieutenant General Morshead before the latter's departure from the Middle East and said he would have been glad of the opportunity to serve in Australia.

<sup>17</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/10/1/200, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 29 April 1943.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*; and National Archives of Australia, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 22 May 1943.

<sup>19</sup> Joubert was born in Calcutta, India, on 21 May 1887. Longmore was born in St Leonards, NSW on 8 October 1885 and joined the Royal Navy and was commissioned as a Sub Lieutenant in 1904. He completed pilot training in 1911 and became a member of the RNAS. Longmore was transferred, as a Lieutenant Colonel, to the RAF following its formation in 1918. He rose through the Service, being promoted to Air Marshal in 1935 and Air Chief Marshal in 1939. In May

this preference, Shedden welcomed the appointment of either officer (or any other senior RAF officer) and he told Curtin that he saw the role of the AOC RAAF as an outsider who would fearlessly purge the RAAF of poorly performing officers:

What we want is a good experienced officer who will clear out the dead wood in the senior ranks of the R.A.A.F., sort out the best men and establish them in the right positions with the best organisation. An R.A.F. officer can act strongly and independently and return to England when he has finished the job.<sup>20</sup>

Acting on Shedden's advice, Curtin met with Blamey who advised that he considered Longmore would have been a very successful AOC RAAF. Blamey had dealt with Longmore in the Middle East and was impressed by him.<sup>21</sup>

In keeping with the established practice, the Prime Minister referred the matter to MacArthur's headquarters. MacArthur consulted with Kenney who was unimpressed with the nominated officers and noted that both Longmore and Joubert were cast-offs from the RAF and he wanted neither, preferring the status quo; 'I'd rather have Jones and Bostock even if they do fight each other harder than the Japs.'<sup>22</sup> Kenney advised MacArthur that the nominees appeared to be second-string men who had been removed from their respective RAF commands.<sup>23</sup>

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1940, he was made AOC Middle East and remained in this position for a bit over a year. After his return to the UK, Longmore was made Inspector-General of the RAF. He retired from the Service in February 1942 and stood unsuccessfully for election to the British Parliament. John Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, Wordsworth Editions, Ware, Hertfordshire, UK, 1997, pp. 337–339; and Norman Gillman, 'Foremost Four', in *Air Enthusiast*, no. 46, Key Publishing, Stamford, Lincolnshire, UK, June–August 1992, pp. 65–67.

<sup>20</sup> John Robertson and John McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939–1945: A Documentary History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1985, p. 347.

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/10/1/200, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 28 May 1943.

<sup>22</sup> Alan Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, p. 122.

<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/10/1/200, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 8 May 1943. Longmore was removed from Middle East Command because Churchill did not think he was carrying out his duties effectively and he would not accept dictates from Churchill. Longmore had succeeded Burnett as AOC Training Command and occupied this position between 1 July 1939 and 13 May 1940. He became AOC RAF Middle East on 13 May 1940 and served until 1 June 1941, when he was replaced by Tedder. Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, pp. 337–339. Joubert's problems as AOC Coastal Command stemmed from shipping losses in the Atlantic Ocean at a time when no U-boat loss had been attributed to Coastal Command aircraft. Slessor replaced Joubert as AOC Coastal Command in February 1943. Terraine, *The Right of the Line*, pp. 425–427; and Marshal of The Royal Air Force Sir John Slessor, *The Central Blue: Recollections and Reflections*, Cassell & Co, London, 1956, p. 464.

Kenney considered Joubert's personality suited him better for dealing with Australians than Americans. Kenney scoffed at the notion of appointing Longmore just because he was Australian, stating he might have been born in Australia but he had lived most of his life in Britain and 'is enough of an Englishman to have stood for election to the British Parliament'. In short, Kenney did not think it was a good idea to appoint either as AOC RAAF, as Longmore was out of favour with Churchill and Joubert with the Air Ministry. He concluded with the logical argument, 'Australia must have the goodwill of both the R.A.F. and Mr. Churchill to ensure that her needs for aircraft, equipment and personnel can be taken care of'.<sup>24</sup> These negative comments ensured that neither officer was appointed and, once again, an opportunity to appoint an overall commander for the Service was lost. In hindsight, we may question whether, at this stage of the war, either of these officers would have been able to solve the problems associated with the divided command, given the influence of the US commanders (with their low opinions of Longmore and Joubert) and the Australian politicians over the RAAF.

Regardless of the lost opportunity, Drakeford continued to pressure Curtin during May and June 1943 for agreement to remove Bostock. Curtin resisted and reminded him of statements made during Drakeford's discussions with MacArthur and Kenney. That is, while the appointment of RAAF officers was a matter for the Australian Government, should Bostock be removed, MacArthur would give him a letter 'of the highest commendation for the very able manner in which he had performed his duties at Allied Air Headquarters', a situation which would have been embarrassing for the Australian Government and, in particular, for Drakeford and the Air Board. MacArthur also would insist he be replaced by an equally capable officer. (No doubt, MacArthur and Kenney would determine whether any officer nominated by the Australian Government was deemed to be 'capable'.) Drakeford pointed out the obvious contradiction in MacArthur's statement—that is, the appointment of RAAF officers was the Government's business but at the same time MacArthur would make things difficult for the Government if Bostock was removed from his position—but Curtin disagreed, stating that MacArthur as Supreme Commander had the right to express his views on changes to senior positions under his command.<sup>25</sup> Again, the usual pattern was followed, MacArthur

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<sup>24</sup> Robertson and McCarthy, *Australian War Strategy 1939–1945*, p. 348. On his return from the Middle East, Longmore was appointed Inspector-General of the RAF, a position he retained until he left the Service.

<sup>25</sup> George Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p. 18.

and Kenney, unwittingly assisted by Curtin, succeeded in blocking a resolution of the command impasse.

Jones was not in favour of the proposal to bring a senior RAF officer to Australia (perhaps fearing that he might be replaced) and wrote to Drakeford on 25 November 1943. In this letter, he expressed his concern over the Government's view that the RAAF's senior officers were not qualified to command their own Service because they had gained little or no operational experience before the war. Jones pointed out the contradiction in the Government's argument by stating that RAF and USAAF officers were in the same situation (that is, the RAF and USAAF had not been involved in recent major conflicts prior to World War II). In his opinion, RAAF officers had prepared themselves for command during the years preceding the war by attending Staff College and other training courses, and it was unfair that the Government overlooked these qualifications. Jones countered the Government's argument that the experience gained from organising and training the RAAF was unrelated to high command by stating that he considered 'that the principal considerations in successful High Command relate to organisation and building up of resources and a sound knowledge of the capabilities of Air Forces which can only be obtained by years of training'. Jones concluded by telling Drakeford:

Experience in the operational directions of Air Forces is, of course, very desirable, but this has many specialised aspects and experience in one theatre of war or type of operation is likely to be quite different to that required in others.

I consider that the senior R.A.A.F. officers available to fill the highest Command in the Service are likely to be more suitable to hold such appointment than officers who are not members of the R.A.A.F. and have no experience in this theatre of war and would recommend the examination of the personal records of R.A.A.F. officers concerned if and when the matter is under consideration.<sup>26</sup>

The Government disregarded Jones' concerns and, on 29 November 1943, Curtin and Shedden met with MacArthur in Brisbane to discuss a number of issues, including the RAAF high command. MacArthur commented on the effect the divided command was having on the Service's operational efficiency but he said

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<sup>26</sup> A.D. Garrison papers, folder titled 'Jones' Papers', minute from Jones to Drakeford, 'Higher Command of the R.A.A.F.', 25 November 1943.



that, as no change had been made to the organisation, he had been content to make the best of a bad job. He added that he preferred the divided command to the appointment of a British officer to command the RAAF.<sup>27</sup>

Another attempt to replace Jones occurred during May and June 1944, when Curtin and Shedden visited Britain. While there, Curtin met with Drummond, as the Australian Government was still interested in this officer occupying the 'highest Australian air post'.<sup>28</sup> The Air Ministry, however, still would not release him for the Australian appointment and this led Curtin to request from the British Government the services of another suitable officer. On this occasion, Curtin approached his British counterpart and briefed Churchill on the RAAF command situation:

The division of the control of the R.A.A.F. between the two officers has not worked satisfactorily and the Defence Committee has recommended the adoption of the principle of unified operational and administrative control. Both of the officers concerned also agree that the present arrangement is unsatisfactory.<sup>29</sup>

He then met with Churchill, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal (RAF CAS) and Sir Archibald Sinclair (the Secretary of State for Air) to state his case, which was still for the appointment of a suitable RAF officer with recent operational experience. The preference was for this officer to be an Australian serving with the RAF. Sinclair supported the Australian request and told Curtin, 'We attach great importance to your proposal. We are most anxious to offer you the best available officer.'<sup>30</sup>

During the subsequent discussions between Curtin and Portal, two RAF officers were nominated—Air Marshal Sir Keith Park,<sup>31</sup> a New Zealander, and Air Vice-Marshal H.W.L. Saunders,<sup>32</sup> a South African—without either first being consulted

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<sup>27</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'Notes of Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Brisbane, 29th November to 1st December, 1943', p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, 'Higher Direction of the RAAF, Following upon Organisation of United States Fifth Air Force and Establishment of R.A.A.F. Command – September 1942, File No. 2 (From Prime Minister's Visit Abroad) (May 1944)', cablegram from Curtin to Drakeford, 6 May 1944; and cablegram from Drakeford to Curtin, 9 May 1944.

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Curtin to Churchill, 24 May 1944.

<sup>30</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Sinclair to Curtin, 27 May 1944.

<sup>31</sup> In 1918, Park, then a Major, was appointed Commanding Officer of No 48 Squadron, RFC. One of his fellow pilots in this squadron at that time was Lieutenant W.D. Bostock.

<sup>32</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'War Cabinet Agendum No. 396/1944 –

by the Air Ministry. Both officers were highly recommended in terms of their operational experience but still Curtin would not make a decision at that point. Instead, he waited until he returned to Australia before taking further action.

In June 1944, on his return to Australia, Curtin broached the subject of RAAF command arrangements with MacArthur at a meeting in Brisbane. Curtin told MacArthur that the only practical manner whereby the administrative and operational functions of the RAAF could be integrated appeared to be by the selection of an officer who would be in a superior position to both Jones and Bostock. On this occasion, MacArthur agreed to the appointment of a senior officer and told Curtin:

... the question was entirely one for the Australian Government, and if it wished to make an appointment as proposed, he would give the officer his fullest co-operation.<sup>33</sup>

MacArthur, however, hesitated at the idea of an integrated structure for the RAAF. Instead, he suggested to the Prime Minister that the RAAF units in the southern areas of Australia could be integrated but there was still a need for two operational commands, one in New Guinea and one in the North-Western Area. Both would have to be placed under an officer on the staff of the Commander AAF, to whom each would be responsible for operations, while they would still be subordinate to the new head of the RAAF.<sup>34</sup> This proposal still left the RAAF as a divided organisation but in a better position than the existing situation because there would have been an AOC senior to the operational commanders.

A bizarre ingredient was introduced into the question of the command structure at the same meeting. During the course of their discussion, which covered numerous defence issues in addition to those pertinent to the RAAF, MacArthur told Curtin:

... it was General Blamey's ambition to become Commander of the whole of the Australian Defence Forces in the same manner that General MacArthur is Commander of all the Naval, Military and Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area. General Blamey had sought General MacArthur's support for the proposal that, to overcome the difficulties between the Chief of the Air

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Appointment of the Chief of Air Staff', 3 August 1944.

<sup>33</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 13 July 1944.

<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'War Cabinet Agendum No. 396/1944 – Appointment of the Chief of Air Staff', 3 August 1944.

Staff (Air Vice-Marshal Jones) and the Officer Commanding, R.A.A.F. (Air Vice-Marshal Bostock), he should be given the command of the R.A.A.F. as well as the Australian Army.<sup>35</sup>

This revelation should not have come as a complete surprise to the Prime Minister because, as early as November 1942, Curtin himself had proposed to the Advisory War Council that the Army Commander-in-Chief could take over responsibility for the RAAF.<sup>36</sup> The proposal progressed no further than the Council meeting. Three months later, at a meeting in Canberra on 12 February 1943, Blamey and Curtin discussed the command problems experienced by the RAAF. Blamey's solution was that he be appointed as Commander-in-Chief of both the Army and the RAAF. Curtin, by this time, had revised his opinion and objected so that Blamey quickly changed his mind and recommended Drummond be appointed AOC RAAF.<sup>37</sup> One can only speculate on the effect on the morale of the senior RAN and RAAF officers had the Army Commander been placed in overall command of their Services.

Following this meeting, Curtin advised Drakeford of his discussions in Britain and with MacArthur. In his minute to Drakeford, Curtin put forward his own views—the new officer should be an Air Marshal and should be appointed CAS. This was a departure from his earlier belief that to sort out the command problems it would be necessary to appoint an AOC RAAF. He preferred Park for the CAS position, although this left him with another problem; that was, 'it would, of course, be necessary to find another position for Air Vice-Marshal Jones.'<sup>38</sup> Drakeford replied that he considered Drummond or an officer (especially an Australian-born officer) with similar experience would have been more suitable, but he concurred with the

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<sup>35</sup> Document 206, 'Note by Shedden of Discussions with MacArthur, Brisbane, 27 June 1944', in W.J. Hudson (ed.), *Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–49*, Volume VII: 1944, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988, p. 424.

<sup>36</sup> David Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1998, p. 272. At this meeting, Percy Spender, an opposition member of the Council agreed some sections of the RAAF could be placed under Army control.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, p. 393. The Government would have then been faced with another command problem as Blamey and the Chief of the Naval Staff were both four-star officers. During the course of the War some other officers had their suspicions about Blamey's aspirations. Former RAN Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin, RN, thought Blamey planned to command all three Services. A Royal Navy officer, Lieutenant Commander Shepherd, visited Australia in November 1943 and reported back to London that Blamey wanted to be Commander-in-Chief of 'an all-British' force comprising the RAN, AIF, AMF, RAAF and components of the RN. See Horner, *Blamey: The Commander-in-Chief*, p. 453.

<sup>38</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Curtin to Drakeford, 13 July 1944.

selection of Park and told the Prime Minister that plans for the RAAF integration should not be abandoned:

I think it desirable that that objective should be kept in mind and implemented as soon as it is practicable and operationally advantageous having particular regard to the size and disposition of the Empire and Allied Forces as may be engaged later against the Japanese.<sup>39</sup>

In reply to the question of Jones' future employment, Drakeford considered there was still a place for the Air Vice-Marshal within RAAF Headquarters after Park's appointment:

... the most appropriate appointment for Air Vice-Marshal Jones would be that of Vice Chief of the Air Staff – a post in which he could render most valuable service and assistance to the new R.A.F. appointee by reason of his wide knowledge of air-force administration, air staff policy, organisation, training activities etc. of the R.A.A.F.<sup>40</sup>

The matter was scheduled for debate by the War Cabinet again and the astute Shedden summed up the situation in a briefing he prepared for Curtin in July 1944. In his opinion, it was desirable there should be an Australian in the CAS position, if possible. As Bostock was unacceptable to Drakeford and it was unfair to put Jones over him, there was 'no alternative to the present unsatisfactory set-up other than the appointment of an RAF officer'. Shedden did not consider this alternative to be ideal but:

due to the difficulty which has long beset us in the Department of Air, I favour:-

- (a) the appointment of Air Marshal Sir Keith Park with his present rank, at a rate not exceeding that for the Chief of the Naval Staff. Sir Charles Burnett was given too high a rank and rate of pay by the Menzies' Government.

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<sup>39</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Drakeford to Curtin, 30 July 1944.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* We may wonder whether Drakeford was going to create a new position of Vice Chief of Air Staff or whether he meant Jones was to become Deputy Chief of the Air Staff.

As Sir Charles Portal had not consulted Air Vice Marshal Park on the submission of his name, the matter will have to be handled with care to prevent a premature leak.<sup>41</sup>

Curtin submitted three recommendations to the War Cabinet meeting on 4 August 1944. That is, Park was to be appointed as CAS, at his present rank; the principle of unified operational and administrative control for the RAAF was to be re-affirmed, with the details to be finalised after Park arrived; and Jones' future appointment was to be decided after Park became CAS.<sup>42</sup> In the notes on the War Cabinet Agendum, Curtin gave the same advice to his colleagues as he had to MacArthur—that it was evident the only way to integrate the RAAF's operational and administrative functions was to appoint an officer who would be superior to both Jones and Bostock.<sup>43</sup>

The Australian War Cabinet approved the three recommendations.<sup>44</sup> Even so, the Government hesitated for another month before negotiating the appointment, while rates of pay and appointment terms were sorted out by Bruce (on behalf of the Australian Government) and the Air Ministry. When detailing the Australian Government's position for the negotiations, Curtin told Bruce that the Government was keen to have Park appointed for 12 months and possibly for a further 12 months after his initial term. It was proposed that Park would retain his rank and would be paid an annual salary of £3000 together with an allowance of £150 if his wife accompanied him to Australia or £450 if she remained in Britain. In addition, as Australian tax rates were then higher than the British rates he would be granted favourable tax concessions.<sup>45</sup> Curtin added:

The Government has re-affirmed the principle of unified operational and administrative control of the R.A.A.F., and detailed arrangements to give

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<sup>41</sup> National Archives of Australia, minute from Shedden to Curtin, 'Appointment of Chief of the Naval Staff and Chief of the Air Staff', 31 July 1944.

<sup>42</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'War Cabinet Agendum No. 396/1944 – Appointment of the Chief of Air Staff', 3 August 1944. Park's pay and conditions were to be arranged by the Treasurer and Drakeford, in consultation with Curtin.

<sup>43</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP1217, Box 238, 'Notes on War Cabinet Agendum No. 396/1944 – Appointment of the Chief of Air Staff', 4 August 1944.

<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/810/2, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume XVI, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Melbourne, 4th August, 1944', '(3693) Agendum No. 396/1944 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff'.

<sup>45</sup> National Archives of Australia, A2908/1/A28, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 5 September 1944.

effect to this would be made when Air Marshal Park takes up appointment and after he has had an opportunity of examining the position.<sup>46</sup>

Bruce passed the word to Sir Archibald Sinclair (Secretary of State for Air) that Park was the preferred officer.<sup>47</sup> In response, Sinclair advised that while Park was 'ear-marked for an important R.A.F. Command', he supported the proposition for Park to take up the RAAF appointment. Sinclair, however, told Bruce of the conditions imposed by the Air Ministry that governed Park's release to the RAAF. Bruce advised Curtin of these terms:

He pointed out, however, that it was of the utmost importance that there should be a clear understanding as to what Park's position would be in Australia and suggested that while the detailed arrangements could be left to be worked out until after Park arrived in Australia, his broad functions should be laid down before Park left. He accordingly asked me to leave the matter over in order to give him an opportunity of thinking about it and consulting Portal.<sup>48</sup>

Sinclair asked Bruce to ascertain from Curtin whether MacArthur's agreement had been obtained to the 'principle of unified operational and administrative control of the R.A.A.F.'. Not only was Sinclair keen to see a unified control for the RAAF reinstated but he also was keen to re-establish some form of Australian control over the elements of the Service. He also suggested that it would be desirable if MacArthur's agreement could be obtained to certain issues relevant to the high command of the RAAF. That is, the AOC RAAF should be responsible to the Australian Government for the operational and administrative control of the RAAF. In this instance, operational control included all matters of operational policy and allocation and organisation of RAAF units, formations and staff, or their integration into US air commands. The AOC RAAF should deal nominally with the Commander AAF but should have access to the Supreme Commander. For these functions, the AOC RAAF would have the right to maintain a deputy and appropriate staff alongside the AAF Headquarters. In the case of RAAF units seconded to form part of an Allied task force, the operational direction would be

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> National Archives of Australia, minute from Bruce to Sir Archibald Sinclair, 12 September 1944.

<sup>48</sup> National Archives of Australia, A2908/1/A28, cablegram from Bruce to Curtin, 28 September 1944.

exercised by the commander of that task force who would also be responsible for local administration.

Sinclair asked the Australian Government to clarify these points before he approached Park. However, he concluded negatively, 'I have grave doubts if Park would accept even if asked.'<sup>49</sup>

Curtin met with MacArthur, in Canberra, on 30 September 1944 and discussed the latest command proposal. The Prime Minister again ran into obstructions as MacArthur had changed his mind since their June meeting and told Curtin the strategic situation in the SWPA had progressed so quickly that a different situation had developed from that which had existed at the time of their last meeting. In light of this, he considered it unnecessary to bring a senior RAF officer to Australia. MacArthur referred to the problems with Jones and Bostock but claimed nothing serious had resulted 'and he felt that any differences that had existed in the past were now quiet'. MacArthur added, 'had this change taken place when first mooted, advantages would have accrued, but he now considered it too late to make such a change.'<sup>50</sup>

One cannot help but be amazed by MacArthur's concluding remark and wonder what Curtin thought when it was made. It would appear to any observer that MacArthur and Kenney had obstructed all attempts by Curtin and Drakeford to sort out the RAAF command problem, albeit a problem the politicians had allowed to develop in the first place. Still the question must be asked, why, when MacArthur had said that it was a matter for the Australian Government to decide, did Curtin continually refer all RAAF command proposals to the Supreme Commander rather than take the initiative and quickly resolve the problem himself? We cannot help but be very disappointed in the Prime Minister's performance in this matter and wonder why he was so out of touch, or ill informed, on the RAAF's situation that he accepted MacArthur's word at this last meeting. Shedden gave his view of the American commander's aims in advice he provided to Curtin in October 1944. He told the Prime Minister that it was the opinion of senior RAAF officers that the Americans did not want the Service unified under a single officer. They preferred the divided command 'because they can play one side off against the other'. Shedden, who had initially been impressed with MacArthur<sup>51</sup> but had become

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<sup>49</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> National Archives of Australia, MP 1217, Box 238, 'Notes of Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, Canberra, 30th September, 1944'.

<sup>51</sup> David Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence*

disillusioned with the General as the war progressed told Curtin he agreed with the correctness of these opinions.<sup>52</sup> The opportunities for this mischief might have declined with the appointment of an AOC RAAF. There can be no doubt that a man of Park's stature, in overall command of the Service and appointed under the terms proposed by Sinclair, would have asserted the RAAF's views when dealing with the Americans, far more effectively than the two belligerent Air Vice-Marshals.<sup>53</sup>

Contrary to MacArthur's advice, things were not quiet between Jones and Bostock, as a couple of signals passed between them indicate. On 19 January 1945, Jones' signal to Bostock on an air staff policy matter contained the following paragraph:

I take strong exception to the insubordinate tone of your signal and your repeated attempts to usurp authority of the Headquarters. Communications couched in terms such as the one under reply are to cease forthwith.<sup>54</sup>

Bostock also took 'strong exception' in his reply:

I also have responsibilities. You do not understand current Allied air and R.A.A.F. Higher Organisation in accordance with which I am responsible to Commander, Allied Air Forces, and not, repeat not, subordinate to you for the discharge of the duties incumbent upon my appointment. I do, and will continue to take the strongest exception to your unwarranted and uninformed interference.<sup>55</sup>

From the other side of the world, Bruce was making his final pleas to Curtin to provide answers for the points Sinclair raised, telling the Prime Minister that the Air Ministry was unable to proceed with Park's proposed placement until the Australian position was resolved.<sup>56</sup> Curtin, however, had accepted MacArthur's

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*Policy*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000, pp. 162–163.

<sup>52</sup> Dr John Mordike, 'RAAF Organisation, Command and Politics', in John Mordike (ed.), *The Home Front: Mainland Australia and the Southwest Pacific Area 1939–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1995 RAAF History Conference Held in Canberra on 27 October 1995*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, p. 16; and David Horner, 'Curtin and MacArthur at War', in *Wartime*, Issue 2, Australian War Memorial, April 1998, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup> Vincent Orange, *A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, GCB, KBE, MC, DFC, DCL*, Methuen, London, 1984, p. 194.

<sup>54</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 436.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, p. 437.

<sup>56</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, cablegrams from Bruce to Curtin, 12 and 23 October 1944.



advice and abandoned Park's appointment. He subsequently told Bruce that, while he 'felt that the proposed appointment would be beneficial to the R.A.A.F., it would now appear inadvisable to proceed with it'.<sup>57</sup>

While Curtin was prepared to accept MacArthur's advice, it would appear other politicians and some senior public servants, employed by the Department of Defence, had opposite views. Shedden discussed the matter further with Chifley, who described the Prime Minister's abandonment of the CAS appointment as 'defeatist'.<sup>58</sup> W.V. Quealy<sup>59</sup> was of the opinion that the appointment of an RAF officer should have proceeded because it would have resulted in a well-organised RAAF, which was essential for Australia's postwar defence.<sup>60</sup> In the absence of a strong commitment from his political masters, Shedden took it upon himself to plan for the future leadership of the RAAF. When Air Commodore J.P.J. McCauley was posted to Britain (to replace Bladin who returned to Australia as DCAS), Shedden asked Bruce to ensure that RAAF officers, sent to Britain in the future, would be placed in positions in the RAF where they would gain operational experience.<sup>61</sup>

The replacement plans were brought to an end on 31 October 1944 when Curtin told Bruce that it was inadvisable to seek Park's appointment.<sup>62</sup> Shedden confided his views of the episode to paper and his opinions reflect the underlying arguments in favour of appointing an RAF officer. In Shedden's opinion, MacArthur's statement that the appointment was entirely a matter for the Australian Government should have been conveyed immediately to Bruce, because this advice would have negated the need for Sinclair to ask the series of questions on Park's position relative to MacArthur, Kenney et al. Without questioning the motives, Shedden noted that MacArthur had blocked the appointment of either Longmore or Joubert and then 'had apparently repented of his agreement to Air Marshal Park, which was

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<sup>57</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, cablegram from Curtin to Bruce, 31 October 1944.

<sup>58</sup> Horner, *Defence Supremo*, p. 217.

<sup>59</sup> William Vincent Quealy, OBE was a career public servant who was Assistant to the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council between 1941 and 1946. He remained with the Department of Defence through his career, eventually reaching the position of Deputy Secretary in 1963.

<sup>60</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, 'Note for Secretary', 17 October 1944.

<sup>61</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, letter from Shedden to Bruce, 19 October 1944. McCauley served with the RAF's Second Tactical Air Force in Europe in 1944–45. He was RAAF CAS between 1954 and 1957.

<sup>62</sup> Orange, *A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park*, p. 194.

made with the Prime Minister in Brisbane.' Quite correctly, Shedden concluded that MacArthur's objections were irrelevant to the Australian Government's main consideration, which was the desire to have the RAAF's internal administration and operational effectiveness placed on a satisfactory basis. Shedden correctly surmised the management of the RAAF would continue to be unsatisfactory until a change was made. He summed up the situation in a prophetic statement:

Someday there will be an outcry about the relatively poor R.A.A.F. effort in the Southwest Pacific Area in relation to the resources allotted to the air effort. It is not the fault of the personnel in the squadrons, who are magnificent, but is due to the set-up, under which it has been necessary to send some officers to Europe to get operational experience which should be provided in the Southwest Pacific Area.<sup>63</sup>

It is to be regretted that Shedden's political masters did not regard the situation with the same clarity.

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<sup>63</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/1/238/1, minute on file by Shedden, 'Higher Organisation of RAAF', 4 November 1944.

## *An Australian in RAAF Blue*

The RAAF was not the only air force to experience personality clashes within its high command during World War II. General Erhard Milch, for example, had numerous disagreements with other Luftwaffe commanders, such as Udet, Kesselring and Jeschonnek,<sup>1</sup> while during the Battle of Britain the upper echelons of RAF Fighter Command clashed over the best means to deploy their aircraft in combat. However, the argument that underlies the Jones-Bostock feud, that of operations versus administration, seems to have been resolved in the other major air forces. For example, in the United States at the outset of the Pacific War, H.H. Arnold was promoted to Lieutenant General and was made responsible only to the US Army Chief of Staff. In this situation, Arnold was allowed to act as the Chief of Staff for the Air Forces, with control over his own budget. He was able to control not only the building up of the air forces but also how they were used operationally. He was also able to appoint or dismiss senior officers.<sup>2</sup>

The Jones-Bostock feud caused problems for many of the RAAF's senior officers who took sides in the conflict and found themselves at odds with their comrades. One can only imagine what the effect was on the morale of individual officers as a result of the feud and their being placed in situations where they observed firsthand, or were inadvertent parties to, the conflict. Group Captain W.H. Garing occasionally found himself in situations where he had to deal with both Jones and Bostock on the same matter. When he visited RAAF Command, the first thing Bostock would ask him was, 'What's Jones got to say?' When Garing returned to Melbourne, Jones would ask him, 'What has Bostock got to say?'<sup>3</sup> Air Commodore Scherger found himself in a similar situation when he visited mainland Australia. When visiting Brisbane, he stayed at accommodation provided by RAAF Headquarters Forward Echelon and when he visited RAAF Headquarters, the first

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<sup>1</sup> Walter J. Boyne, *Clash of Wings: World War II in the Air*, Touchstone, New York, NY, 1997, pp. 29–30.

<sup>2</sup> Richard J. Overy, *The Air War 1939–1945*, Stein & Day, New York, NY, 1981, pp. 80–81; and Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory: The Army Air Forces in World War II*, Random House, New York, NY, 1993, p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Comments made by Air Commodore W.H. Garing following the presentation of Dr John Mordike's paper, 'RAAF Organisation, Command and Politics', in John Mordike (ed.), *The Home Front: Mainland Australia and the Southwest Pacific Area 1939–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1995 RAAF History Conference Held in Canberra on 27 October 1995*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1996, p. 20.

question Jones would ask him was, 'Where did you stay in Brisbane?' Jones was always happy with Scherger's reply. When Scherger returned to the operational area he stayed at RAAF Command and he found the situation very difficult:

This business of tightwire walking was most uncomfortable. I didn't like it, I don't suppose anybody liked it really, but it did make life very difficult for me indeed, particularly when I went back to take over from Cobby.<sup>4</sup>

Other officers also would have found themselves in similar unreasonable and embarrassing positions where they were asked by either Air Vice-Marshal to inform on his rival.

Government indecision on matters relating the RAAF's high command caused problems for Jones' own morale and health. He found the difficulties of the divided command and dealing with Bostock and Kenney very stressful and frustrating, and several times considered resigning from the CAS position. He believed, however, any officer selected to replace him would have been placed in the same invidious position because he believed Curtin and Drakeford would never appoint Bostock as his replacement.<sup>5</sup> This suggests that Jones considered Bostock to be wholly the cause of all problems associated with the divided command. While Jones appears to have been aware of his personal shortcomings, he does not seem to have realised that another officer in the CAS position may have taken a different approach and established a good working relationship with the AOC RAAF Command.

Another consequence of the feud was a discontent in the management of the Service, which permeated to all levels and, in one instance, Jones found himself having to deal with a very senior officer who took it upon himself to speak out against the RAAF. To put this particular incident and its outcome into perspective, we first need to look at an Allied command initiative in another theatre of the war.

### **Air Command, South-East Asia**

Air Command, South-East Asia (ACSEA) was established in 1943 and comprised the RAF's command, operational and administrative units in India, Burma and Ceylon. In January 1944, Jones advised Drakeford of ACSEA's formation and

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<sup>4</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger.

<sup>5</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 85.

proposed the RAAF post an officer of appropriate seniority to India for six months, as an accredited observer to the ACSEA staff. This officer would be tasked with acquainting himself with the organisation and operational plans of the Command, studying tactical methods employed in the theatre, and reporting his findings to the Air Board. Jones asked Drakeford to support the proposal and wrote that the officer would be selected and posted as soon as support was received.<sup>6</sup> Drakeford gave his support but referred the proposal to Curtin.

Curtin argued that the proposal had a direct relation to the operational set-up in the SWPA and because of this it should be referred to MacArthur for his concurrence.<sup>7</sup> It appears the proposal was then deferred until November 1944, when Jones reactivated it by informing Drakeford that RAAF Command had planned to send a liaison officer to ACSEA. Jones opined that it was desirable for RAAF Headquarters to appoint its own accredited representative to ACSEA. He told the Minister, 'The information obtained by the officer concerned, if so appointed, on matters which are the responsibility of R.A.A.F. Command would, of course, be passed direct to that formation.' Jones' view was that one officer could take care of the needs of both RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command and he sent the Minister a copy of a message from General Headquarters SWPA (received via RAAF Command) stating that no objection had been raised to the appointment of an observer to ACSEA.<sup>8</sup> The acting Prime Minister, F.M. Forde, concurred with the proposed appointment. Now all that remained was to appoint a suitable officer.

It did not take long before the opportunity to appoint a 'suitable' officer presented itself. Coincidentally, about the same time as the ACSEA was being discussed, Jones was investigating some disturbing accusations made against one of his Service's senior officers. He received an anonymous letter dated 14 November 1944, which described the disgraceful conduct by the Air Member for Personnel (AMP), acting Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole, at the general meeting of the RAAF Headquarters Mess on 8 November. The letter stated that the meeting was being properly conducted until Cole, apparently quite inebriated and 'for reasons known only to himself decided to address the meeting'. The letter went on:

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<sup>6</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from CAS to Minister, 'Appointment of R.A.A.F. Officer to Staff of Air Command, S.E. Asia', 12 January 1944.

<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Curtin to Drakeford, 7 March 1944.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 21 Nov 1944.

## *The Private Air Marshal*

Events lasting some two hours which followed were unbelievably poor and in such bad taste that the 600 of your headquarters staff officers present will never till their dying day forget the pitiful sight of an Air Vice-Marshal whom we owe obedience and respect so drunk that he could only stand with difficulty. Indeed such conduct would even be classed as indecent amongst the dregs of the community. The effect of such behaviour in the minds of so many of all ranks up to Air Marshal could never be measured and the damage done to the RAAF and in particular the Air Board can never be repaired. Had it been a junior officer his dismissal from the Service would have taken place before now.<sup>9</sup>

The anonymous informant stated that Cole showered abuse and humiliation on the most respected and senior officers. The abuse was interspersed with unintelligible rambling. The writer concluded with the pertinent comment:

As a permanent officer, and I might say that I am speaking for the multitude, our permanent service has been turned into a farce. I will leave service at War's end. Is it any wonder we are being openly laughed at?<sup>10</sup>

A copy of the letter was also sent to Forde who passed it to H.P. Lazzarini, the acting Minister for Air, for investigation:

... in view of the serious nature of the statements made, which reflect so discreditably upon an officer holding a very important appointment in the R.A.A.F., that you should have enquiries made as to their validity.<sup>11</sup>

Following Lazzarini's instruction, Jones quickly undertook an investigation into the matter, cautioned Cole and reported back to the Minister:

I desire to place on record having had occasion to warn the above mentioned officer against a repetition of certain conduct which took place at a General Mess Meeting at Ormond Hall on 8th November, 1944.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, copy of anonymous letter dated 14 November 1944.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Forde to Lazzarini, November 1944.

<sup>12</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, report from Jones to Minister, 'Report on Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole', 23 November 1944.

Jones reported that the meeting had been attended by nearly all officers of RAAF Headquarters, with Group Captain Radford in the chair. There was some disagreement over procedures for the election of the Mess Committee for 1945 and Cole took it upon himself to take over the chair. Jones could not say that Cole was drunk but 'he was incapable of thinking sufficiently clearly to carry out his task'. He concluded that Cole's conduct was not such as to warrant a charge. Nevertheless, he had probably lost considerable prestige and 'this is liable to affect, to some extent, the discipline of the Service'.<sup>13</sup>

Jones' report, naturally enough, caused some confusion for the Minister who was unable to reconcile the statement that Cole may not have been under the influence but was incapable of thinking. Lazzarini also questioned the wisdom of only giving Cole a warning, when it was claimed his actions were liable to affect discipline. The Minister pointed out that the duties of the Air Member for Personnel included responsibility for the administration of business relating to personnel, discipline and individual training. Against this background, he should have set and maintained the disciplinary standard and conducted himself in an appropriate manner. Therefore, in light of the reported incident, Lazzarini doubted the wisdom of keeping Cole as Air Member for Personnel.<sup>14</sup>

Jones now found himself in a very difficult position. He made further inquiries but found the officers who were present were reluctant to make any statement on the incident (that is, officers of a lower rank were not prepared to speak openly and criticise the conduct of an Air Vice-Marshal). Therefore, it was difficult to determine Cole's culpability, even though it was obvious the sense of discipline of some officers at RAAF Headquarters had suffered severely as a result of the incident. Jones' remedy was to remove Cole and replace him with Frank Lukis, an officer whom Jones considered had suitable experience for the Air Board position—'Air Commodore Lukis formerly held the appointment of A.M.P. and carried out these duties to my satisfaction and, I believe, to the satisfaction of the Minister'.<sup>15</sup> Lazzarini also received advice on the matter from Langslow who agreed with Jones' recommendation and added that if any disciplinary action was to be taken against Cole, then charges should have been laid against him and the

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<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Lazzarini to Jones, 'Report on Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole', 29 November 1944.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, Top Secret minute from Jones to Minister, 'Report on Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole', 13 December 1944.

case tried by court martial, as soon as possible after the incident. A court martial would have been difficult because of the publicity aspects and the reluctance of officers to make any statement on the incident (Langslow noted the difficulty Jones encountered in collecting information during his investigation into the matter). The possibility of sending Cole on extended leave was also ruled out as 'he would resent the action and seek redress or the fullest inquiry, to which he would be quite entitled'. Therefore, Langslow agreed that the changes in appointments seemed the best under all circumstances.<sup>16</sup> RAAF Headquarters then had the problem of what to do with Cole. Jones came up with a solution and Lazzarini was able to report to Forde that Cole would be posted overseas:

... having regard to his experience on operations and tactics, both in Australia and overseas, he be appointed to the newly created post on the staff of Air Command, South East Asia.<sup>17</sup>

## **Aircraft Supply**

One of the main activities of RAAF Headquarters during World War II, Jones wrote later, was acquiring more aircraft for the Service that would be, by 1945, the world's fourth largest air force.<sup>18</sup> However, this was not a simple task of approaching aircraft manufacturers with a shopping list. The major problem Jones faced with aircraft acquisition related to the government agendas of other Allied powers, namely the United States and Britain. While Australian industry was turning out training aircraft, such as the Wirraway, Wackett and Tiger Moth, as well as Beaufort and Boomerang combat aircraft, there was a need for the very latest types of combat aircraft and transports and these were not forthcoming in necessary quantities. The RAAF's acquisition problems revolved around the predetermined direction of overall Allied strategy and we should take a brief look at that in order to understand the problems Jones faced.

The first part of the strategic planning that impacted on the RAAF occurred on the other side of the world, in December 1940 (a year before the US entered the war), when President Roosevelt and his advisers agreed to a strategy known as 'Beat

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<sup>16</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, Top Secret minute from Secretary to Minister, 20 December 1944.

<sup>17</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/259, minute from Lazzarini to Forde, 'Proposed changes in higher appointments in the R.A.A.F.', 20 December 1944.

<sup>18</sup> G. Jones, 'Australia's Shield and Spear', in *Aircraft*, April 1951, p. 21.



Hitler First'.<sup>19</sup> Put simply, this meant that the largest part of the military resources of the US and Britain would be allocated to defeating Germany before Japan.

The second problem area dated back to June 1942, when the policy for Dominion air requirements was agreed by the US and British Combined Chiefs of Staff. This agreement meant that it was the role of the US Chiefs of Staff to determine the strategic requirements of the Dominions (i.e. British Empire member countries and colonies), located in the US spheres of responsibility, all within the overall framework of the 'Beat Hitler First' strategy. Therefore, aircraft allocations for the SWPA were determined by the chief of the USAAF—Lieutenant General H.H. Arnold—and Australia had no direct representation in the decision-making process.<sup>20</sup> Arnold and the RAF CAS, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, also agreed that all Australian aircraft requests would be first assessed by the US Chiefs of Staff and then would be referred to their British counterparts. This, in theory, was to ensure the RAAF was given a 'square deal'. In practice, this was not to be the case, as we shall see when the RAAF attempted to acquire heavy bombers.

Alan Stephens notes that Portal and the British Government had an agenda of their own for RAAF aircraft acquisition (especially heavy bombers), which related to Australia's commitment to aircrew training. Australia had provided a large number of aircrew to the RAF (16 per cent of that Service's personnel were Australians provided under the Empire Air Training Scheme) and the RAF wanted to retain these personnel. Portal's view was that, if the RAAF were supplied with heavy bombers, then Australian Service personnel would be diverted from the RAF (either they would be recalled from Britain or retained in Australia) to crew these aircraft—to the detriment of the RAF.<sup>21</sup> The simple solution was the fewer the aircraft allocated to the RAAF, the fewer aircrew the Service would need. From Portal's point of view it was logical to oppose the allocation of bomber aircraft to the RAAF.

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<sup>19</sup> John Robertson, 'Australia and the "Beat Hitler First" Strategy, 1941–42: A Problem in Wartime Consultation', in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. XI, no. 3, May 1983, Frank Cass & Co., London, 1983, pp. 300–321.

<sup>20</sup> General Arnold noted, in his memoirs, 'The Australians wanted to have the same representation on the Combined Chiefs of Staff as the British. Had that been sanctioned, the Combined Chiefs ultimately would have become too unwieldy to do business. The stand had to be taken that the Combined Chiefs of Staff would continue as it was originally organized.' H.H. Arnold, *Global Mission*, TAB Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA, 1989, p. 289. Given the state of the RAAF's command structure, one wonders who the Australian Government would have nominated to represent the Service had Australian participation been agreed.

<sup>21</sup> Alan Stephens, 'Nobbled by our powerful friends', in *The Canberra Times*, 16 October 1999.

The US had their own motives for ensuring the RAAF was under equipped, largely based around two of General MacArthur's mindsets—to ensure all credit for victory in the Pacific was given to himself and to US forces, and his initial poor opinions of Australians. These ideas were conveyed to Generals Arnold and Kenney. General Arnold's own opinion was simply that Australia was part of the British Empire and so when he needed an opinion on the RAAF's aircraft needs he would consult Portal and not Jones (or any other RAAF officer).<sup>22</sup>

It was against this background that Jones set off to the US in late 1943 to attempt to acquire aircraft. We may wonder how much he knew of all the political forces working against his Service at the time. On 30 December 1943, in the company of Group Captain F.W. Thomas (Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements), Jones flew from Brisbane to the United States. The whole trip took over a month and included visits to Washington, DC; Dayton, Ohio; Los Angeles, California; London and Ottawa. Jones went to attend the conferences which would decide upon the allocation of aircraft for the RAAF for 1944. He also wanted to ensure that the promise of 475 aircraft, given by President Roosevelt to Dr Evatt, during 1943, would be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup>

Jones and Thomas initially planned to travel to the US with Kenney. Unfortunately, their aircraft was delayed on the long flight between Melbourne and Amberley, and when they arrived at the Queensland airport they found that Kenney had left on an earlier flight. They proceeded by themselves and, after meeting up with Kenney at Canton Island, continued the trip aboard a USAAF Douglas C-54.

The conference to discuss the RAAF's aircraft allocation took place in Washington, DC, on 5 January 1944. In addition to Kenney, the meeting was attended by Major

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/37/301/232, 'Report by Chief of Air Staff on visit to USA and UK, January 1944 (Allocation of Liberator aircraft)', 'Report on Visit by Chief of the Air Staff and Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements to United States of America and Great Britain, January 1944 – Written by the Chief of Air Staff for the Minister for Air', 5 February 1944. p. 1. In his report, Jones noted it was acknowledged at the conference that the dive-bombers sent to the RAAF (as a result of representations made to the US Government by H.V. Evatt) in 1943 (Vultee A-35 Vengeance) were of little value and were given to Australia as there was no bid for them by the USAAF nor the RAF. See also Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 105. Jones was not a supporter of dive-bombers. He considered the whole concept of building an aircraft specially to be a dive-bomber to be wrong (despite the Luftwaffe's success with the Junkers Ju 87). In his view, dive-bombers were unsuccessful in the SWPA because they could not carry a heavy bomb load and they were too slow to be used as fighters. National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection, c. 1976.

General Giles (General Arnold's Chief of Staff), Air Marshal Sir William Welsh (head of the RAF delegation) and Air Marshal Richard Williams. Owen Dixon, the Australian Ambassador to the US, assisted the Australian delegation.

The conference outcome was both good and bad for the RAAF, as Jones succeeded in gaining agreement to the allocation of 33 Lockheed PV-1 Venturas, 47 Consolidated PB5Y-5A Catalinas, three Martin PBM-3 Mariners and 118 Curtiss P-40N Kittyhawks. Jones ran into problems with acquiring transport aircraft. He was unable to gain additional Douglas C-47s to equip two new squadrons but he was able to secure 36 of the type as wastage replacements for existing squadrons. However, owing to the agreements associated with aircraft allocation, his work did not end there.

Jones next met with Arnold who advised him that the RAAF would need British approval before the aircraft could be supplied.<sup>24</sup> In addition, there were a few other difficult issues to be resolved. Jones was advised that all types of aircraft were in short supply and the European Theatre of Operations (ETO) had the higher priority. General Arnold confirmed this advice and added that he was not prepared to release aircraft to the RAAF because USAAF training units needed large numbers of contemporary combat types. Arnold claimed aircraft supply problems would not be resolved during the course of the war. The main reason being, Arnold logically explained, was that while large numbers were produced there were frequent changes in aircraft types and combat tactics so that manufacture was always one step behind the front-line requirements and a saturation point for suitable aircraft types was never likely to be reached.<sup>25</sup>

By far the biggest problem that Jones experienced was the difficulty in obtaining assurances that heavy bombers would be provided. Kenney and Welsh supported the RAAF's acquisition of this type of aircraft but, at the same time, advised they had requirements of their own.<sup>26</sup> Giles, however, had another agenda and approached the conference with instructions that nothing was to be done which would in any way detract from a maximum effort in Europe during the first half of 1944.<sup>27</sup> Giles advised Williams that Arnold had asked Portal of his opinions on the

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<sup>24</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/37/301/232, 'Report on Visit by Chief of the Air Staff and Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements to United States of America and Great Britain, January 1944', p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Alan Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992,

RAAF's acquisition of heavy bombers. Portal's reported response was, 'nothing must be done to detract from the effort in Europe nor to reduce Australia's personnel commitment to the Royal Air Force.'<sup>28</sup> The RAAF was in the extraordinary situation of competing with the RAF for the supply of aircraft and also for Australian aircrew.

Nevertheless, Jones had some success with his negotiations as it was agreed that the RAAF would receive 150 Consolidated B-24 Liberators between July and December 1944. In addition, six ex-Fifth Air Force B-24s would be handed over to the RAAF at the earliest possible opportunity, so that RAAF ground and aircrew training on the aircraft type could begin immediately. Jones still was not satisfied with this arrangement because it would delay the formation of heavy bomber units by up to 12 months:

I could not regard this as satisfactory and decided to visit England in an endeavour to obtain a number of the RAF allotment in the first six months of this year.<sup>29</sup>

Before he left the US, Jones looked into a project that was of considerable interest to him—the manufacture of the North American P-51 Mustang in Australia. During discussions with Major General Eccles (Controller of Aircraft Production), he confirmed that the production contracts had been signed. Jones was told that, despite a few delays, the shipping of information and production equipment from the US to Australia was proceeding and, most importantly, there was no major difficulty to hinder Australian Mustang production. This was the most advanced aircraft construction project undertaken in Australia up to that time.

Jones and Thomas, accompanied by Welsh and Giles, flew to the UK via Newfoundland and Iceland aboard a USAAF C-54. The time in Britain was spent in a series of meetings with government officials and senior RAF officers. During the nine days there, Jones spoke with Portal, Air Chief Marshal Sir Christopher Courtney (the Air Member for Supply), Air Marshal Sir Peter Drummond (who by this time was the Air Member for Training), the Secretary and Under-Secretary

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p. 76.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/37/301/232, 'Report on Visit by Chief of the Air Staff and Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements to United States of America and Great Britain, January 1944', p. 2.

of State for Air, and members of the Air Council, as well as the Australian High Commissioner, Stanley Bruce.

In discussions with Portal, Jones explained that one of the main reasons for acquiring the B-24s was to provide the RAAF with an effective long-range strike force. Another reason centred on Service prestige—the Fifth Air Force was carrying out, what he described as, spectacular raids and as a result it was gaining great publicity. This, he claimed, was having a demoralising effect on the RAAF, which was unable to carry out similar operations due to a lack of suitable aircraft. While Portal was sympathetic to the RAAF's situation, he advised Jones that the RAF needed aircraft for the bombing campaign on occupied Europe and also for use against U-boats.<sup>30</sup> Regardless of the RAF's needs, an agreement was reached with Giles, and Jones succeeded in gaining 18 B-24s, which were to be delivered to the RAAF between March and June 1944. In addition, Jones was given an assurance for the delivery of 50 Mosquito aircraft during the second half of 1944 to supplement local production of that aircraft type.<sup>31</sup>

In his discussions with senior RAF officers, Jones was advised of other matters relevant to the British aircraft industry. On the subject of aircraft production, Jones was told that British bombers were being produced at a rate of 250 aircraft per month. In his report to Drakeford, he commented that this was little more than sufficient to make up for wastage, while at the same time US industry was turning out 1200 bombers per month. These production figures did not seem to bother the British Secretary of State for Air, who told Jones he was convinced the war in Europe would end soon:

It is confidently expected, however, that Germany will be forced out of the war not later than the autumn of 1944, and that thereafter, all available forces will be sent against Japan.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> The B-24 Liberator, with its long range turned out to be the ideal aircraft for the RAF Coastal Command to use against the U-boats, which during the early years of World War II had wreaked havoc on Allied shipping. The B-24 was able to undertake convoy escorts and anti-U-boat operations over most of the North Atlantic and into areas of ocean that were previously beyond the range of the RAF's other long-range maritime patrol aircraft—the Lockheed Hudson and the Short Sunderland. Boyne, *Clash of Wings*, p. 199.

<sup>31</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/37/301/232, 'Report on Visit by Chief of the Air Staff and Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements to United States of America and Great Britain, January 1944', p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

At a meeting with Drummond to discuss the supply of aircrew for the RAF, Jones was advised that the RAF had considerable personnel reserves and, as a result, the RAAF could retain those personnel it needed in Australia. This was contradictory to the advice Jones had received earlier from Portal.

Before he departed the UK, Jones visited four RAAF Article XV squadrons (three flying Avro Lancasters and one equipped with Mosquito fighter bombers). The Article XV squadrons were established under the terms of the EATS agreement, supposedly as Australian units within the RAF. Jones briefed squadron personnel on contemporary conditions in Australia. When reporting back to Drakeford, he commented on the morale of the Australians and noted the desire on the part of some members of the ground staff to return to Australia as soon as possible.<sup>33</sup> One suspects the ground staff were unhappy with their lot in life, as the majority (Europe and Pacific-based) did not remain with the Service after the war ended. This situation does not seem to have been fully appreciated by Jones when he drew up initial plans for the postwar RAAF.

The three-day return flight to Washington was via Morocco, French West Africa, Brazil and the West Indies. Before making his way back to the US west coast, Jones flew to Ottawa where he met with Goble and the Australian High Commissioner. Back in the US, Jones was given the opportunity to view new aircraft types when he visited the USAAF base at Dayton, Ohio, and factories in Los Angeles, California. Aircraft types he was shown included the Boeing B-29, the Douglas A-26, 'the jet propulsion fighter [probably the Lockheed P-80] and a very large Civil Transport being manufactured by Lockheed.'<sup>34</sup>

In addition to his progress with aircraft acquisition, Jones reported back to Drakeford on a few other things that he had observed while overseas. He reported that conditions of service for RAAF personnel in Canada appeared to be uniformly good and that he had visited the RAAF headquarters in London and Washington and found the administrative work up-to-date and records maintained in a satisfactory manner (despite this, he made recommendations for additional staff at both sites). Senior officers at these Headquarters had proposed that WAAAF personnel should be posted there to provide clerical support or to work as drivers.

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<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/37/301/232, 'Report on Visit by Chief of the Air Staff and Director of Tactics and Operational Requirements to United States of America and Great Britain, January 1944'. Jones added that details of these aircraft were not included as part of his report but would be supplied if and when required.

It was claimed that such an initiative would serve a double purpose of ‘improving the morale of our own men in these areas, and would provide valuable publicity, bearing in mind their distinctive uniform.’<sup>35</sup>

Finally, there was an observation, made overseas, which caused concern. Jones reported the lack of publicity given to RAAF activity. In the UK, the press recorded the operations of the RAF and Royal Canadian Air Force but referred to the RAAF and Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) as ‘Dominion air forces.’ Similarly, the US press referred to non-American air forces as ‘Allied forces.’ Jones argued, ‘While it is not suggested that we should compete for publicity, the prestige of Australia warrants justifiable recognition.’<sup>36</sup>

In the meantime, back in Australia, Curtin briefed representatives of the press on 19 January 1944, and told them that Jones and Kenney were in the US on aircraft-related matters. The Prime Minister summed up the situation quite simply by advising that some of the aircraft delivered to the RAAF were not in accordance with specifications and, because of operations in other parts of the world, promised aircraft had not been forthcoming. Furthermore, he said, with every offensive in other theatres, aircraft allocation to the RAAF declined and so Jones and Kenney were trying to rectify the situation.<sup>37</sup>

On his return to Australia, Jones forwarded his report of the acquisition negotiations to the Air Board and to Curtin. Shedden asked, on behalf of the Prime Minister, what assurances had been given to obtain the aircraft. Jones commented, ‘I had much pleasure in replying that I had given no assurances whatsoever.’<sup>38</sup>

The trip was very successful and stands out as one of Jones’ significant achievements during World War II. The RAAF received new aircraft during the course of 1944. The first of 321 Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawks from the 1944 production run was delivered to the RAAF in May 1944. Delivery of these aircraft continued until February 1945.<sup>39</sup> However, it was with another type of aircraft Jones acquired that he introduced a new capability into the RAAF.

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Clem Lloyd and Richard Hall (eds), *Backroom Briefings: John Curtin’s War*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997, pp. 188–189.

<sup>38</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 110.

<sup>39</sup> Stewart Wilson, *The Spitfire, Mustang and Kittyhawk in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, NSW, ACT, 1988, pp. 178–181

## **Bomber Acquisition**

One area of acquisition that deserves special mention is that of heavy bombers. As we have seen, the RAAF's attempts to gain a strategic bombing force came to fruition during 1944. In addition to Jones' negotiation skills, it was also made possible through the US industry's ability to mass-produce vast amounts of military materiel and through the Australian War Cabinet's decision in November 1943 to have the Department of Aircraft Production construct the Avro Lancaster heavy bomber in Australia.<sup>40</sup> It was to be several years, however, before Lancasters were scheduled to roll off the Australian production lines and so the RAAF needed an interim heavy bomber. This aircraft turned out to be the Consolidated B-24 Liberator.

The B-24 was one of the three heavy four-engine bombers used in large numbers by the USAAF during World War II (the other two were the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and the Boeing B-29 Superfortress). The B-24 was produced in greater numbers than the other two, even though the B-17 was the aircraft more favoured by the European-based Eighth Air Force. This preference resulted in the availability of greater numbers of B-24s for the Allied forces in the Pacific.<sup>41</sup>

As we have seen, Jones succeeded in gaining agreement for the allocation of B-24s to the RAAF. The next step was to determine how they were to be used. Kenney proposed that, as there was a surplus of B-24s emerging from the Ford Motor Company's production line at Willow Run,<sup>42</sup> the RAAF should form

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<sup>40</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/501/533, 'Acquisition of Heavy Bomber Aircraft from Overseas', minute from Jones to Drakeford, 1 August 1944. As the Lancaster was to be produced in Australia and was likely to be flown by the RAF in the Pacific Theatre, Jones recommended the RAAF acquire a flight of four aircraft to gain experience in their use. He requested the aircraft be supplied with fully-trained crews, ground staff and spares, and be funded in a similar manner to the Spitfires. They would be attached to the RAAF's heavy bomber wing. Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 80. John McCarthy notes that it was proposed that the RAF would have ten squadrons of Lancasters based on Okinawa. John McCarthy, *A Last Call of Empire: Australian Aircrew, Britain and the Empire Air Training Scheme*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988, p. 126. In so far as Australian production was concerned, the war ended before construction began and the Lancaster's successor, the Avro Lincoln, was built by the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF) at Fishermans Bend. Stewart Wilson, *Lincoln, Canberra & F-111 in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, ACT, 1989, pp. 26–28.

<sup>41</sup> George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, Office of Air Force History, USAF, Washington, DC, 1987, p. 214. Up until the B-29 became available, the B-24 was the one Allied heavy bomber suited to the Pacific War because of its long-range capability.

<sup>42</sup> Despite Henry Ford's fanatical anti-Semitism and his opposition to the war in Europe, partially because he believed it was part of a conspiracy against himself and his company, the Ford Motor



seven bomber squadrons. Kenney could then transfer the USAAF's 380th (H) Bombardment Group from the North-Western Area (where it operated under Australian direction) and move it north with the Fifth Air Force, while the newly formed RAAF squadrons could take over the Group's role of bombing targets in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI).<sup>43</sup> The RAAF went ahead forming heavy bomber squadrons, so by late 1944 the Group's role had been largely met by the Australian units. The 380th (H) Bombardment Group, however, remained in the North-Western Area until mid January 1945 when they were ordered to join the Fifth Air Force units in the Philippines.<sup>44</sup>

Jones estimated that the RAAF needed to acquire 226 heavy bombers, sufficient to equip seven squadrons and an Operational Training Unit (OTU).<sup>45</sup> Initially, ten ex-USAAF B-24Ds were supplied to the RAAF (and were flown at Tocumwal) while crew training was undertaken with USAAF B-24s at Nadzab, New Guinea.<sup>46</sup> In May 1944, the first of the new model B-24Js were delivered from the production lines to the RAAF. Jones' negotiations in London and Washington paid off, as the RAAF would eventually receive 287 Liberators in different versions during 1944 and 1945.<sup>47</sup>

## **Morotai**

An organisational change to the AAF occurred on 15 June 1944, when Kenney announced the formation of the Far East Air Force (FEAF), which comprised the

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Company built 8685 B-24s at their Willow Run plant. Don Sherman, 'Willow Run', in *Air & Space*, vol. 7, no. 3, August/September 1992, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, 1992, pp. 74–84.

<sup>43</sup> Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, p. 341.

<sup>44</sup> Michael V. Nelmes, *Tocumwal to Tarakan: Australians and the Consolidated B-24 Liberator*, Banner Books, Belconnen, ACT, 1994, p. 64.

<sup>45</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/501/533, minute from CAS to Allied Air Force Headquarters, 9 June 1944. The RAAF squadron establishment for heavy bomber units was 12 aircraft.

<sup>46</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/231/9/1251, 'Establishments General – Heavy Bomber Squadrons', minute from Jones to Director of Training, 27 June 1944. It was decided the training of B-24 crews should take place in an area similar to that in which they were to fly. Darwin was considered unsuitable while Nadzab in New Guinea was more appropriate. NAA A705/1/501/533. Notes of meeting 30 June 1944. General Kenney confirmed that up to 28 RAAF crews per month could be trained at Nadzab. Jones agreed to 120–150 RAAF ground staff being provided to assist with maintenance of the aircraft used by the RAAF

<sup>47</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'Record Card – Airframes, Aero Engines and Mechanical Transport', Consolidated Liberator A72.

USAAF's Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces. As a result of the FEAF's formation, the AAF then comprised only RAAF, NEI, RNZAF and RAF units, although USAAF units could be assigned to it whenever necessary. Kenney commanded the FEAF and retained command of the AAF. The formation of the FEAF allowed MacArthur to move the AAF into a secondary role. That is, the FEAF moved northward with the Allied advance as part of the force designated to invade the Philippines and eventually Japan. The AAF was tasked with continuing the fight against Japanese troops who had been bypassed by the advance and remained in the Netherlands East Indies and in the British colonies on Borneo.<sup>48</sup>

Three months later, on 14 September 1944, Curtin met with Bostock to discuss the RAAF's participation in future forward offensive operations in the SWPA, such as the Borneo campaign, as well as its commitments to mopping-up operations and air garrison duties in the reoccupied territories. The Prime Minister advised Bostock of the following principles for the use of the RAAF, which were to be followed when Bostock was making recommendations or tendering advice to the Commander AAF:

- RAAF operational squadrons were still assigned to MacArthur and he would decide on their employment.
- So far as the Australian Government was concerned, the RAAF's first requirement was to provide adequate air support for Australian land forces.
- When major Australian land forces were stationed in operational areas in contact with the enemy, RAAF air cover was to be available to them to the greatest extent practicable.
- For the purposes of cooperation with Australian land forces in future offensive operations in the SWPA, it was desirable that an RAAF Tactical Air Force (TAF) was maintained as an integrated formation of such strength as was practicable.
- Mopping-up and air garrison duties in British and foreign reoccupied territories would be undertaken after the other duties were satisfied.<sup>49</sup>

Curtin told Bostock that, if circumstances prevented the retention of the integrated Tactical Air Force, every effort was to be made to ensure the RAAF was represented within the AAF by individual wings or even by separate squadrons in the advance

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<sup>48</sup> Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, pp. 68–69.

<sup>49</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/810/2, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume XVI, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Canberra, 18th September, 1944,' (3804) Future Employment of R.A.A.F. in Southwest Pacific.

against Japan. Bostock advised the Prime Minister that the strength of the Tactical Air Force might fluctuate in accordance with the RAAF developmental program and the overall AAF commitments from time to time, but he was committed to maintaining an integrated formation of not less than six fighter squadrons and three attack squadrons.<sup>50</sup>

Despite being away from the main areas of fighting and the direct advance to Japan, the operations in Borneo (conducted by elements of the RAN, the Australian Army and the RAAF) were seen, at the time, to be a major task for the Australian forces. Before the campaign started, however, an incident took place on Morotai Island that was one of the all-time low points in the RAAF's history. In order to understand the incident we should first look at the reason why many RAAF units came to be based on Morotai.

As part of the overall strategic campaign to support MacArthur's return to the Philippines, a large number of AAF units were moved to Morotai Island in the Halmahera group of islands. Morotai is located 24 kilometres north-east of Halmahera Island. It is a small island, measuring 72 kilometres north to south and 34 kilometres east to west. It was largely covered by mountains and forests, although there was a flat piece of land at the southern end where the AAF established two airfields at Wama and Pitoe.<sup>51</sup>

The Allied forces started to build up Morotai as a major military base soon after they invaded the island in September 1944. This move was vital for MacArthur's campaign because the two airfields gave the bombers of the Far East Air Force the opportunity to conduct operations over the Philippines and to disallow Japanese naval vessels the use of the important Celebes Sea and Macassar Strait.<sup>52</sup> The Australian units, however, were late to arrive on the scene and the Philippines invasion had been underway for one month before the first RAAF units (apart from the Airfield Construction Squadrons) arrived on Morotai.<sup>53</sup> The Australian forces used the island as the base for the Borneo operations and so Bostock set up an advanced headquarters for RAAF Command there. In addition, the First

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> J.R. Grant, 'End of the Line', in *FlyPast*, no. 210, January 1999, p. 37.

<sup>52</sup> George Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, pp. 248–249.

<sup>53</sup> John Robertson, *Australia at War 1939–1945*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, Vic., 1981, p. 167.

Tactical Air Force (1st TAF) RAAF had its headquarters there, as did the USAAF Thirteenth Air Force.<sup>54</sup>

It appeared to many Service personnel when they reached Morotai that the Australian forces had been left behind in the advance to Japan. Instead of being directly involved in the important fighting in the Philippines, the Australians encountered an unpleasant state of affairs that involved a combination of geography, climate and operational issues which led to a serious decline in morale, especially among the fighter pilots.

When the RAAF and Australian Army personnel arrived on Morotai they found it to be a miserable place. Conditions were crowded<sup>55</sup> and unhygienic; unpaved roads and open spaces were either dust or sticky mud, depending on the weather. Personnel were housed in tents and there had even been shortages of these so other forms of uncomfortable makeshift accommodation were erected. The Australian food supplied to the RAAF and Army was, when compared to US rations, unpalatable and dreary. To add to the unhappiness of the RAAF personnel there was another problem—transportation to and from the island, or more specifically, the lack of it. This meant that the personnel sent to the island remained there, regardless of the length of their posting because transportation was not available to take them back to Australia or to bring in replacements. Because of this and other operational needs, tours of duty in the combat areas had been extended in duration, especially for ground staff and many personnel had not been granted home leave for over two years.<sup>56</sup> As well as the discomforts, there was the awareness that the decisive actions of the Pacific War were now being waged almost exclusively by the US forces. All these conditions fed an element of discontent among RAAF personnel, which was exacerbated by the behaviour of some senior officers who preferred socialising to their Service duties.<sup>57</sup>

One other big problem for the Australian commanders on Morotai was the illegal trafficking in alcohol, conducted by Australian Service personnel. Unlike their Australian counterparts, the local US forces had no issued alcohol ration. They did,

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<sup>54</sup> Gary Waters, *OBOE – Air Operations Over Borneo, 1945*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1995, p. 9.

<sup>55</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'RAAF Units at Morotai'. The RAAF had 98 different units based on Morotai between 15 September 1944 and 10 July 1948.

<sup>56</sup> Harry Rayner, *Scherger: A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1984, p. 85.

<sup>57</sup> Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 72.

however, have money and access to better rations, equipment and other materiel. Each Australian was issued two bottles of beer per week (when it was available) and this ration, together with other alcohol illegally imported on to the island, was easily sold to the US Service personnel in exchange for either money or materiel. While the senior Australian officers attempted unsuccessfully to stamp out the trafficking, other RAAF officers were flying bottles of alcohol to the island aboard Service aircraft.

The main RAAF unit on Morotai was the First Tactical Air Force, which comprised fighter, attack and transport units, all under the command of Air Commodore Cobby. Cobby had assumed command of No 10 Operational Group from Air Commodore Scherger, a capable and highly regarded officer, when the latter was injured in a motor vehicle accident on Noemfoor Island in July 1944.<sup>58</sup> Although Cobby was a less popular officer than Scherger, Jones claims Kenney and Bostock opposed the appointment only on the grounds that Cobby was 'too old.'<sup>59</sup> No 10 Operational Group was then renamed as the First Tactical Air Force on 25 October 1944, with Cobby as AOC.

In addition to the discomfort caused by the climate and overcrowding, RAAF aircrew were starting to experience morale problems that related to their operational tasks. While aircrew flying attack and transport aircraft were kept busy, the units that suffered the biggest morale problems were the fighter squadrons equipped with Spitfires, which were underemployed. These particular aircraft, which had achieved legendary status in Europe, proved to be quite unsuitable for operations in the SWPA. They were designed as an interceptor fighter for use over the UK and later over Europe but their range was inadequate for operations in the SWPA and they had numerous mechanical problems, some of which could be traced back to the unsuitability of the Rolls-Royce Merlin engine to tropical conditions.<sup>60</sup> When the Spitfire Wing (comprising Nos 79, 452 and 457 Squadrons) reached Morotai the pilots found the opportunities for air-to-air combat with Japanese aircraft had

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<sup>58</sup> Rayner, *Scherger*, p. 80; and Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 241.

<sup>59</sup> Jones papers, 'Difficulties with Senior Officers' A.H. Cobby was a year older than Jones and Kenney and two years younger than Bostock. Interestingly, Jones does not record any adverse comments that Kenney or Bostock might have made about Cobby's leadership capabilities.

<sup>60</sup> For a detailed account of the Spitfire's earlier role in defending northern Australia, refer to Peter Helson, 'The Forgotten Air Force—The Establishment and Employment of Australian Air Power in the North-Western Area, 1941–1945', Master of Arts (Hons) thesis, University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1997.

disappeared. Instead of being used as interceptor fighters, the Spitfire's role was transformed to ground attack—a role for which the aircraft was not designed.

The fact that RAAF units would not be accompanying the US forces in their reconquest of the Philippines contributed to the serious discontent experienced by officers in the First Tactical Air Force based at Morotai, particularly the Spitfire pilots. Matters reached a head when eight prominent officers (including Group Captain Clive Caldwell—the RAAF's highest scoring fighter ace during World War II) presented Cobby with identically worded resignations of their RAAF commissions—an action Jones described as 'absurd'<sup>61</sup> and as only a 'gesture' because officers cannot resign during wartime.<sup>62</sup>

Cobby informed Bostock of the resignations and the AOC met with seven of the officers.<sup>63</sup> Bostock asked them to tear up their resignations, which they refused to do, although they agreed to change the wording as to when the resignations would come into effect. Bostock then sent a signal to RAAF Headquarters outlining the situation; stating that morale in the First Tactical Air Force was dangerously low and recommending the transfer of Cobby and two other officers—Group Captains Gibson and Simms. Bostock requested Air Commodore Scherger be sent as a replacement for Cobby.<sup>64</sup>

When the signal reached RAAF Headquarters, Jones immediately departed for Morotai, which he reached on 25 April 1945. Jones then spent the next few days separately interviewing each of the officers who had 'resigned' (except Caldwell). The officers were unwilling to disclose the full extent of their discontent to CAS, but Jones was told that each was dissatisfied with the activities conducted by the First Tactical Air Force.<sup>65</sup> Jones believed that Kenney and Bostock should have

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<sup>61</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection.

<sup>62</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 93.

<sup>63</sup> Bostock did not interview Caldwell because charges relating to the trafficking of alcohol were pending against him and it was considered undesirable that he should be questioned as to the reasons for his resignation.

<sup>64</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 445. In his signal to RAAF Headquarters, Bostock stated that seven officers (not eight) had submitted their resignations. Apparently, Bostock did include Caldwell because of the charges pending against this officer. In addition, Caldwell had on 21 April 1945 (a day after having submitted his resignation) applied to the AOC First Tactical Air Force for 'an opportunity to take part in the pending operations of the RAAF in any capacity whatsoever'.

<sup>65</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/517, 'Inquiry into Allegations Relating to Trading in Liquor and Kindred Matters in the First Tactical Air Force and the Northern Area of the Royal

been aware of the situation that had led to this discontent. Nevertheless, he used the situation to air his views on how the RAAF's operational areas should be managed in future.

Jones told one of the officers, Squadron Leader R. Gibbes, during the interviews, 'I realise this thing is very serious. I have come up here to straighten it out. I don't care whose corns I tread on in doing so.' After listening to Gibbes' grievances, Jones, who was obviously concerned about how the situation had been allowed to develop, added:

I realise that a lot of senior officers have outlived their usefulness and that pilots with operational experience have not been used as they should have been. In future the policy will be to put men with operational experience in jobs which they are fitted to.<sup>66</sup>

In another interview, Group Captain W. Arthur asked Jones, 'You're the Chief of the Air Staff, why don't you go into MacArthur's office, thump the table and demand to be taken on [as part of the advance to the Philippines]?' To which Jones replied, 'Well I don't know how far you'd think I'd get if I did that, since our Prime Minister's done his utmost already.'<sup>67</sup> The following day, Arthur approached Jones with a 'profit and loss' statement he had drawn up, which showed the results obtained in attacks on Japanese ground targets, balanced against the RAAF's pilot and aircraft losses.<sup>68</sup> Before Arthur had explained the 'profit and loss' statement, Jones was advised that Kenney had arrived from the Philippines to meet with Bostock and Generals Blamey and Morshead to discuss air support for the

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Australian Air Force, J.V. Barry, Commissioner, p. 138.

<sup>66</sup> Bobby Gibbes, *You Live but Once: An Autobiography by Wing Commander (Rtd) Bobby Gibbes, DSO, DFC and Bar*, R.H. Gibbes, Collaroy, NSW, 1994, p. 233.

<sup>67</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection. By 1944, MacArthur was frequently declining to use Australian troops for anything other than 'mopping-up' operations. This attitude left the Australian Government and Defence leaders perplexed. The Australian Government offered MacArthur the 7th and 9th Divisions for use in the Philippines 'as an acknowledgment of American assistance to Australia'. MacArthur refused the offer and even planned to keep Australian troops out of the forthcoming Operations Olympic and Coronet (the invasion of the Japanese home islands), until the Joint Chiefs of Staff forced him to include them. Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, *Code-name Downfall: The Secret Plan to Invade Japan and Why Truman Dropped the Bomb*, Headline, London, UK, 1995, p. 161.

<sup>68</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/517, 'Inquiry into Allegations Relating to Trading in Liquor and Kindred Matters in the First Tactical Air Force and the Northern Area of the Royal Australian Air Force', p. 138; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 93

forthcoming Borneo operations. On hearing of problems, Kenney demanded to speak with the seven officers.<sup>69</sup> There are two versions of the meeting with these officers—Jones' and Kenney's. Not unsurprisingly, they differ in reporting what may have happened next. One thing which is certain is that it was at this point that relations between Jones and Kenney reached their lowest level. Jones initially questioned the US General as to why he wanted to see the officers. Kenney replied that he still had operational control of the RAAF's tactical units and he was conducting a tactical inspection of the pilots' efficiency, including morale, and this was none of Jones' business.<sup>70</sup> Initially, CAS told Kenney he could not see the officers but then, after Kenney threatened to request through MacArthur to Curtin to have Jones sacked (and replaced with someone who would cooperate), sent word that he would accompany the officers when the American spoke with them. This could be regarded as an empty threat on Kenney's part because we know he and MacArthur had opposed Jones' replacement on several occasions and rejected officers nominated by the Australian Government. It would have been unlikely that Drakeford would have supported a move to replace Jones and it is likely he or Langslow would have reminded the Prime Minister of the failed attempts in the past. Furthermore, given the view that the US commanders wanted the RAAF divided to ensure that they could keep the Service in the background during the advance against Japan, it would not have been in Kenney's favour to have a CAS who would cooperate with him and Bostock. Nevertheless, the threat serves to demonstrate how bad the situation had become between the two senior officers.

When he met with the Australian officers, Kenney patronisingly suggested that they had become 'war weary'.<sup>71</sup> He then told them there were times during wars when personnel became dissatisfied or thought they were wasting their time. He described the progress of the war and said that there were a lot of people tied up in areas where it was necessary for them to continue attacks on enemy forces whose usefulness appeared to be outlived. During his talk he asked Group Captain Arthur

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<sup>69</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, pp. 445–446. As noted in Footnotes 63 and 64, Bostock apparently did not include Caldwell in the group and in his signal to RAAF Headquarters stated that 'seven officers' (not eight) had submitted their resignations.

<sup>70</sup> George C. Kenney, extract from General Kenney's diary, provided by Mr Ric Pelvin, Australian War Memorial, 18 February 1999. It could easily be argued that morale was a personnel issue and, as CAS was the officer with the final responsibility for RAAF personnel, it certainly was Jones' business! In that scenario, the 'mutiny' was an administrative issue and thus was no business of either Kenney or Bostock.

<sup>71</sup> Gibbes, *You Live but Once*, p. 234.



how many operational tours he had completed and whether he had lost any weight. Jones interrupted to explain that Arthur had been burnt in an aircraft crash. Arthur took exception to the interruption because it implied he had become tired of operational flying. He then explained to Kenney that neither he nor his comrades were tired; they were not complaining about the efficiency of the RAAF, nor were they complaining about their role. Instead, they were complaining about the way in which they were carrying out that role and their grievance was an internal one with the RAAF. Gibbes told Kenney that the Spitfires were being wasted on Morotai and, as they were the best fighter aircraft in the world, they should be in the front line of operations. Kenney upset the officers even further by replying that he had been against the Australian Government purchasing Spitfires because, in his opinion, they were unsuitable for operations in the SWPA.<sup>72</sup> After this negative statement, Kenney asked the officers to 'take back their badges'. The meeting ended when they refused.<sup>73</sup> Kenney had achieved nothing by addressing the officers, other than to upset them further. It would be reasonable to think that some of the problems on Morotai existed because of a deficiency in communications. That is, Bostock had not communicated to the Spitfire squadrons details of the Prime Minister's directive that the RAAF's role was to support the Australian Army. If this was the case, it makes Kenney's interference in the 'mutiny' not only unnecessary but also potentially embarrassing for RAAF Command.

Jones claims another heated discussion started after Kenney had finished his meeting with the officers. He turned on Jones and said, 'Evidently you don't trust me. You had to come into the tent and sit down here and listen to everything I had to say'. Jones quite correctly replied that it was a disciplinary matter and had nothing to do with Kenney. At this point, Jones thought the American was going to hit him and claims, 'I was quite ready for him.'<sup>74</sup> One can only guess the impact on the demoralised officers of seeing the two senior commanders involved in a punch-up. After the meeting, Arthur, without the knowledge of Jones, spoke with Kenney once more, but again gained no satisfactory resolution to his and the other officers' grievances.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>73</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/517, 'Inquiry into Allegations Relating to Trading in Liquor and Kindred Matters in the First Tactical Air Force and the Northern Area of the Royal Australian Air Force', pp. 138–139.

<sup>74</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 94–95.

<sup>75</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred

Kenney advised Jones against planning any disciplinary action against the officers, stating that he would appear as a witness for the defence and would not be restrained in what he told the press about the causes of the mutiny.<sup>76</sup> Kenney then got Jones and Bostock together. He told Jones to replace Cobby with Scherger and he placed Bostock in charge of the air component of the Tarakan operation and told him to 'be ashore with the ground troops.'<sup>77</sup> Kenney then returned to the Philippines, where on 30 April 1945, he welcomed members of the Mexican Expeditionary Air Force (MEAF), who had just arrived and were to fight alongside the USAAF in the American re-conquest of the country.<sup>78</sup>

Jones took remedial action and, after reporting the matter to Drakeford, he put in place moves to transfer Cobby together with Group Captains Simms and Gibson and Squadron Leader Harpham from their appointments.<sup>79</sup> He then re-appointed Air Commodore Scherger as AOC First Tactical Air Force. Regardless of Jones' quick response to Kenney's directions, there was some delay in Scherger's arrival and Cobby remained with the First Tactical Air Force and went to Tarakan during the early stages of the Borneo operations. As soon as Scherger arrived on Morotai, he set to work on improving morale and developing better relationships between senior Army and RAAF officers.<sup>80</sup> Jones' reaction to the mutiny (i.e. the replacement of senior commanders and discussions with the officers involved) was

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Morton in the Fred Morton collection; and National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/517, 'Inquiry into Allegations Relating to Trading in Liquor and Kindred Matters in the First Tactical Air Force and the Northern Area of the Royal Australian Air Force,' pp 139–140.

<sup>76</sup> We might suspect that this was another empty threat by Kenney. It would be highly unlikely he would have taken valuable time away from his command of the Far East Air Force to attend a court martial (which, most probably, would have been conducted over a long period at a site remote from the major area of conflict, such as Melbourne). It is doubtful that either he or MacArthur, both moving further away from Australia and intent on the invasion of Japan, would have shown any concern for eight officers in a foreign air force. This belief is reinforced by an examination of the records kept by Justice J.V. Barry. It appears Kenney was not interviewed by the Judge, nor did he make any representation to Barry's inquiry. One would expect that, if he was concerned about the fate of the officers, he would have gone out of his way to make his views known to Barry. One also wonders exactly what Kenney would have told the media as to the causes of the mutiny—would he have admitted to the US policy of excluding the RAAF from the major campaigns in the later war years?

<sup>77</sup> Kenney, extract from General Kenney's diary. One might question what right Kenney had to give orders to Jones.

<sup>78</sup> Santiago Flores, 'To Join the Allies: The Mexican Expeditionary Force,' in *Air Enthusiast*, no. 46, June–August 1992, Key Publishing, Stamford, Lincolnshire, UK, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> Office of Air Force History, Barry Report, 'Report of Proceedings taken at Melbourne, Friday 27th July 1945.'

<sup>80</sup> Rayner, Scherger, p. 88.

perhaps the best course of action. Obviously, it was a situation that should not have been allowed to develop and we may ask why the AOC RAAF Command was so out of touch with the feelings of officers under his command and what representations he had made to Kenney concerning the opportunities for RAAF participation in the re-conquest of the Philippines and the Allied advance towards Japan.

Regardless of Kenney's threats, Jones and the Air Board did not allow the mutiny to end there. Rather than hold a court martial (and have the potentially embarrassing presence of the Commander AAF speaking on behalf of the 'mutineers'), Jones returned to Melbourne and reported what he had seen on Morotai to Drakeford. He recommended that an inquiry, headed by a judge, be set up.<sup>81</sup> Drakeford agreed but it was decided to turn attention from the mutiny to other infringements of law and discipline and on 24 May 1945, the Minister announced he had set up an inquiry into allegations of liquor trading and kindred matters in the First Tactical Air Force. Heading the inquiry was Justice J.V. Barry. Under the terms of his commission he was required to inquire whether the resignations were associated with the alcohol trafficking, or with the First Tactical Air Force's operational activities between 1 November 1944 and 19 April 1945.<sup>82</sup> Barry set to work, interviewing 107 people in Melbourne and on Morotai, including Jones, Bostock, Gibbes and Arthur. During his interview, Bostock took advantage of the inquiry to level further criticism against RAAF Headquarters by stating that the RAAF Headquarters staff on Morotai were incompetent, arrogant and generally unhelpful.<sup>83</sup>

On 27 July 1945, Barry interviewed Jones, who advised that the resignations were unrelated to the divided command structure—Jones' view was that the officers were dissatisfied with the operational role assigned to the First Tactical Air Force and, to a lesser extent, the manner in which they had been dealt with by the senior officers of First Tactical Air Force.<sup>84</sup> Jones believed each officer was quite sincere, but misguided, in what they were attempting to do and they had acted out of a rather

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<sup>81</sup> Office of Air Force History, Barry Report, 'Report of Proceedings taken at Melbourne, Friday 27th July 1945'.

<sup>82</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/585, letter from Barry to Jones, 12 July 1945.

<sup>83</sup> Office of Air Force History, Barry Report, 'Report of Proceedings taken at Melbourne, Friday 27th July 1945'.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.* When giving evidence to the Commission, Jones stated that it was not the first time he had encountered discontent amongst RAAF personnel. He claimed that when EATS was at its height and after the outbreak of the Pacific War, officers who were retained at training establishments and at RAAF Headquarters became unhappy because they preferred to be engaged in operations.

exaggerated sense of national duty.<sup>85</sup> The inquiry might be seen as a vindictive act on the part of Jones and the Air Board, in that it was set up as a means of punishing the officers involved in the mutiny. However, there is another issue to consider here. That is, trafficking in alcohol was illegal and if Jones turned a blind eye to it and allowed it to continue he would have been condoning it through his failure to take action. In this case, his actions were correct but the timing of the inquiry, so soon after the mutiny, tends to overshadow its purpose.

Barry's report of his findings to Government was in two parts—alcohol trafficking and the resignations. When dealing with the resignations, Barry found that the matter was not one which should have been brought to Kenney's notice. Rather, it was a domestic matter which should have been confined within the RAAF.<sup>86</sup> He further found that, as RAAF Headquarters had no control over the operational role assigned to the First Tactical Air Force, it could not be held responsible for that role nor the manner in which the First Tactical Air Force carried out its operational activities. He concluded that Arthur's resignation came from a high sense of duty and a desire to correct defects he believed existed in the RAAF.

Barry determined there was widespread discontent among Morotai-based RAAF personnel and he suspected that this was a partial result of the Jones-Bostock feud. He reported that the RAAF was suffering from the disastrous command decision made in 1942, and neither Jones nor Bostock were the men to make the best of the bad arrangements. Barry also noted a bad relationship had developed between the RAAF and the Australian Army units on Morotai. As noted earlier, Scherger set out to improve this relationship as soon as he returned to the island.

Although Barry's report vindicated Arthur and his 'profit and loss' statement, it brought no discernible change to the RAAF, aside from an improvement in conditions on Morotai.<sup>87</sup> Apart from Caldwell, the other officers remained on Morotai and the pilots continued to fly on operations supporting the Borneo Campaign.

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<sup>85</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 2505/12/517, 'Inquiry into Allegations Relating to Trading in Liquor and Kindred Matters in the First Tactical Air Force and the Northern Area of the Royal Australian Air Force', pp. 151–152.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>87</sup> Robertson, *Australia at War 1939–1945*, p. 169.

## **The Borneo Campaign**

While MacArthur's US forces pushed on through the Philippines, Allied war plans were also directed towards clearing Japanese forces from the territory they occupied in the South-West Pacific Area, which had been bypassed in the main advances. These operations, codenamed *Montclair*, were aimed towards the reoccupation of the Visayan–Mindanao–Borneo–Netherlands East Indies area and planning for them began at General Headquarters on 25 February 1945. One part of *Montclair*, a series of operations named *Oboe*, had as its objectives to recapture Java, to destroy the Japanese forces in the Netherlands East Indies, to re-establish the Dutch Government, and to establish a base for subsequent operations against the Japanese throughout the area. *Oboe* comprised six components (*Oboe 1–6*), which were planned to be six distinct operations. *Oboe 1* was to take Tarakan Island, *Oboe 2* was directed at Balikpapan, *Oboe 3* was directed at Bandjermasin, *Oboe 4* was to be staged at either Surabaya or Batavia, *Oboe 5* was directed at the whole Netherlands East Indies, and *Oboe 6* was to take British Borneo. Only *Oboe 1, 2* and *6* actually came to fruition before the end of the war.<sup>88</sup> Tarakan was selected as the target for the first Allied attack, which was to be a series of amphibious landings by Australian troops, supported by naval and AAF elements.

Tarakan is a small island forming part of the delta area of the Sesajap River in north-east Borneo. The island was an important target because it was a source of oil for the Japanese and, when occupied by the Australians, it would serve as a base for operations against other *Oboe* objectives. The amphibious landings at Tarakan started on 1 May 1945 (P-Day).<sup>89</sup>

The pre-invasion aerial bombardment of the island was largely undertaken by units of the Thirteenth Air Force and a small number of RAAF aircraft. In early April 1945, 15 B-24s from 21 and 24 Squadrons RAAF arrived on Morotai and flew operations with the USAAF's XIII Bomber Command. Their task was to bomb targets on Tarakan and nearby Borneo during the lead-up to the invasion. For 17 days prior to P-Day, B-24s from the 42nd Bombardment Group, B-24s from the 5th and 307th Bombardment Groups, fighters from the 18th and 347th Fighter Groups, and RAAF Beaufighters attacked buildings, jetties, airfields, barracks and oil storage tanks on Tarakan.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> David Wilson, *Always First: The RAAF Airfield Construction Squadrons 1942–1974*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1998, p. 81.

<sup>89</sup> Nelmes, *Tocumwal to Tarakan*, p. 107.

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*; and Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* –

As well as the intensive aerial activity, in the four days leading up to the landing, the invasion area on Tarakan had been subjected to a naval bombardment. This was because it was feared that some 7000 Japanese troops were entrenched in the vicinity of the invasion area and would inflict heavy casualties on the Australian troops.<sup>91</sup> During this time, the bombing raids were also flown against anti-aircraft positions, supply dumps, barracks, warehouses and coastal defence positions. The continual bombing of the defensive positions on the invasion beaches (near Lingkas on the south-west side of the island) forced the Japanese to withdraw inland before the invasion began. Consequently, there was very little resistance in the opening phases of the invasion.<sup>92</sup>

On the day of the invasion, the USAAF P-38 fighters and medium and heavy bomber aircraft carried out their raids successfully but the RAAF B-24s did not appear over the island. Bostock, to his embarrassment, later found out that after the invasion fleet had sailed from Morotai and radio silence was in force, RAAF Headquarters had sent a signal to the B-24 squadrons ordering them to stop flying because they had reached their allocated number of flying hours, on which their maintenance schedules were based. So, instead of supporting the invasion of Tarakan, the RAAF's heavy bombers were grounded for maintenance.<sup>93</sup>

The ship on which Bostock and MacArthur were commanding the operation was also maintaining radio silence and thus the message from RAAF Headquarters was not received. When the RAAF B-24s failed to appear, Bostock was humiliated and was later to comment, 'If I could have been a three-penny bit and fallen through a

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Volume Five – *The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki, June 1944 to August 1945*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, 1965, pp. 463–464.

<sup>91</sup> Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>92</sup> Waters, *OBOE – Air Operations Over Borneo*, pp. 33–34.

<sup>93</sup> Nelmes, *Tocumwal to Tarakan*, p. 107; and Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 457; and Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, p. 121. One wonders, however, whether the RAAF's contribution to the bombing on P-Day would have really made a great deal of difference to the opening phase of the campaign. We know that only 15 RAAF B-24s had been tasked to support Oboe 1, compared to the three USAAF Bombardment Groups (usually comprising four squadrons per Group) and two fighter groups. The tonnage of bombs that could be delivered by USAAF aircraft was obviously far greater than that by the RAAF. Despite the large number of B-24s acquired by the RAAF, Bostock chose to deploy a very small number of the aircraft to directly support the invasion. Perhaps the non-appearance of the B-24s did more to offend Bostock and the reputation of the RAAF than it harmed the invasion troops.

crack in the boards on the deck I would have been thankful.<sup>94</sup> When Bostock later explained the incident to Kenney, the American could only offer his sympathy.<sup>95</sup> In his official report on the *Oboe* campaign, Bostock wrote:

In my opinion, it is inexcusable to allow consideration of routine maintenance procedure of this nature to preclude the employment of aeroplanes in operations in support of an assault on a beach head.<sup>96</sup>

The following day (2 May 1945), a RAAF B-24, which had been tasked for aerial observation duties over Tarakan, also failed to appear for the same reason. Bostock was incensed and again reported:

Such inflexibility of effort is intolerable, and could have caused acute operational embarrassment had enemy ground opposition been more severe.<sup>97</sup>

Because of the grounding of the bomber squadrons, the Tarakan invasion is not one of the high points of Jones' time as CAS. We should give this incident further examination and consider some of the alternatives available to RAAF Headquarters. If the B-24s were grounded because Jones used the maintenance schedules as a means to discredit Bostock in the eyes of MacArthur and Kenney, then he should be condemned as a small-minded person who put personal anger and spitefulness ahead of the lives of Australian Servicemen. In this case, Drakeford should have removed him from the CAS position and replaced him.

If, however, Jones genuinely believed that the aircraft should have been grounded for maintenance, it shows a total lack of awareness of operational needs and an inability to plan ahead on his part. These are not the characteristics possessed by a man who claimed to be a good administrator. RAAF Headquarters had, in the past, kept close control over the B-24's flying hours and there were other courses

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<sup>94</sup> Comments by Mrs Beryl Daley following the presentation of the paper by Alan Stephens titled 'RAAF Operational Commanders', later published in Alan Stephens (ed.), *The RAAF in the Southwest Pacific Area 1942–1945 – The Proceedings of the 1993 RAAF History Conference Held in Canberra on 14 October 1993*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1993, p. 48. Mrs Daley was Kenney's secretary.

<sup>95</sup> Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, p. 121.

<sup>96</sup> Odgers, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Three (Air) – Volume II – Air War Against Japan, 1943–1945*, p. 457.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

Jones could have taken to ensure that aircraft were available to support *Oboe 1*. The scheduled maintenance for aircraft can be changed to fit around operational requirements<sup>98</sup> and one would expect that Jones, who was aware of the invasion plans, could have directed that flying be limited in the weeks preceding the invasion so that the maintenance would be required after the main part of the invasion was successfully completed. Similarly, he could have ensured the necessary maintenance was undertaken prior to the invasion. If it was absolutely essential that the aircraft had to receive maintenance at the time of the Tarakan invasion, Jones could have advised RAAF Command and arranged the temporary deployment of other North-Western Area B-24 squadrons to support the invasion.

### **A Very Busy War**

After reading the preceding accounts of the ongoing conflict, one might be forgiven for thinking that Jones' time during World War II was largely taken up by his feud with Bostock. This, of course, is incorrect. We have seen that Jones oversaw the RAAF's top-level decision-making body—the Air Board—as its Chairman. He also spent a considerable amount of his time away from RAAF Headquarters, visiting RAAF establishments located in Australia and, as the war progressed, other parts of the SWPA. Generally, Jones made one trip per month that took him around Australia or to New Guinea. These trips varied in duration of anywhere between one and two weeks.

### **2 September 1945**

World War II ended following the detonation of two atomic bombs over Japan during August 1945. MacArthur was designated Supreme Commander for the Allied powers to accept, coordinate and carry into effect the general surrender of the Japanese forces. In addition to MacArthur, representatives of other Allied nations signed the surrender documents on behalf of their Governments. After some negotiation, it was agreed that an Australian delegation, headed by Blamey would attend the ceremony and he would be the Australian signatory. To accompany him, Blamey nominated Bostock and Major General F.H. Berryman, (the Chief of Staff, Advanced Land Headquarters). The Australian Government approved Blamey's nominations and added two of its own—Commodore Collins and Captain R.R.

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<sup>98</sup> Discussions with Squadron Leader Graeme Swan at Russell Offices, ACT, 14 June 2003.



Dowling. The War cabinet also added the name of Air Commodore R.J. Brownell (subsequently replaced by Jones) to the delegation.<sup>99</sup>

On 2 September 1945, Jones was one of the hundreds of military personnel aboard the USS *Missouri*, in Tokyo Bay, who were there as representatives of their countries or Services at the surrender. The trip to Japan was not a pleasant one for Jones, although, no doubt, he was extremely happy at the prospect of peace. He made the long flight to Manila aboard his 'personal' Lockheed Hudson (A16-120). Unfortunately, soon after his arrival he suffered from a bout of influenza and was confined to his hotel room for four days, unable to eat anything other than chicken soup. The remainder of the trip was aboard a crowded ship and Jones, still recovering from his illness, was confined to a diet of ice-cream. The diet must have been a good remedy because Jones had recovered by the time the ship docked in Yokohama.<sup>100</sup>

In his autobiography, Jones gives no indication about how he felt on the historic occasion. A contemporary account, however, reported that attending the surrender ceremony was Jones' ('an Australian in R.A.A.F. blue') proudest hour:

It was the hour for which he and the R.A.A.F. had been born. For the war against Japan was the R.A.A.F.'s first great trial of strength. And now he, as its chief and its representative at this historic moment, felt pride in the way it had acquitted itself during those years of war.<sup>101</sup>

Jones, it was reported, returned to Melbourne convinced that the Japanese should never again be given the chance to wage war. He hoped Australians would realise that they had had an extraordinary escape from any real bomb damage and would take steps to ensure the country never again faced the dangers that had been present in the war. In his view, 'maintenance of adequate air defences in the years

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<sup>99</sup> Paul Hasluck, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945 – Series Four (Civil) – Volume II – The Government and the People, 1942–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970, pp. 596–598. Air Commodore Brownell was initially nominated to attend as it was thought that Jones would not be able to reach Tokyo in time for the ceremony. However, Brownell was replaced by Jones when it was found that there was time for the latter to make the journey. Captain Dowling also was replaced by Rear Admiral G.D. Moore (Acting Chief of the Naval Staff).

<sup>100</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 115.

<sup>101</sup> F. Doherty, 'The End of the Conflict', in RAAF Directorate of Public Relations, *Victory Roll: The Royal Australian Air Force in its Sixth Year of War*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1945, p. 11.

to come is the surest way that safety can be guaranteed.<sup>102</sup> The account went on to quote his views on the recently vanquished enemy:

The Japanese have been cowed for the time being, but their spirit has not been broken. They may endeavour to regain their strength for a further attempt to enforce their Greater East Asia Co-prosperity plan upon the world. Only rigid control by the Allies can keep their ambitions in check.<sup>103</sup>

Soon after the war ended the Australian Government rescinded the agreement that handed over operational control of RAAF units to General MacArthur, and the Air Board resumed control of the whole Service. With the cessation of hostilities, operational control of RAAF units reverted to RAAF Headquarters and on 2 September 1945 RAAF Command was disbanded in Brisbane. It was replaced by a unit known as Advanced RAAF Headquarters.<sup>104</sup> Jones now became CAS of a unified Service. The day Japan surrendered, operations ceased to be the RAAF's priority and the Service's activities became more directed towards administrative tasks.

Jones' next major task would be to dismantle the Service that was the source of his pride and to rebuild to a structure that would reflect its role in a changed world.

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<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 11–12. This account made no mention of Bostock's attendance at the surrender ceremony.

<sup>104</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM54 81/4/143, 'Expansion of RAAF Organisation and Administration – Part 1 – Higher Organisation and Command, "Brief" of Command Organisation RAAF 1939 – 1945'.



In this group photograph, taken 'somewhere in New Guinea' in October 1942, are General Blamey (second from left); Arthur Drakeford, Minister for Air (second from right) and Air Vice-Marshal Jones (far right).

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 013370)*



(From left) Air Commodore F. M. Bladin (Air Officer Commanding North-Western Area), Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Lieutenant Colonel Fiedeldij (Commanding Officer No 18 (Netherlands East Indies) Squadron) on the tarmac at McDonald airfield, Northern Territory, shortly after Jones' arrival for a visit to the composite RAAF/Dutch squadron, 1943.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. NWA0434)*



A ground crew engineer explains to Air Vice-Marshal Jones (second from right) the damage caused to the wing of a Beaufighter aircraft of No 30 Squadron by enemy anti-aircraft fire from Babo airfield, Dutch New Guinea, which the RAAF bombed heavily, November 1944. On the left is Air Commodore A.H. Cobby, AOC First Tactical Air Force.

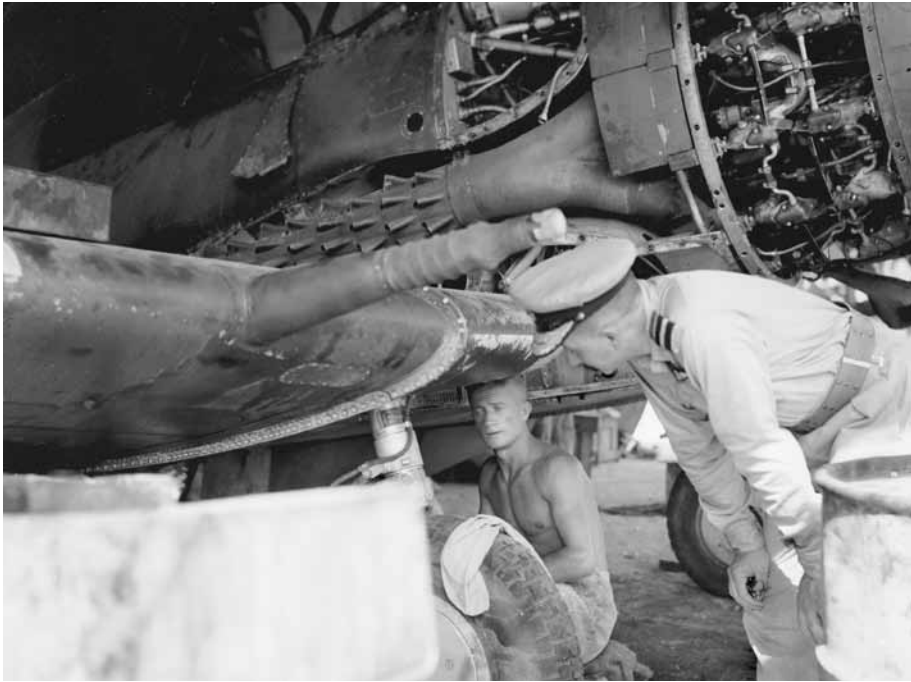
*(Australian War Memorial ID No. OG1706)*



Group photograph of the party who accompanied Air Vice-Marshal Jones, and the aircraft crew, on his inspection visit to First Tactical Air Force, Kamiri airstrip, Noemfoor Island, November 1944.

(From left: Air Vice-Marshal Jones, Flight Lieutenant F. Kelly (aircraft navigator), Squadron Leader W. Upjohn (aircraft pilot), Group Captain D. Ross (Director Technical Maintenance), Wing Commander K.S. Hennock (Director of Operational and Training Requirements), Group Captain H.G. Acton (Director of Equipment Administration) and Squadron Leader N.B. Palmer (Jones' aide)

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. OG1741)*



Air Vice-Marshall Jones talks to a RAAF fitter, Corporal R.H. Ball, working on a Boomerang aircraft of No 5 Squadron at Piva airfield, Bougainville, February 1945.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. OG2265)*



Air Vice-Marshall Jones (right) discusses plans for his visit to the RAAF's most forward operational areas with Air Commodore A.H. Cobby (AOC First Tactical Air Force), Morotai, February 1945.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. OG2291)*



Air Vice-Marshall Jones (centre) at No 17 Stores Unit, Finschhafen, February 1945.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Air Vice-Marshall Jones driving a Jeep during his tour of inspection of RAAF units at Torokina, Bougainville, in February 1945. With Jones is Group Captain W.L. Hely, Officer Commanding No 84 Wing.

*(Australian War Memorial ID  
No. OG2268)*



Air Vice-Marshall A.T. Cole, the RAAF Liaison Officer, South-East Asia Command (left), conferring with Air Vice-Marshall Jones, during the latter's visit to General Kenney's Headquarters, July 1945.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. VIC1639)*



Australian delegates at the Japanese surrender ceremony on board USS *Missouri*, Tokyo Bay, Japan, 2 September 1945.

Back Row (from left): Captain J. Balfour, Lieutenant Colonel D.H. Dwyer, Air Vice-Marshall G. Jones, Lieutenant General F.H. Berryman and Commodore J.A. Collins  
Front Row (from left): Rear Admiral G.D. Moore, General Sir Thomas Blamey and Air Vice-Marshall W.D. Bostock.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 019136)*



George Jones at work on the frame of his first holiday house at Mount Dandenong, Victoria. He designed and built this house in the little spare time he had during World War II. He wanted a place to get away from work and to which he was still able to drive in the era of petrol rationing.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff (left), and Air Marshal George Jones at RAAF Laverton, shortly after the Field Marshal's arrival on his postwar visit to Australia, November 1945.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 125675)*



## *The Meanest Piece of Service Administration*

Australia ended World War II with an extremely powerful air force, which stood ‘as testimony to the remarkable administrative and organisational achievement of Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal George Jones and his colleagues.’<sup>1</sup> By October 1945, the Service possessed 5585 aircraft, was staffed by 173 622 personnel placed in 570 different units, which were located around Australia and the SWPA.<sup>2</sup> In addition, there were thousands of Australian air and ground crew serving with the RAF in other parts of the world. The RAAF also had vast amounts of equipment and other materiel in depots located on the Australian mainland and islands that stretched from Bougainville to Borneo.<sup>3</sup> Jones himself looked back on this achievement with pardonable pride.

Jones and the Air Board were now faced with two enormous tasks—demobilising the Service and building up an air force for the postwar world. The first task started almost straight away. Jones realised that the Service had more personnel than it needed by the time the war in Europe ended but he could not begin downsizing because other Air Board members were loath to reduce the RAAF’s size until Japan was defeated.<sup>4</sup> Rather than wait for this to happen, the Federal Government started on an initiative directed towards rationalising the personnel establishments of the three Services and, on 20 June 1945, Drakeford announced in Parliament the formation of the War Establishments Investigation Committee. Mr W. Slater, a Melbourne barrister and a member of the Victoria State Parliament, chaired the Committee. Assisting him were Gerald Packer (a former RAAF officer) and Group Captain A. Richards (the RAAF Deputy Director of Organisation).<sup>5</sup> The Committee’s task was to examine the non-operational parts of the three Services.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Stephens, ‘Demobilisation and the Interim Air Force’ in John Mordike (ed.), *The Post-War Years: 1945–1954 – The Proceedings of the 1996 RAAF History Conference held in Canberra on 25 October 1996*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1997, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), ‘Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC’, chap. 14, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Jones papers, ‘The Demobilization of the R.A.A.F.’

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Session 1945, Vol. 183, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 20 June, 1945, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1945, p. 3334.

Specifically, it was to review internal organisations and methods to determine more economical means of undertaking Defence related tasks, review proposals for the creation of new units or branches, review personnel numbers and ranks, and investigate whether Service staff should be military or civilian personnel.<sup>6</sup> The Committee worked on these tasks for the next three years, so their work was undertaken in parallel with the RAAF demobilisation. Jones had, by the time of Drakeford's announcement, endorsed a plan to withdraw RAAF personnel from Europe.<sup>7</sup>

## **Demobilisation**

Three days after the end of the Pacific War, the War Cabinet directed all three Services to implement demobilisation plans as soon as possible.<sup>8</sup> The rapid demobilisation of the RAAF was a significant achievement for the Service's senior managers and, in some ways, was a task as great as the building up of the Service during the war years. We might expect that Jones would have played a significant part in managing the demobilisation process. Following receipt of the War Cabinet directive, Jones endorsed a plan to cease RAAF recruiting and to identify and release all surplus personnel. However, it had been decided between Drakeford and Langslow, prior to the end of the war, that the Air Member for Personnel (AMP) and his branch at RAAF Headquarters would be 'the one primarily responsible for the demobilisation of the Air Force.'<sup>9</sup> Air Commodore Hewitt, who had been acting AMP, was permanently appointed to the position. This left Jones free to concentrate on other tasks. We would expect that a person who prided himself on his administrative ability would have capably managed demobilisation or at least shown great interest in its progress. Jones was, however, content to allow Hewitt and his staff to have carriage of the process, while his attention was largely focused on the RAAF's future structure. This did not mean that he did not have some

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<sup>6</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Edge of Centre: The Eventful Life of Group Captain Gerald Packer*, RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Vic., 1992, pp. 72–73.

<sup>7</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1196/36/501/589, 'Reduction of the R.A.A.F. in S.W.P.A. from 53 Squadrons – Organisation and Planning, 1945–46', minute from Jones to Air Member for Personnel, 30 July 1945.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/815/2, Minutes of War Cabinet Meetings, Volume XVIII, 'Minutes of War Cabinet Meeting, Canberra – 17th August, 1945', '(4351) Agendum No. 375/1945 – Demobilisation – Beginning of Demobilisation'.

<sup>9</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/68(1), minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 'Appointment of Air Member for Personnel', 24 August 1945.

sympathy for the young men and women who had served in the RAAF since they left school but for whom there was no longer a job within the Services:

I had faced the same situation in 1918, and I would have only had to recall the state of my own mind at that time, to appreciate the difficulties of the men whom I now had the obligation to 'off load'.<sup>10</sup>

I can well understand the heart burning of the younger men who had the R.A.A.F. figured out as their only home; the only life they had known since school, and the traumas which resulted.<sup>11</sup>

Jones acknowledged the role Hewitt played in this difficult task and his remarkable success:

In one year the service [sic] was reduced from approximately 125,000 men and 17,000 women to about 7,000 all told. This remarkable result was mainly due to the efforts of the Air Member for Personnel, Air Commodore JE Hewitt, who organised and controlled this activity.<sup>12</sup>

Hewitt was assisted in his task by other officers, including Group Captain Richard Kingsland<sup>13</sup>—an officer with a distinguished operational career, who provided an insight into the process. Kingsland found dismantling the RAAF to be a difficult task, with many agonising decisions to be made. For example, the closure of RAAF bases in country areas might mean the economic ruin for nearby towns, so all manner of local financial and social issues had to be considered before it was decided which bases would be closed. Nevertheless, Kingsland found it interesting and challenging work and he found it strange that someone in Jones' position took very little interest in the demobilisation process. In making important decisions, Kingsland had to rely on his own judgement and ability and received no guidance from the top, stating 'Jones was of no use what so ever as my chief'. There were numerous problems to be solved, which should have been challenging and exciting tasks for CAS. Instead, such problems were an annoyance to Jones and discussions

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<sup>10</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC', chap. 14, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Jones papers, 'The Demobilization of the R.A.A.F.'

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> At the time, Kingsland was known as Julius ('Dick') Cohen. He changed his name by deed poll to Richard Kingsland in 1947.

between himself and Kingsland were few and fruitless.<sup>14</sup> Kingsland experienced some frustrating and unpleasant dealings with Jones, the worst of which was when Jones suggested that Kingsland was responsible for a series of leaks to the media on the RAAF's demobilisation plans. Kingsland eventually tired of the frustration of dealing with a disinterested CAS and resigned from the RAAF.<sup>15</sup>

Another officer whose work was also met by a lack of enthusiasm from Jones was Gerald Packer,<sup>16</sup> who became a member of Slater's War Establishments Investigation Committee. Drakeford had a high regard for Packer's abilities and considered his very wide and lengthy experience of Air Force matters made him suitable to work with the Committee.<sup>17</sup> Jones, however, took an opposing view. He was unimpressed with the Committee and its membership, especially Packer, who he described as someone:

who had always been a troublesome officer and on this committee he lived up to his reputation. He was a great believer in time and motion studies for the performance of all work. He wrote all the reports for this committee and endeavoured to show that the tasks of the stores depots, repair workshops and other units could be done with much fewer men.<sup>18</sup>

Jones was also less than happy with Packer's time in the Service but realised there was little he could do because Packer had influence with the politicians:

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<sup>14</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland of Campbell, ACT, 12 September 1999. To make matters worse, as Hewitt noted later, Jones, for unknown reasons, had developed some sort of animosity towards Kingsland. Air Vice-Marshal J.E. Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, Vic., 1980, p. 300. Kingsland had served on Bostock's staff at RAAF Command in the position of Senior Intelligence Staff Officer. It is possible that Jones distrusted Kingsland because he had worked closely with Bostock. Australian War Memorial, AWM54 81/2/4, 'R.A.A.F. Command Order of Battle, January 1942/44 – Commanders and Senior Staff Officers within R.A.A.F Command'.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland. After leaving the RAAF, Kingsland began a long and very successful career in the Commonwealth Public Service, which saw him rise to the office of Secretary of several Federal Government departments.

<sup>16</sup> Gerald Packer had been Officer Commanding of Forward Echelon, RAAF Headquarters in Brisbane for some time during World War II. He left the RAAF in June 1945 at the same time as the War Establishments Investigation Committee was formed. Coulthard-Clark, *Edge of Centre*, pp. 70 and 72.

<sup>17</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates, Session 1945, Vol. 183, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 20 June, 1945, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1945, p. 3334.

<sup>18</sup> Jones papers, 'The Demobilization of the R.A.A.F.'

On one occasion when serving with 1st Tactical Air Force he attempted to cancel the orders of his commanding officer because he disagreed with them. Nevertheless he was highly regarded by Langslow, the Secretary, Dept of Air and also by Drakeford the Minister.<sup>19</sup>

Packer conducted various management efficiency studies relevant to personnel numbers required for various tasks within the restructured postwar Service. Jones dismissed Packer's work, claiming the people who actually did the work were puzzled by his conclusions.<sup>20</sup> We may wonder whether Jones also dismissed Packer's work because he (Jones) was uneasy with contemporary management methodology.

Regardless of Jones' role, demobilisation went ahead at a remarkable rate. There was, however, one area in which he played an important part. That is, while others were dealing with downsizing the whole of the Service, some of Jones' time was occupied with one particular aspect—resolving the RAAF's high command situation. As the RAAF shrank in terms of personnel, squadrons and aircraft numbers, it would be reasonable to expect there would not be the need in the Interim (or postwar) Air Force for the same number of senior officers that the wartime Service possessed. Regardless of such reasoning, one of the more controversial aspects of the Service's reorganisation during this period was the forced retirement of certain senior officers, shortly after the end of the war. This move should not have come as a surprise to the senior RAAF officers because Prime Minister Chifley announced the direction for senior appointments in all three Services in December 1945. During a press interview he stated that it was considered desirable for older personnel to be retired to make way for younger men who had distinguished themselves in the war. Those officers who were most likely to gain advancement were those who had gained experience in managing operations that used the combined resources of the three Services.<sup>21</sup>

In his autobiography, Jones tends to gloss over this issue, noting that at the end of the war the Service had one Air Marshal and 12 Air Vice-Marsals, the majority of who had served in World War I and were within a few years of their retirement age. The Government, according to Jones, had no alternative to placing the majority of

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Coulthard-Clark, *Edge of Centre*, pp. 73–74; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 118

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), 'Composition of Postwar R.A.A.F., paper titled 'Post-War Defence Policy', for Press.

them on the Retired List.<sup>22</sup> In reality, the task Jones and Hewitt faced was a lot more difficult and drawn out than Jones alluded to and it was not a spur of the moment decision.<sup>23</sup> Nor was it the initiative of Jones or the Air Board, as the Government started, at least a year before the war ended, to plan for the downsizing of the three Services.

In late August 1944, Drakeford wrote to Jones questioning the suitability and qualifications of the officers holding the higher command and administrative appointments in the RAAF. Jones was directed to report on the disposition of officers who did not measure up to requirements and to suggest changes that should be made. To ensure there was not a void in the upper echelons of the Service, Jones was to ascertain that, when recommending changes, officers were available within the RAAF who could fill the top positions with greater efficiency and who fully merited advancement.<sup>24</sup>

Jones compiled a list of officers considered to be unsuitable, which looked like a senior RAAF 'Who's Who'. At the top were the first two RAAF CAS—Williams and Goble—followed by Anderson, McNamara VC, Wrigley, De La Rue, Summers, Murphy, Christie, Marsden and Murray.<sup>25</sup> Surprisingly, the name W.D. Bostock did not appear on Jones' original list. The reason was that he was to be retained in the Service, temporarily at least, because of 'his undoubted ability' and the position he held at the time.<sup>26</sup> We may suspect that Jones and Drakeford had learned from previous dealings with Kenney and MacArthur that it was not worthwhile making yet another attempt to remove Bostock from his position as AOC RAAF Command while that organisation was part of the AAF. Instead, they would wait until after the war's end. In the meantime, Jones put together a case to get rid of some of his other fellow officers. In looking at this initiative and determining whether Jones' actions were in the best interests of the RAAF, we should consider a few points. At the time Jones was undertaking this work, there was a perception that, after the war was over, Australia would have no visible threat to national security and this meant smaller Defence Services. If, at the end of the war, the RAAF had a large number of very senior officers, we can ask the question: in a greatly reduced

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<sup>22</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>23</sup> Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, p. 291.

<sup>24</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, 'Proposal to Retire Certain Senior Officers of RAAF', minute from Drakeford to Jones, 31 August 1944.

<sup>25</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 September 1944.

<sup>26</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 17 January 1945.

Service (in terms of personnel and aircraft) what would have been the role for many of these officers? While the methods Jones employed and the comments he made may be open to criticism, we can also ask what alternatives the Government had, other than to retire these officers. To retain them until their retirement age would have resulted in a very top-heavy personnel structure for the RAAF, with the possibility of a number of senior officers having little work to do in the postwar Service. Their retention would also have blocked the promotion of junior officers and it may have meant that the animosities that existed prewar and during the war may have continued. An alternative might have been to offer the retirees senior positions within the Commonwealth Public Service, but this would have upset the non-productive practice of advancement through seniority, which hindered modernisation of the Federal Public Service up until the 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

Jones was quite forthright in his reasons for recommending the retirements. His Top Secret minute to Drakeford and associated documents are worth noting because they show how Jones viewed some of his fellow officers. In the case of Richard Williams, Jones wrote that this officer was not considered for the position of CAS at the time Burnett left and 'in view of this it is unlikely that the Government would wish to give him another appointment commensurate with his rank'. Jones, if he was aware of the circumstances surrounding his own appointment, chose to ignore them, because we now know his claim to be incorrect as Williams was Drakeford's first choice for the CAS position in 1942. Jones provided the Minister with his views of Williams' management of the RAAF:

In my opinion, this officer, although competent in details of service administration, is lacking in the breadth of view necessary in an officer of his rank, and he has been conspicuously lacking in judgement in the selection of officers for promotion. He must accept a considerable measure of responsibility for the lack of fighting strength of the R.A.A.F. at the outbreak of war. This applies particularly to the absence of reserves and a secure source of supply of up-to-date aircraft.<sup>28</sup>

Jones, quite unfairly, was prepared to blame Williams for nearly every problem that beset the RAAF in the SWPA. Such an attitude does not reflect well on Jones,

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<sup>27</sup> The opportunities for public service appointments for retired officers would have been slim, when we consider that it was not only the RAAF that was downsizing but the RAN, Army and the Service Departments as well. In effect, there would have been more people than positions available.

<sup>28</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 September 1944.

and some of his comments are so petty as to be almost irrelevant. We should note the introductory phrase, 'In my opinion', and question how Jones formed this judgement. We can only suspect that it was based on Jones' long-held view that Williams was an Army officer who lacked a technical knowledge of aircraft. Jones blamed his former Chief for the lack of combat aircraft in the RAAF at the outbreak of the Pacific War (i.e. 'the lack of fighting strength') and claimed Williams was totally unaware of aircraft acquisition processes and that he 'thought you could conjure them [aircraft] up out of space when the trouble started'. Williams' perceived problems with aviation were due to his World War I service. He had been in Palestine and, according to Jones, had no idea of 'the aircraft situation as others had seen it on the Western Front. Those of us who knew what was happening with the aircraft situation in Europe could see we were falling further behind.'<sup>29</sup> Nowhere among the papers on the official RAAF file dealing with the retirement issue was there any documented evidence that Williams lacked the 'breadth of view necessary in an officer of his rank', and nowhere was there any reference to the officers who were promoted through Williams' lack of judgement. On this latter point, one could suspect that Jones was still carrying a grudge over Williams' initial appointment of officers at the time the RAAF was formed more than 25 years earlier.<sup>30</sup> Jones claimed that Williams 'had his favourites, members of his own squadron in the war [World War I]; he got them all into senior RAAF positions after the war.'<sup>31</sup>

Such comments also hint at the jealousy, of which Jones was so critical, that was so prevalent within the Service in its early days.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps, at this point the jealousy had finally surfaced in Jones himself and he was in a position to do something about it. Over the years Jones must have forgotten his adverse comments about

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<sup>29</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988', transcript of interview. This is a poor argument on Jones' part, as Williams acknowledges that he was tasked with acquiring aircraft for the RAAF during his time in the United States during World War II. Sir Richard Williams, *These are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, pp. 297–298.

<sup>30</sup> It will be remembered that Bostock, at the time initial ranks were allocated in the RAAF, was appointed to a rank higher than Jones.

<sup>31</sup> Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988'. Despite Jones' perceptions about favouritism, it would appear that the RAAF's senior officers' service during World War I was widespread through the AFC and RFC/RAF. Williams, Anderson, McNamara VC, Murphy and Lukis served with No 1 Squadron, AFC. Cole served with Nos 1 and 2 Squadrons. Cobby and Jones served with No 4 Squadron. Bostock, Brownell, De La Rue and Summers served with the RFC/RAF, and Goble served with the RNAS.

<sup>32</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921–39*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1991, p. 36.



Williams, because in his autobiography he wrote a contradiction when discussing Bostock, to the effect that the latter 'had little respect for Williams's considerable ability'.<sup>33</sup> Or perhaps it was that by the time he wrote his autobiography, Jones had become aware that Williams was held in high regard by many people as the 'Father of the RAAF' and it would discredit Bostock if he were known to be critical of the distinguished Air Marshal.

In his comments to the Government, Jones did not consider the fact that Williams had spent most of World War II outside Australia, where he was away from the day-to-day management of the RAAF.<sup>34</sup> However, one expects that, on his overseas postings, Williams would have been dealing with senior RAF and USAAF officers on a regular basis and, no doubt, would have acquired a reasonably good overview of the entire conflict. One can thus assume that Williams' knowledge and experience, gained from working in the UK and US, would have been quite valuable to the postwar RAAF. Nevertheless, at that time, William's career was dependent on Jones' opinion and that opinion is what influenced Drakeford. It is also reasonable to suspect that Jones realised that when Williams returned to RAAF Headquarters he again would be the Service's most senior officer in Australia and the Government would have to decide whether to appoint the Air Marshal as CAS or to find him other employment. By recommending Williams' retirement, with the accompanying criticism, Jones was clearing a path for his retention as CAS in the postwar RAAF. This supposition could also be applied to the other officers who were senior to Jones.

The Service's other former Australian CAS was next on Jones' list, and Air Vice-Marshal Goble did not fare much better under Jones' critical pen:

In my opinion this officer has a sound Service knowledge and an alert mind, but suffers from certain nervous characteristics which make continuous application to a task impossible. This has severely handicapped him in his Service work.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 81. Or perhaps it was that Jones disliked both officers, but of the two, Williams was the more preferable, and he used the comment as another opportunity to criticise Bostock.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, pp. 245 and 297. Williams served as Air Officer in Charge of Administration for the RAF Coastal Command until 1940. He was appointed the RAAF representative to the Combined Chiefs of Staff organisation, in Washington, in 1942.

<sup>35</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 September 1944.

Jones would have been aware of the facts surrounding Goble's earlier resignation as CAS in 1939 and, while he (Jones) was Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, he had the opportunity to observe Goble's command and management abilities and could well have based his judgement on what he saw. It should be remembered that Goble was in Canada at this time and this was to be to his disadvantage because Jones' advice to Drakeford was that Goble (then 53 years of age) had no position to return to upon the completion of his overseas posting.<sup>36</sup> This could well have been the case when Goble returned to Australia and to a much smaller RAAF. One could be forgiven in thinking, when reading the reports on the officers, that no-one in the RAAF was any good, except Jones! It could also be considered to be quite unprofessional for Jones to level criticisms of this nature, without specific examples to reinforce them, against his fellow officers.

Jones considered that Air Commodore (acting Air Vice-Marshal) W.H. Anderson was a hardworking, conscientious and loyal officer but he lacked constructive capacity and organising ability, and he had on occasions shown regrettable weaknesses. This was an interesting comment on an officer who the Federal Government had considered suitable to act as CAS four years earlier. Anderson had held the position of Air Member for Personnel between 30 November 1943 and 10 October 1944.<sup>37</sup> In this role, Jones would have had the opportunity to observe Anderson's skills and abilities in a senior management position. Therefore, it may be argued that Jones was in a position to form the opinion the officer was unsuitable for further appointments to high administrative positions.<sup>38</sup> CAS was more critical of Air Vice-Marshal F.H. McNamara, VC:

Although he possesses considerable theoretical Service knowledge, he has shown himself to be incapable of co-ordinated thinking required of an officer in a senior appointment.<sup>39</sup>

Jones added that, while McNamara was Air Liaison Officer in London, the administrative affairs of UK-based RAAF personnel fell into a chaotic condition. Jones disregarded the satisfactory reports McNamara had received from the RAF

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Office of Air Force History, 'The Air Board'

<sup>38</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 September 1944.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

and considered that he would be quite unsuitable for further senior appointment within the RAAF.<sup>40</sup>

Jones was of the view that acting Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole lacked 'certain of those qualities expected to be possessed by senior officers of such rank'.<sup>41</sup> No doubt, Jones was referring to Cole's performance at the RAAF Headquarters Mess Meeting at Ormond Hall on 8 November 1944. Air Vice-Marshal Henry Wrigley was reported to have moderately good Service knowledge and was a painstaking administrator who, unfortunately, had no great depth of view and was occasionally very undiplomatic—he made considerable errors in the manner in which he handled subordinates. The reason justifying Air Commodore H.F. De La Rue's retirement was his poor health, otherwise Jones considered that he had a 'fairly good Service knowledge' and considerable strength of character, 'although sometimes his efforts are ill-directed'.<sup>42</sup>

Air Commodore J.H. Summers was also the subject of criticism. He was said to have limited Service knowledge and his decisions were erratic. He was a good disciplinarian but had to be censured for failing to carry out orders from RAAF Headquarters and for adopting an insubordinate attitude. Summers was AOC North-Eastern Area, but Jones considered him to be unsuited to further employment in senior RAAF positions.<sup>43</sup>

Now for the remaining officers. Wing Commander (temporary Air Commodore) Arthur Murphy had passed the retirement age for his rank and it was thought he should make way for younger officers to advance.<sup>44</sup> Other officers who had

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<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* In a Top Secret minute titled 'Retirement of Certain R.A.A.F. Officers' were harsh comments to the effect that McNamara VC, Anderson, Lukis, Brownell and Summers did not take a lead in the RAAF during the war commensurate with their seniority in the Permanent Air Force. While they may have carried out the duties assigned to them in wartime posts with reasonable efficiency, their future employment would have prejudiced the promotion of younger, and at least equally efficient, officers and the development of the RAAF.

<sup>41</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, Top Secret minute titled 'Retirement of Certain R.A.A.F. Officers'.

<sup>42</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 September 1944.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* On reading these comments, one might suspect that Summers may have taken the 'wrong' side in the Jones-Bostock feud.

<sup>44</sup> Arthur William Murphy deserves a special mention as he had the distinction of being RAAF 'Airman No. 1'. He had served as a gunner and later as a pilot with 1 Squadron, AFC in the Middle East, was Mentioned in Dispatches and commissioned. After the war he served with the Central Flying School as a Sergeant Mechanic (his commission was terminated at the end of World War I). He gained further fame by accompanying Captain Henry Wrigley on the first trans-Australia flight—they flew a B.E.2 from Point Cook to Darwin over the period November–

also reached or passed their retirement age were Wing Commander (acting Air Commodore) R. Christie, Wing Commander T.R. Marsden and Squadron Leader (temporary Group Captain) J.F. Murray.

Based on Jones' opinions, Drakeford advised Curtin that retirement of the nominated officers was desirable in the interests of the RAAF.<sup>45</sup> Despite the Government's desire to downsize the Services, the retirement process proceeded slowly, as F.M. Forde, (the acting Minister for Defence) then asked for further information about the retirement selection process.<sup>46</sup> Jones replied that he had considered all officers from the rank of Group Captain upwards before he made his recommendations. Bostock was missing from the list of officers presented to the Minister for Defence but his case, Jones claimed, was fully considered.<sup>47</sup>

It was at this point that the Prime Minister added a new dimension to the retirement situation. He requested Drakeford to supply him with details of all officers at the rank of Air Commodore and above. It would appear from the second paragraph of Curtin's request—'Statements relating to the Navy and Army have been received from the other Service Ministers'<sup>48</sup>—that the initiative to retire the RAAF officers did not begin with Drakeford but at a higher level. If we go back a few months to October 1944, we find that the Army had expanded its senior officer retirement plans. F.M. Forde, in his capacity of Minister for the Army, had written to the Treasurer, stating in his opening paragraph:

On 27th September, the Commander-in-Chief forwarded a recommendation to me to provide for reduced retiring ages and adequate retirement benefits for Staff Corps Officers.<sup>49</sup>

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December 1919. Murphy was again commissioned in September 1921 and spent the remainder of his time in the RAAF working in aircraft maintenance areas. Lieutenant Colonel Neil C. Smith, AM, *One Thousand Airmen: An Examination of the First 1000 Enlistments in the Royal Australian Air Force*, Mostly Unsung Military History Research, Gardenvale, Vic., pp. 35–37.

<sup>45</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Drakeford to Curtin, 7 October 1944. Interestingly, Williams' name was omitted from this first list that Drakeford sent to Curtin. Perhaps the Minister still had other plans for Williams.

<sup>46</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Forde to Drakeford, 30 December 1944.

<sup>47</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Jones to Drakeford, 17 January 1945. On some occasions Jones must have wondered about his political masters. Forde asked that he be supplied with details of retirement ages and plans for financial benefits for the retirees. In the final paragraph of this minute, Jones pointed out to Drakeford that he had already given this information in his original minute in September 1944.

<sup>48</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Curtin to Drakeford, 20 March 1945.

<sup>49</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Forde to Chifley, 14 October 1944.

Forde also noted that General Blamey had asked for a complete retirement plan to be in operation some time before the cessation of hostilities, so that its details would be known to officers planning advancement in the AIF and also to officers who would have to be retired at that time.<sup>50</sup> The Army's experience in officer retirement differed to that managed by the RAAF in that it started earlier and made better provision for the retirees. The Army started to downsize its personnel numbers in 1943 and many officers were retired before the end of the war. In some cases, the retirements were well managed, but in others they were poorly managed. Some officers were content to leave the Army, while others were disappointed because they considered they had something to contribute to the Service.<sup>51</sup>

So it would appear that Drakeford, Jones and the Air Board were not acting alone in retiring senior officers, although it seems that the Army's plans were much more visible to all officers concerned and the Army hierarchy had made better superannuation provision for the officers concerned.<sup>52</sup> While Curtin received a list of all senior RAAF officers in April 1945, it would be several more months before action started.

Finally, in October 1945 the Air Board decided who should be retired. The long list started with Williams, Goble, Anderson, Cole and McNamara, and this time Bostock was included. The official statement to support Bostock's retirement read as follows:

This officer, has during the war period held appointments as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff and subsequently as Air Officer Commanding R.A.A.F. Command. He has displayed inability to work in harmony with certain other high ranking R.A.A.F. officers, while his attitude towards the Air Board in certain matters (his use of the title Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, R.A.A.F. Command being a case in point) has indicated a lack of appreciation of his responsibility, as well as of co-operation, which considerations render his continued employment undesirable in responsible posts commensurate with his rank and seniority. These difficulties are already known to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Discussions with Mr Roger Lee, Australian Army History Unit, 6 August 2003.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, p. 329.

<sup>53</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/1510/1, 'Higher Direction of RAAF – Retirement of Senior Officers of Permanent Air Force', minute from Drakeford to Forde, 'Proposal to Retire Certain Senior Officers of the Permanent Air Force', Attachment B, 12 Jan 1946. It is interesting

Jones made a comment, late in his life, which clearly indicates he did not regret retiring his rival—‘immediately the war ended, we had to get rid of about twelve senior officers and Bostock was one to go I can assure you. The Labor Government had no time for him.’<sup>54</sup>

In his minute to the Air Board, Hewitt explained that Wrigley, De La Rue, Murphy, Eaton, McIntyre, Swift and Murray had passed the statutory fixed age for retirement. The posts occupied by Williams, Anderson, Cole and McNamara had, or would, become obsolete.

One other issue that Hewitt considered was the availability of suitable officers to continue the efficient management of the RAAF. This was determined by calculating the maximum number of officers expected to be required for the postwar RAAF and the suitable officers who would remain in employment. It was determined that senior appointments would not exceed 13 (Air Board appointments and Commands). Hewitt made the logical observation to the Air Board to reinforce his nominations to the senior appointments, ‘It would appear to follow that, if the officers now holding the other 7 Commands are capable of efficiently administering those Commands in wartime, they must be equally capable of administering comparable peace time appointments.’ Hewitt nominated eight officers (Charlesworth, McCauley, Ewart, Scherger, Knox-Knight, Wilson, Lachal and Walters) as being suitable for senior appointments within the postwar Service. In addition, a further 26 officers—mostly at Group Captain level—were nominated for ‘more junior appointments.’ This list included Hancock, Hely, Garing and Murdoch.<sup>55</sup>

Hewitt and Group Captain Winneke (Director of Personal Services) drafted letters to each officer nominated for retirement. The letters, which included details of the amounts of money to be paid as retirement benefits, were taken to Drakeford who asked that they be dispatched at an opportune time during the Parliamentary session, as he expected to be faced with questions and possibly complaints in the newspapers. Hewitt advised Drakeford not to answer any question because

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to note that Attachment A to the same minute gave a brief explanation for the retirement of each officer. Most explanations were summarised into a paragraph, except Bostock, who was given one and a half pages!

<sup>54</sup> Coulthard-Clark, ‘Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988.’

<sup>55</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Hewitt to Secretary Air Board, October 1945. Of those nominated, Scherger, McCauley, Hancock and Murdoch all reached the position of CAS.

the wording of each letter was courteous and considerate, and the compensation offered was fair. Before the letters were dispatched, Drakeford asked Jones for his opinion. Jones paused as he walked towards the Minister's desk, raised his right arm, clenched his fist and exclaimed, 'Let us grasp the nettle.'<sup>56</sup>

The letters were similar in content, advising the recipient that the Government had considered the retirement of certain Permanent Air Force (PAF) officers and that the postwar Service would be required to function on a considerably reduced basis. Therefore, unless older officers retired, there would have been limited advancement opportunities for younger officers. The letter continued with:

Under these circumstances, it has been decided, after due consideration, to effect your retirement, and the normal administrative action necessary to place you on the Retired List will be initiated in the near future.

In communicating this advice to you, the Government desires me to convey expression of its great appreciation of the long and valuable service you have rendered to the Royal Australian Air Force and to express its good wishes to you for the future. Please also accept my personal thanks for your assistance during the time I have been Minister.<sup>57</sup>

The remainder of the one and three-quarter page letter dealt with redundancy payments, which were also a matter of contention for those who were being retired. Jones expressed little sympathy towards the retirees, stating only that the way was now clear for suitable careers for officers who had entered the Service before World War II and who had served with distinction during that war—officers such as Hewitt, Bladin, Charlesworth, McCauley and Scherger were all in this category.<sup>58</sup>

The press was very quick to question the retirements. *The Argus* reported that no official reason had been given for Bostock's retirement and Australia had lost, for its immediate postwar defence planning 'the ability and knowledge of the airman who directly controlled the whole of Australia's wartime operational air forces.'<sup>59</sup> In its editorial of Monday 25 February 1946, *The Herald* asked why some of the most senior and distinguished RAAF officers were cast abruptly into retirement

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<sup>56</sup> Hewitt, *Adversity in Success*, pp. 292–293.

<sup>57</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, letter from Drakeford to Bostock, 21 February 1946. Similar letters were sent to other officers.

<sup>58</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC'; chap. 14, p. 4.

<sup>59</sup> 'Compulsorily retired from RAAF: Air Vice-Marshal Bostock', in *The Argus*, 23 February 1946.

without a public expression of gratitude from the Government. The editorial also asked why Bostock was removed on the grounds that there was no longer a place for him within the Service. The column's writer reminded the readers that there were jealous rivalries present within the Service during the war and commented that it would have been a deplorable situation if Bostock's retirement was a result of the feuds that arose from the divided command.<sup>60</sup>

One question that comes to mind is why Drakeford allowed Williams to be retired. Prior to Jones' appointment as CAS, Drakeford had nominated Williams for that position but this had been vetoed by Curtin. Drakeford now had a new Prime Minister to deal with and one wonders why he did not put the same case he presented in 1942 for Williams, to Chifley. Williams was Drakeford's first choice for appointment as CAS in May 1942—four years later he was first on the retirement list. Drakeford, however, found another way to look after Williams.

Williams had received a hint that he was to be retired, while he was in the US. Early in January 1946, Drakeford telephoned him and asked whether the Air Marshal would accept appointment to the position of Director-General of Civil Aviation but it was not until he returned to Australia that he learned officially of the retirement plans.<sup>61</sup> He was unimpressed because, like all military officers, he expected he would be employed until he reached his retirement age. It was, he wrote later, with justifiable bitterness, 'the meanest piece of Service administration in my experience.'<sup>62</sup> Williams accepted the Civil Aviation appointment.

Bostock was also unhappy with his forced retirement and wrote a letter of protest to Drakeford. In addition, he submitted a redress of grievance to the Air Board. The redress was supported by a personal letter from MacArthur, who described Bostock as 'one of the world's most successful airmen.'<sup>63</sup> As one might expect, regardless of MacArthur's letter, the redress was unsuccessful.

Another senior officer who went into retirement at this time was Jones' old friend, Air Commodore A.H. Cobby. It had been decided that the services of Cobby, together with Group Captains Simms and Gibson (who had been on Morotai at the time of the 'mutiny'), would be terminated as a result of the findings of the Barry

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<sup>60</sup> 'Politics in the RAAF', in *The Herald*, 25 February 1946.

<sup>61</sup> Williams, *These are Facts*, pp. 326–327. Civil aviation was, at that time, the responsibility of the Minister for Air.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>63</sup> Stephens, 'Demobilisation and the Interim Air Force', p. 16.



Commission and subsequent Air Board action. Simms and Gibson would be given the opportunity to resign their commissions and, if they did so, their discharge papers would record 'at their own request'.<sup>64</sup> The Air Board looked after Cobby a bit better than some of his contemporaries and Langslow arranged employment for Cobby in the Department of Civil Aviation after the latter ceased duty with the RAAF on 19 August 1946.<sup>65</sup>

The September 1942 edition of the *Royal Australian Air Force List* showed George Jones as the fourth-highest ranking officer, preceded by Williams, Goble and Bostock. In the June 1947 edition of the *Air Force List*, Jones was the RAAF's most senior officer.<sup>66</sup> He was, by that time, the only air force chief from World War II who had retained his position in peacetime. Jones and Air Commodore Mackinoly were the only remaining RAAF officers who had seen service in the two world wars.<sup>67</sup>

The removal of the senior officers may have solved the RAAF's leadership problems and allowed for the advancement of talented officers, but the Interim Air Force (as the RAAF was known in the immediate postwar years) was not a happy organisation, as Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park found when he visited Australia in June 1946. During his time in the country, he had discussions with political and Service leaders on plans for the RAAF's future. Postwar planning was making its mark on the Service, as Park found discipline and morale to be poor and, while there were many good junior officers, there was a lack of confidence towards the future of the RAAF. There was also little of the camaraderie Park had experienced in the RAF and RNZAF. To make matters worse for personnel morale, Park found the newspapers were very unfriendly to the Services and showed no interest in comments he made while in the country, on the roles of both air power and Australia in World War II.<sup>68</sup> Jones met with Park as part of the discussions

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<sup>64</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 7 February 1946. Regardless of the opportunity, Gibson chose not to retire and remained in the Service until the 1960s. Discussions with Air Vice-Marshal Dave Rogers, AM (Retd), 28 September 2003.

<sup>65</sup> Office of Air Force History, 31/8/44, minute from Langslow to Hewitt, 14 August 1946.

<sup>66</sup> *Royal Australian Air Force List*, September 1942; and RAAF Publication No. 598, *Royal Australian Air Force List*, June 1947.

<sup>67</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC', chap. 14, p. 4.

<sup>68</sup> Vincent Orange, *A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, GCB, KBE, MC, DFC, DCL*, Methuen, London, 1984, pp. 239–240. I found no record of discussion that may have taken place between Park and Jones. One assumes that, if future planning for the RAAF was discussed, Jones took little heed of the organisation of the RAF, as his own plans for the RAAF retained the

on Service planning but tended to distance himself from the distinguished New Zealander outside work engagements and it was Kingsland (still a serving officer at that time) who, on at least one occasion, invited Park to the Officers Mess for a drink. Jones did not drink alcohol regularly, nor in great quantity, nor did he frequently mix socially with his colleagues (he was not a regular patron of the Mess) but on this occasion he showed the New Zealander a great discourtesy. As CAS, he should have shown Park every accommodation, befitting a man of his stature. It is possible, however, that Jones suspected the Australian Government still maintained its plans to replace him with Park and, without MacArthur to disrupt things, these plans could have gone ahead. Whatever his reason, Jones was unhappy and stayed away from Park.<sup>69</sup>

Jones' fears were not realised and not only was he retained as CAS but he was made a temporary Air Marshal on 1 January 1947. He was promoted to that rank on 1 July the following year (a promotion that the Government could have made in 1942). It is interesting to consider that when the RAAF was at its largest in terms of personnel, units and assets it was headed by an Air Vice-Marshal. Two years after the end of the war, when the RAAF was a fraction of its wartime size, the Government finally saw fit to promote Jones. Jones continued to manage the much-reduced RAAF in the same manner as he had done during the war, and as part of his work, he continued to visit RAAF bases both in Australia and overseas, although not with the same frequency. Jones enjoyed flying and took the opportunity to pilot Service aircraft during his visits to the bases. He managed to fly each new aircraft as it entered RAAF service, including the de Havilland Vampire—the RAAF's first jet aircraft. A contemporary newspaper account reported that Jones' conversion to jet aircraft was conducted in an extremely short period of time. He was shown over the Vampire at Williamstown, climbed into the cockpit and took off, 'what is more, he flew it in bifocals!'<sup>70</sup> Despite his enjoyment of flying, as CAS he did not have the opportunity to exercise his ability as a pilot frequently enough and thus became out of touch with flying and had lost some of his skills. Fortunately, his forays into the air were free of major incidents.<sup>71</sup>

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prewar area commands, rather than adopting the RAF system of functional commands.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland.

<sup>70</sup> 'A man called Jones', in *The Herald*, 30 June 1951.

<sup>71</sup> Alan Stephens and Jeff Isaacs, *High Fliers: Leaders of the Royal Australian Air Force*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1996, p. 96.

In spite of his position as a Service chief, to the public Jones was still seen as a quiet and unassuming man. In a 1951 newspaper interview, he explained his decision-making technique, which was borrowed from Lord Tedder: 'Faced with a problem, you obtain from experts a statement of their varied opinions. You make an appreciation of all views and reach a conclusion. Then you follow it colourlessly.'<sup>72</sup>

### **Newspaper Comments**

Following his retirement from the RAAF, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock took up work as a newspaper journalist. As a civilian, he now had the opportunity to tell his side of the RAAF's high command debacle. Starting on 22 June 1946, as 'The Herald's Specialist Aviation Correspondent', he wrote a series of four articles, which were published in *The Herald*. In the first article, he called for a Royal Commission or some other competent investigation into what he referred to as 'the unsound foundations upon which our Air Force rests'. He raised eight points he considered that the Federal Government should answer before it decided upon the structure of the postwar RAAF.<sup>73</sup> The newspaper articles are important because they present views of one side of the command struggle, written soon after the war ended. Interested observers would have to wait for over 40 years to read Jones' view of the unhappy episode and, even then, those observers would be disappointed with Jones' lack of detail.<sup>74</sup>

Bostock was motivated by the desire to tell the story of RAAF Command because, as he claimed quite incorrectly, 'It is unlikely that it will find a place in the official history of the RAAF as prepared by the Department of Air.'<sup>75</sup> In making this claim, he does a great disservice to the men who compiled the four-volume history of the RAAF in World War II.

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<sup>72</sup> 'A man called Jones', in *The Herald*, 30 June 1951.

<sup>73</sup> W.D. Bostock, 'RAAF's Unhappy Story: Govt. Indicted On Eight Points', in *The Herald*, 22 June 1946.

<sup>74</sup> George Jones' autobiography, *From Private to Air Marshal*, was published in 1988. It is a disappointing book because of what it does not tell the reader. Its 155 pages are a collection of Jones' recollections about certain events in his life. However, he still does not explain the majority of events, for example: why he took certain actions (such as why he joined the RAAF in 1921), his relationship with politicians and why he entered politics himself (his election campaigns are totally omitted from the book, as are most details of his family life). Jones had the opportunity to produce a work that could have been regarded as a key historical reference on the RAAF between 1921 and 1951. Unfortunately, this was not his intention, as he wanted to write about how he saw things.

<sup>75</sup> W.D. Bostock, 'Command muddle at grim war stage', in *The Herald*, 24 June 1946.

Bostock stated that decisions regarding the future RAAF should be clear-cut, progressive and far-sighted, without 'the muddled system of control which caused inefficiency and appalling waste of effort' during the war. Bostock described the divided command as a dangerous and impractical handicap, probably unprecedented in military history. He claimed that the Minister and the Air Board created problems that should never have existed. Once again, he raised the issue of administration functions being retained by RAAF Headquarters and he was also critical of the appointment of officers to operational positions without his consent.

Bostock also levelled criticism at RAAF Headquarters because it failed to provide adequate aircraft maintenance facilities and because it made inflexible rulings that were sometimes dangerous and often unsuitable for combat units. In this instance, he cited the withdrawal of the heavy bombers prior to the Borneo operations.<sup>76</sup>

Bostock's initial article was a series of accusations and general criticisms, and he gave few actual examples of poor administration on the part of RAAF Headquarters. The public had to wait until 24 June 1946 to read how he saw the RAAF's problems come into being. In Bostock's view, the problem stemmed from the interpretation of the agreement that placed the control of the RAAF under the Commander of the Allied Air Forces. Bostock claimed that Drakeford knew nothing of the realities of war and that his view of the role and organisation of the RAAF differed to that held by Burnett.<sup>77</sup> The following day, Bostock wrote that he was not the only officer 'who suffered headaches over the RAAF's muddled wartime organisation.'<sup>78</sup> He claimed that General MacArthur had to protest against its inefficiency and that General Kenney had protested against 'Melbourne' issuing orders without his concurrence. Bostock made no mention of the Australian Government's attempts to resolve the problem and MacArthur's opposition to their efforts.

In the fourth and last article in the 'RAAF's Unhappy Story' series, Bostock blamed Drakeford for not supporting him when he protested against unwarranted,

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* Drakeford's lack of military knowledge was also noted by Kenney, who wrote that the Minister had been head of a railway union and had no aviation background, 'but he was trying'. Kenney added that he considered Drakeford was 'sincere and honest and would help in every way possible'. One thing that Kenney liked about him was that he did not pretend to know anything about aviation or the strategy and tactics involved in the use of air power. George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, Office of Air Force History, USAF, Washington, DC, 1987, pp. 80–81.

<sup>78</sup> W.D. Bostock, 'Generals Protest About "Confused" RAAF Headquarters', in *The Herald*, 25 June 1946.

confusing and dangerous interference from RAAF Headquarters in his command. He also cited instances where there were considerable delays in providing materiel and construction work urgently needed by operational units. One important point Bostock raised in this article was that RAAF Headquarters seemed unable to keep pace with the progress of the war,<sup>79</sup> especially in regard to the airfield construction program.<sup>80</sup>

Bostock noted the success of the Borneo operations and stated that neither praise nor congratulations were received from Drakeford, the Air Board or CAS. He then raised an even more contentious issue—that of recognition for excellent service by RAAF Command personnel. During the existence of RAAF Command, Bostock recommended 33 honours and awards, and 42 Mentions in Dispatches for members of RAAF Command. The citations covered personal courage and initiative under fire, staff work of the highest efficiency, and devotion to duty. These recommendations were largely ignored and ‘only three minor honours were granted and five men were mentioned in dispatches.’<sup>81</sup>

Bostock concluded his series of articles with the comment:

I feel that the majority of those who served with me in RAAF Command will feel that their unrecognised efforts will not have been in vain if Parliament insists that there shall be no room in Australia’s air force for the confusion, conflict and pettiness which hindered our effort in the Pacific war.<sup>82</sup>

Bostock’s writings attracted attention among ex-RAAF members, who wrote letters to various newspapers. One of the more prominent correspondents was retired Air Vice-Marshal A.T. Cole, who added weight to Bostock’s criticisms by telling a newspaper:

From the beginning of the Second World War, I felt that the administration of the RAAF was weak. For that reason I was a lot happier to serve most of the War with the Royal Air Force.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> As an example, he cited the construction of semi-underground operations rooms at Lowood (southern Qld) and Gawler (SA) in mid-1943. The need for such facilities had passed in 1942.

<sup>80</sup> W.D. Bostock, ‘RAAF hindered from St. Kilda Road’, in *The Herald*, 26 June 1946.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* One assumes that the CB and OBE awarded to Bostock were not included as part of the three minor honours.

<sup>82</sup> W.D. Bostock, ‘RAAF hindered from St. Kilda Road’, in *The Herald*, 26 June 1946.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Bostocks revelations endorsed by RAAF officers’, in *The Herald*, 27 June 1946.

The articles caused a deal of concern for the Government, and Drakeford made a formal reply in Parliament. In his statement, the Minister hit back at both the newspaper and Bostock. He described the articles:

On entirely false premises these malicious and unjustified attacks on the Government, the Air Board, and myself have built up for ulterior purposes what, without factual reply, might have been regarded as a formidable indictment.<sup>84</sup>

He added that it was regrettable that newspapers should take advantage of their privileged position in the community to:

belittle the efforts and the achievements of an administration responsible for a Service acknowledged throughout the world, and particularly the English-speaking world, to have achieved a standard of performance that compares favorably with any other Air Force.<sup>85</sup>

Drakeford repudiated Bostock's claims starting with the official account of the Service's activities in the recent conflict. The official history of the RAAF in World War II, he stated, was not to be written by the Department of Air but by three writers contracted to the Commonwealth. As an aside, on the subject of the official histories it should not come as a surprise to learn that when George Odgers, who was tasked with writing about the RAAF in the SWPA, started his research he encountered problems with the two feuding Air Vice-Marshals. He received little assistance from Jones, while Bostock refused to cooperate, saying the historian should approach him through CAS!<sup>86</sup>

Drakeford continued, stating that Bostock's claim as to the basic cause of the RAAF's difficulties was that the Minister knew nothing about the realities of war and that RAAF Command should have been given control of administration did not go unnoticed. Drakeford quoted the War Cabinet Minute and also a minute from himself to Burnett in which he wrote that CAS would assume responsibility

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<sup>84</sup> Office of Air Force History, 19/1/59, 'Request by Air Force Association for Royal Commission to Inquire in to Allegations by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock', 'Statement by Minister for Air on Press Articles by Air Marshal Bostock', 10 July 1946.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Correspondence received from Mr George Odgers of Bondi, NSW, March 2002.

‘for all matters such as personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings, and training of the R.A.A.F.’<sup>87</sup>

In addition to Bostock’s newspaper articles, another source of criticism against RAAF Headquarters emerged. Towards the end of the war, a polemical document, drafted by an unknown author, titled ‘The RAAF Command Scandal’, was circulated among RAAF officers.<sup>88</sup> One wonders whether Bostock condoned the writing of this account of the RAAF command situation because he expected the official history volumes would present a one-sided view of the command relationship. The document was read by junior RAAF officers, among who it produced feelings of both disgust and apprehension that the Service’s senior officers wasted so much of their time and energy fighting between themselves.<sup>89</sup> The information contained in the document was a greatly expanded version of Bostock’s newspaper articles. This document was never formally published but Bostock sent at least one copy to a sympathetic Opposition member of Federal Parliament. Thomas White,<sup>90</sup> a former RAAF officer, thanked Bostock for the document and considered it to be:

a scandal that you should have been so hampered in your command; it is a great pity that personal jealousies should go so far. This week in the House I intend to try again to have a Royal Commission or other enquiry, but the odds are against it.<sup>91</sup>

Two months earlier in Parliament, White had asked for a Royal Commission to verify Bostock’s revelations, to ensure an avoidance of such happenings in the future, and to inquire into RAAF policy. When making this request, White stated,

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<sup>87</sup> Office of Air Force History, 19/1/59, ‘Statement by Minister for Air on Press Articles by Air Marshal Bostock’, 10 July 1946.

<sup>88</sup> Australian War Memorial. AWM54 81/2/17, ‘The RAAF Command Scandal’. The author is unknown but was obviously pro-Bostock. The Australian War Memorial attributes the paper to Group Captain Gordon Grant who was the Senior Administrative Officer RAAF Command and it is thought he wrote it in 1946.

<sup>89</sup> Harry Rayner, *Scherger: A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1984, p. 69.

<sup>90</sup> Thomas Walter White was the Federal member for the electorate of Balaclava (Victoria) between 1929 and 1951. Between 1946 and 1951 he held the electorate for the Liberal Party. The Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia – Twenty-Second Edition*, 1984, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1984, p. 374.

<sup>91</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], 1912–1992, folder MS9148/8/13, letter from White to Bostock, 16 August 1946.

‘There has been too much secrecy about the Royal Australian Air Force.’<sup>92</sup> The perceived secrecy was to continue as White’s request for an inquiry, and the release of J.V. Barry’s report of his inquiry into the Morotai ‘mutiny’ were both rejected by the Government.

Jones himself had a few clashes with White and found the politician a difficult person to deal with, even while the latter was still in uniform. White had taken leave from Parliament and served with the RAAF in Europe during World War II, where he had risen to the rank of acting Group Captain. On his return to Australia he approached Jones with the proposal that officers who had been given acting ranks should be confirmed in those ranks (i.e. White would become a permanent Group Captain). Jones did not agree, because of the numerous changes in rank during the course of the war there would have been ‘an absurd number of senior officers’ in the Service. To overcome the situation, Jones had formulated the RAAF policy whereby, when an officer relinquished a temporary or acting higher rank, he/she reverted to his/her substantive rank.<sup>93</sup> Dissatisfied because Jones would not accede to his request, White sidestepped CAS and approached the Air Member for Personnel (Air Commodore Lukis) with the same proposal. White pressed his case strongly in insubordinate language, which caused Lukis to appeal to Jones for assistance and White was told that CAS’s decision was final.<sup>94</sup> This, however, was not to be Jones final encounter with White.

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<sup>92</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Session 1945–46, Vol. 187, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Thursday, 27 June, 1946, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1946, p. 1962.

<sup>93</sup> RAAF Museum, Air Board Order N7/46, Air Board Agendum 7157, 8 May 1946.

<sup>94</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), ‘Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC’, chap. 20, p. 1.



## *One of Our Better Chiefs of the Air Staff*

George Jones remained in the position of Chief of the Air Staff until January 1952. He was the person who served as CAS for the longest continuous period, almost 10 years. Jones' time as postwar CAS was understandably different to that during World War II. As the postwar head of the RAAF, he was notable for his achievements in reorganising and re-equipping the Service. RAAF units were deployed to conflicts in other parts of the world during the immediate postwar years but Jones had little to do with the operations in which they were engaged. Once again, they were part of coalition forces and operated with allied units. Jones' role was to ensure the units were equipped and adequate personnel were posted to them. Therefore, the relevant parts of this chapter deal only with the role Jones played in such deployments, rather than accounts of RAAF operations.

While the RAAF ended World War II as the world's fourth largest air force, the task that faced Jones in the immediate postwar years was to construct an air force for peacetime Australia. This task was to be a major undertaking and Jones could not plan to reconstruct his Service in isolation. Instead, his planning was dependent on other Government initiatives that impacted on the RAAF, the first of which was an establishment of new defence links with Britain, referred to as 'Co-operation in Empire Defence'.<sup>1</sup> This initiative proposed the uniform development of air forces within the British Empire, together with the establishment of air bases, an interchange of Air Force personnel and units, and the development of Australian aircraft production in cooperation with selected British manufacturers. This last initiative meant that the types of aircraft selected for production were to be suitable not only for the defence of Australia but also for use in other parts of the Empire.<sup>2</sup>

The second influence on Jones' planning was the availability of Service personnel. The Labor Government had overseen the build up of the RAAF to its 1945 size but in the postwar world political priorities changed and the Government did not need, nor could it maintain, a large air force. The personnel numbers for the Interim Air

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<sup>1</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), 'Composition of Postwar R.A.A.F.; War Cabinet Agendum No. 537/1945, 'Co-operation in Empire Defence', 14 December 1945.

<sup>2</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), 'Memorandum on Co-operation in Empire Defence', authored by F.G. Shedden, 14 December 1945.

Force were set at 34 592.<sup>3</sup> This was decreased to 29 711 in February 1945<sup>4</sup> and by 1948 RAAF personnel levels would be less than half this number. As we will see, a large air force was a luxury that would not be maintained in peacetime.

### **Reforming the Service**

In the immediate postwar period, Jones embarked on a series of reforms for parts of the Service. The reforms, however, did not spread through every part of the RAAF. It would appear that, while he followed the Government's direction for demobilising the RAAF and prepared plans for the postwar Service, other things did not seem to change. We have an interesting situation in which Jones delivered reforms and restructuring that were to benefit the RAAF for many years but at the same time resisted any change to the management of his own headquarters, which remained at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne.

RAAF Headquarters became the central authority for major policy formulation and overall direction of the Service, overseen by the Air Board with Jones as chairman. As noted earlier, the composition (i.e. the positions and their functions) of the Air Board initially remained the same as it had been during the war and the matters that held its attention still included trivial items. Thus the Service was managed by a body lacking in 'new blood' and, one would assume, lacking in new ideas and initiatives. The first postwar change to the Air Board came in January 1948, when the position of Business Manager was abolished. To his credit, in the few appointments he made to the Air Board, Jones ensured that those officers he selected were among the most capable in the Service, such as the November 1948 appointment of Air Vice-Marshal F.M. Bladin, an officer with a highly distinguished operational record, who was made Air Member for Personnel (AMP). In October 1949, the position of Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance (AMEM) was abolished. In its place, in recognition of the advanced developments that had occurred with aircraft and equipment during the 1940s, Jones established the position of Air Member for Technical Services, who headed the RAAF's Technical Branch. The Technical Branch was responsible for all technical functions, including the development, design, modification and maintenance of all RAAF equipment.

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<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/240, 'Civil Staffing – Department of Air: Functions of the Permanent Head', 'Committee of Review – Civil Staffing of Wartime Activities, Report on the Department of Air', 19 December 1945.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/240, letter from Drakeford to Chifley, 18 February 1946.

When establishing the position, Jones recognised there were deficiencies in the previous RAAF policies whereby General Duties Branch personnel filled technical positions, regardless of their qualifications. To overcome this, the new Branch was staffed by specialised personnel with a technical or engineering background.<sup>5</sup>

One area where Jones resisted any form of change was the RAAF's area command structure. When he was appointed CAS, Jones inherited an air force that had been divided into area commands based on geographic boundaries. He maintained this system, the only change was the reduction from the six commands that had existed during the war, to five.<sup>6</sup> Some of Jones' staff officers at RAAF Headquarters realised that there were shortcomings with the existing set-up and proposed that the Service should adopt a functional command system. They persuaded Jones to call a conference of area commanders to discuss the proposal. The reaction of the area commanders was anything but enthusiastic, possibly because they realised that their positions were in danger of being abolished. Consequently, their participation in the discussion at the meeting was limited and Jones finalised the matter by remarking:

Well, when I came into this appointment, that was the organisation, a geographical one on the command side, and that's the way it's going to remain as long as I'm here.<sup>7</sup>

During World War II (and the feud with Bostock) it had been through the area command system that Jones had been able to maintain some of his control over the Service's non-operational units, so one might expect that he would be reluctant to depart from a system that had served him well in the past. So the RAAF would have to wait for Jones' successor, Air Marshal Hardman, RAF, to introduce a functional command system. As we will see, some of Jones' planning for the Service considered a reduction in the number of areas and, after the Menzies Government came into office, he prepared a plan for decentralising the Service. It would appear that this plan was opposed by Langslow (possibly because he was keen to control all financial aspects of the Service, even at the lowest level) and it was shelved until

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<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/73 (11), 'Higher Organisation of the R.A.A.F. – Operational & Administrative Control', memorandum from Langslow to Shedden, 'Establishment of a Technical Branch in the R.A.A.F.', 18 November 1949.

<sup>6</sup> Alan Stephens, *Going Solo: The Royal Australian Air Force 1946–1971*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1995, pp. 66–68.

<sup>7</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger, 13 November 1973.

after he retired in 1951. The plan was adopted by Hardman as one of his reforms for the RAAF.<sup>8</sup>

Another area of deficiency was at RAAF Headquarters where Jones' own management style left a lot to be desired. He continued to manage his headquarters in a stultifying atmosphere of 'we've always done it that way'—an atmosphere that was strongly resistant to change. The reasons for this may have been partially due to Jones' personality, in that he had to adopt a defensive attitude because of the wartime feud. This left lasting personal characteristics and it seemed that Jones was unable to adapt to a situation in which Bostock was no longer present. Even though Bostock had been retired from the Service, Jones appeared to be a person under considerable stress.<sup>9</sup> He seemed unable to relax, even in the postwar Headquarters—free of the feud, the global conflict and with a much smaller Service to look after.

One officer who provided an insight into RAAF Headquarters at the time was Sir Richard Kingsland. It was while working at RAAF Headquarters that Kingsland had the opportunity to observe Jones' less than dynamic management style. An example of which could be seen at the weekly meetings of senior officers. These meetings, which were convened each Monday morning, tended to be a boring waste of time for many who attended. Jones rejected any new initiatives put forward by officers with operational experience, such as Kingsland. There was no apparent malice in such rejection, just a flat refusal to change, as new ideas were not welcome.

One issue that concerned the Service in the immediate postwar years was the loss of talented, educated and experienced people. Kingsland raised this with Jones and suggested that the Air Board should start a recruitment campaign for new blood and new brains. Jones, whose personality caused him to resist change, was absolutely horrified at the suggestion and totally opposed to such a novel idea.<sup>10</sup> Jones' personality was also a potential cause of problems when it came to dealing with politicians. Throughout his time as CAS, it is apparent that Jones had no strategy for dealing with the Minister for Air or his staff. Even though he was CAS

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<sup>8</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Session 1954, Vol. H. of R.3. – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 14 April, 1954, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1954, p. 375.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland of Campbell, ACT. During the interview, Sir Richard told me that Jones had a habit of running his thumbnail back and forth under the table in the Air Board conference room, during Board meetings. Over the years he had worn a deep groove in the table!

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Sir Richard Kingsland.

for nearly 10 years, Jones' approach to his political masters was to act more like a senior public servant rather than as the head of a Defence Service. He provided advice and took direction without fear or favour but does not seem to have acquired the same political skills as Williams.

While the day-to-day management of RAAF Headquarters may have been dull and unimaginative, it was in the area of strategic planning that Jones was to gain his greatest postwar success.

### **Plan 'D'**

On 22 November 1945, the Defence Joint Planning Committee (JPC) was directed to report on the size and organisation of the Services that should be maintained in peacetime, together with the costs and materiel requirements.<sup>11</sup> In its reply to Government two months later, the Joint Planning Committee advised that the future role of the Services would be the fulfilment of Australia's obligations on the world stage. Against this scenario, the ideal structure for the RAAF would be a mobile task force, including long-range bombers and transports, ready to move to other parts of the world or to provide air support for the other Services; together with squadrons tasked to protect Australia against raids.<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the Joint Planning Committee undertaking its work and before the end of the war, Jones took the initiative and started to draw up proposals for the structure and composition of the postwar RAAF. The first proposal—Plan 'A'—drafted in 1945 (before the Government considered the 'Co-operation in Empire Defence' proposal), was based on the contemporary global situation. It was an ambitious scheme for an extremely powerful air force (by postwar standards) and called for 34 squadrons, equipped with 134 B-24 Liberators, 250 Mosquitoes, 455 P-51 Mustangs, 105 C-47 Dakotas and 56 PBY Catalinas, as well as training aircraft (this was to be an air force ten times larger than the RAAF was in 1939). Under Plan 'A', the RAAF was to be structured with two main components—an expeditionary force and a home defence force.<sup>13</sup> In the peacetime world, the Government was

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<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/294, 'Post-War R.A.A.F. Nature, Organisation and Strength (Plan "D")'. On 19 November 1945, the Minister for Defence directed the Defence Committee (DC) to advise on the postwar strengths and organisation of the Defence Services. The DC passed this task to the Joint Planning Committee.

<sup>12</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/294, Plan 'D' Introduction.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*

not prepared to accept a plan that called for an air force equipped with 1000 front-line aircraft. So Plan 'A' was rejected, as was the subsequent proposal—Plan 'B'.<sup>14</sup>

One could gain the impression, from Plan 'A', that Jones was either out of touch with the Government's plans for a future Australia, or was unaware of the personnel situation within his own Service. Chifley's Labor Government was directing a lot of its attention towards policies of postwar reconstruction, which meant it needed a sizeable labour force, and this was one reason for the instructions for the rapid demobilisation of the Services. The Government wanted people to move out of the Services and back into the labour force as quickly as possible, and Service personnel wanted to return to civilian life quickly.<sup>15</sup> It would have been unlikely that a Government, keen to have these policies put into practice, would agree to a large air force, which in turn would have meant a large number of people retained in uniform. In addition, the RAAF itself was having trouble retaining personnel. At this time, there were more jobs for skilled tradesmen available in Australia than there were people to fill them. Consequently, the RAAF found that it was competing for personnel alongside other employers and all three Services faced severe manpower shortages. The RAAF's technical musters were especially affected by the personnel shortages.<sup>16</sup> So, even in the unlikely event that the Government had approved Plans A or B, the RAAF would have had insufficient personnel to maintain approximately 1000 aircraft.

Jones considered the advice given by the Joint Planning Committee on the future role of the RAAF and prepared a structure that would allow the RAAF to engage in overseas deployments and home defence. Plan 'C', submitted to the Government in September 1946, still called for a large air force, this time staffed by 19 483 personnel and equipped with 880 aircraft. While the plan called for the reorganisation of the RAAF, Jones retained area commands, but he had reduced their number to three—Northern Area (Queensland and the Northern Territory), Eastern Area (New South Wales) and Southern Area (Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania). Jones estimated the cost of implementing Plan 'C' to be £104 765 000.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Alan Stephens, *RAAF Policy, Plans and Doctrine 1946–1971*, Paper No. 29, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, February 1995, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Craig Wilcox, 'Winning the Peace', in *Wartime*, Issue 31, August 2005, Australian War Memorial, 2005, pp. 27–29.

<sup>16</sup> John McCarthy, *Defence in Transition: Australian Defence and the Role of Air Power 1945–1954*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1991, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), 'Post-War R.A.A.F. – Nature, Organisation and

After submitting Plan 'C' to the Government, Jones visited Britain in September 1946<sup>18</sup> and sought advice on the future composition and nature of the RAAF from the Air Council.<sup>19</sup> Their advice was that Australia's highest priority should be to acquire a striking force of long-range bombers capable of delivering an atomic bomb. The purpose of the force would be a deterrent because, the Air Council reasoned, an enemy would be unable to determine if Australia had acquired atomic weapons, even if they were aware that Australia was not producing them. The Air Council also advocated an air force for Australia comprising 22 squadrons.<sup>20</sup>

Plan 'C' was rejected and on 14 October 1947 Jones presented the far more realistic Plan 'D'. The Government was receptive to this plan, which proposed a much smaller Service, both in terms of personnel and aircraft and, in spite of the Air Council's advice, did not formally provide for the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Plan 'D' became the blueprint for postwar air power in Australia. Jones' introduction to the plan demonstrates that, this time, he had given some serious thought to air power theory and developments. He stated that, notwithstanding weapons development during World War II, a future conflict would be a long protracted fight, which would use all the resources of the belligerent nations. If Australia was drawn into such a conflict, Jones' view was that its armed forces would be deployed to Asia or the Middle East and this would only happen after the continent's borders were secure from invasion or raids. Jones reminded the Government of the dearth of Allied air power in the early stages of World War II and argued that Navy and Army commanders had been slow to appreciate the idea of control of the air as an essential condition for victory in warfare. Thus, without adequate air power, the Allied forces had suffered a succession of defeats. Jones put forward some air power concepts and explained how they might be applied in future warfare. He considered it would be essential to use air power offensively, against the types of targets vital to the enemy's infrastructure, production and morale, before land operations began. In some circumstances, air power might prove so effective it might bring about the enemy's surrender and the role of the land forces would only be an army of

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Strength, September 1946.

<sup>18</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Personal Record of Service – Officers'.

<sup>19</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), minute from Jones to Drakeford, 'Paper by the Air Staff, R.A.F. on Future Requirements for Air Defence of Australia', 27 September 1946.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.* The 22 squadrons recommended by the Air Council included four long-range bomber, two ground attack, six interceptor and one night fighter.

occupation.<sup>21</sup> Scenarios such as these were likely to be reinforced with the further development of airborne weapon systems. Thus, research and development, Jones stated, would become an integral part of a modern air force.<sup>22</sup> The total cost of the plan over 5 years was estimated to be £80 000 000.

The development of Plan 'D' was a great achievement for Jones and was the product of a lot of hard work. Physically, the plan was a collection of documents, charts and tables, which presented detailed information on every aspect relevant to the organisation of an air force, including strategic assessments, costs, organisational arrangements and establishments. Despite this impressive collection of comprehensive documents, the RAAF still fared poorly in the Government's postwar Defence plans.

### **Jones' Opposition to the Naval Air Branch**

During the final years of World War II, the Australian Government sought to acquire aircraft carriers for the RAN. This initiative led to the formation of the Naval Air Branch, a section of the RAN that would become responsible for all matters relevant to naval aviation. The Government was unsuccessful in its aims during the war but continued with the initiative after the cessation of hostilities.

Jones opposed the formation of a Naval Air Branch from the outset, as it would have been a rival air force and would have been competing for the same resources of money and personnel. In the covering minute of his 1946 submission on the matter to Government, he told Drakeford of his opposition:

The question of whether carriers should be included in a post-war force has yet to be discussed by the Defence Committee, and my attitude will be that, although it may be sound to acquire one or more carriers, they would be of a lower priority than our shore-based air requirements.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> On reading this, one wonders whether Jones and his colleagues had finally discovered the writings of the Italian air power theorist Giulio Douhet, although we may question the value of Douhet after World War II.

<sup>22</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/294, Plan 'D', 'Foreword by Air Marshal G. Jones, C.B., C.B.E., D.F.C., Chief of the Air Staff', 14 October 1947. Plan 'D' was upgraded over the years due to changes in conditions and government policy decisions.

<sup>23</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/83, 'R.A.N. Air Branch – Formation of', minute from Jones to Drakeford, 14 March 1946.



Jones used several arguments to support his opposition. He considered that three aircraft carriers equipped with 75 aircraft was insufficient to be an effective force by itself and it could only become effective if it was part of a larger force. He noted the problems associated with finding the specialised personnel required to fly and maintain the carrier-based aircraft. Jones also warned that the development of two separate organisations (the RAAF and the Naval Air Branch) would lead to inefficiencies, such as duplication and parallel training regimes. He considered that the means to overcome this (if the Government continued with the initiative) was to establish common training and maintenance infrastructures.

Once again Jones was keen to protect the integrity of his Service and his submission noted that the RAAF was Australia's primary fighting arm and nothing should be done to weaken it by establishing separate sections or dissipating its effort by duplication. Considerations of economy and efficiency, he argued, made it essential for Australia to have only one air force and it should be autonomous in all matters of higher policy, organisation, equipment and personnel. If the Government went ahead and acquired aircraft carriers, Jones' proposal was to retain the status quo in regard to the provision of aircraft and personnel; 'I recommend that the existing policy by which the R.A.A.F. provides air forces for embarkation in ships of the Royal Australian Navy be continued'. This would be done by identifying the RAAF squadrons that would be embarked aboard the carriers and by ensuring that squadron personnel receive special training in carrier duties to ensure their ability to work with other carrier forces. When they were aboard the carriers, the RAAF personnel would come under the operational control of the appropriate Naval Command.<sup>24</sup>

In his opposition to the formation of the Naval Air Branch, Jones had an ally in Langslow, who advised Drakeford that, if aircraft carriers were introduced into the RAN, the provision of air personnel, aircraft and maintenance should be RAAF's responsibility because two separate air forces in Australia did not appear to be justified.<sup>25</sup>

The RAN's argument to support the establishment of the Naval Air Branch centred on the proposition that if Australia was to have a modern Navy capable of defending the country and its sea communications, that Navy must be built around aircraft

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<sup>24</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/83, submission titled 'Establishment of R.A.N. Air Branch', March 1946.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/69(1), minute from Langslow to Drakeford, 'Strength and Organisation of Post-War Defence Forces', 12 March 1947.

carriers. To build this modern Navy, the Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Admiral Sir Louis Hamilton, RN, called for a minimum of two carriers and three aircraft groups.<sup>26</sup> The matter was the subject of discussion by the Defence Committee (a body that included both Jones and Hamilton as its members) and Jones acknowledged that he encountered difficulties in his dealings with Hamilton over the formation of the Naval Air Branch during Committee meetings. Hamilton had his way, however, as the Defence Committee agreed that the RAN should acquire carriers and the means of providing air personnel for them was to be examined and reported on jointly by the Naval and Air staffs.<sup>27</sup> The matter then went before the Committee for Defence, which decided in favour of a Naval Air Branch under the control of the RAN, despite opposition from Drakeford who made the unlikely claim that the establishment of a separate naval aviation entity failed to take into account the developments and use of air power during World War II.<sup>28</sup> The Government approved the establishment of the Naval Aviation Branch on 3 June 1947. Jones retained some influence over naval aviation as his recommendations for the establishment of common training regimes were accepted and, as part of Plan 'D', the RAAF was committed to train 24 RAN pilots per year at Point Cook and to provide certain workshop and overhaul facilities for the maintenance and overhaul of RAN aircraft.<sup>29</sup>

On 4 June 1947, the Minister for Defence, John Dedman, announced his Government's Defence policy for the forthcoming five years. Total budget allocation for Defence over five years was to be £250 000 000 (or an annual expenditure of £50 000 000). Of the three Services, the RAN received the largest allocation—£15 000 000 annually, which totalled £75 000 000 for the five years. The Army and the RAAF each were allocated £12 500 000 annually or £62 500 000 for the five years. The remainder of the money was to be spent on research, administration and materiel.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/83, letter from Hamilton to Makin, 28 June 1946.

<sup>27</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/83, letter from Chifley to Drakeford, 2 September 1946; and minute from Langslow to Jones, 'R.A.N. Air Branch', 19 September 1946.

<sup>28</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/83, memorandum from Shedden to Secretary Department of Navy and Secretary Department of Air, 'Status and Control of Naval Aviation Branch', 9 July 1947.

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia, M2740/1/294, 'Naval Aviation – RAAF Participation'.

<sup>30</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Session 1946–47, Vol. 192, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Wednesday, 4 June, 1947, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1947, p. 3337.

Under this new Defence policy, the Government saw the RAAF's role as assisting Australia in meeting obligations under the United Nations Charter, enabling participation in British Commonwealth defence, providing a basis for expansion in wartime, and furnishing the air component for the defence of Australia. In order to be able to undertake the new roles, the RAAF was to be restructured along the lines of a permanent air force trained in the techniques of modern air warfare and capable of rapid expansion in an emergency, with a training organisation capable of rapid expansion to meet commitments in the first phase of mobilisation. In addition, there was to be a maintenance organisation, which, with the support of civil resources, would be able to support the RAAF in peacetime and would be able to be expanded to meet war time needs.<sup>31</sup>

The new Defence policy was based on the Government's desire for returning to a strong relationship with Britain and to turn away from the wartime alliance with the US. Dedman told the Australian Parliament that, despite advances in weapon technology, the British Commonwealth remained a maritime empire, depending on sea power for its existence.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, given this rationale, it was logical for the Government to concentrate a large part of its resources on the RAN so that Service would be in a position to participate with the Royal Navy in any future conflict involving the United Kingdom. On reading this statement today, one might think it harks back to the pre-World War II days of Australia's defence policy being dependent on a strong Royal Navy and the accompanying 'Singapore Strategy'.

The Defence policy outlined the new structure for the RAAF, which was a reorganisation along the lines of Plan 'D', with its squadrons and aircraft numbers reduced dramatically from its wartime structure. The new organisation called for a home defence element, task force elements, a training organisation, a maintenance organisation, and a headquarters unit. The bottom line was the Service would comprise 16 squadrons equipped with 144 aircraft (together with 439 reserve operational aircraft and 698 training aircraft). Personnel numbers were reduced to 12 625.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the work that went into Plan 'D', there was an area of deficiency on the part of Jones and the Air Board. That was a body of thought, dedicated towards how best to use the RAAF. In spite of the major reorganisation, the RAAF did not develop a unique air power doctrine. It was only in the late 1950s that the RAAF adopted

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p 3341.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3338.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 3342–3343.

the contemporary RAF air power manual (AP 1300—*Operations*) as their standard text.<sup>34</sup> It could be argued, however, that if the role of the RAAF was to participate with the RAF in Empire defence there was little need to develop a unique doctrine. It might be expected that, under such a regime, in a future conflict the RAF would be the major player and RAAF units would find themselves under RAF control and their operations would be subject to RAF doctrine.

After the announcement of the Defence policy, Jones was retained to head the reorganised Service, despite the advice provided by Shedden (Secretary of the Department of Defence) to Dedman that CAS should be replaced. Shedden held the belief that the Defence Committee now should be made up of ‘new, young and vigorous minds’, who were capable of dealing with the vast array of problems that were part of Australia’s postwar Defence policy. He recommended replacement of the Navy and Army Chiefs and, in the case of Jones, while recognising he was still relatively young, considered he had been in the post too long and should be replaced by an officer with recent operational experience.<sup>35</sup>

In this situation, one is inclined to agree with Shedden. The Government should have used the new Defence policy as an opportunity to appoint a new CAS. Jones need not have been retired from the Service. Rather, he could have been moved sideways into an Air Board position. However, the first question that comes to mind with this proposition is who to appoint as the replacement. The answer could well have been one of the officers whom Jones himself had stated would have a good career—McCauley, Bladin or Scherger. It is highly likely that, if he was asked, Jones would have nominated Scherger as his successor.<sup>36</sup> Scherger got on well with Jones and served as DCAS between 1947 and 1951. He regarded Jones as one of the RAAF’s better Chiefs of the Air Staff because during his time as CAS a remarkable number of projects were initiated or finalised.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Air Vice-Marshal Brendan O’Loughlin, AO (Retd), 14 January 2000; and Alan Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992, p. 136.

<sup>35</sup> David Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 2000, p. 256. Shedden himself had been Secretary for Defence since 1937—a longer period than Jones had been CAS.

<sup>36</sup> During one of our interview sessions, Mrs Anne Jones told me Sir George Jones had a great admiration for Scherger’s skills and abilities. ‘Scherger was the only one of them that he [Jones] wouldn’t say anything bad about,’ she commented in February 2002.

<sup>37</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 121/52, Recorded interview with Sir Frederick Scherger, 13 November 1973.

## **US Decoration**

On 2 September 1947, the Australian Embassy in Washington advised the Prime Minister that the US Government wished to award Air Marshal Jones the Legion of Merit on 4 September.<sup>38</sup> The Australian Ambassador noted that the award was to be made on the basis of Jones' operational and tactical leadership during World War II. The proposed decoration stirred up some discussion within the Federal bureaucracy, where it was decided to oppose the award. The argument against it went along the line that during the war Jones was CAS but, as we know, RAAF operational units were placed under MacArthur's command. It was specified that CAS was then responsible for 'all matters associated with R.A.A.F. personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, workshop buildings, and training.'<sup>39</sup>

The award of US decorations to other senior Australian officers was also considered when attempting to justify the award to Jones. A year earlier, General MacArthur had proposed the award of a US decoration for General Northcott for his role as Chief of the General Staff and Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan. The Australian Government had, by that time, decided no further recommendation would be made for the award of British decorations to members of the Australian forces for non-operational service. Therefore, the award for Northcott was not agreed to 'as this would lead to embarrassment in respect of the decision relating to British awards.'<sup>40</sup> The precedent had been set and, unfortunately for Jones, the award was not approved. The reply to the Embassy stated that the award was appreciated but, as the US Government was aware:

The policy of the Australian Government is that only operational awards be recommended for bestowal on members of the Australian Forces. It

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<sup>38</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1068/7/IC47/35/1/8, 'Decorations – US awards to Australian nationals: Legion of Merit—JONES, Air Marshal', cablegram from Ambassador, the Australian Embassy, Washington to Prime Minister, 2 September 1947.

<sup>39</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/66/301/517, 'Proposed award of U.S. Decoration to Air Marshal G. Jones', minute from Secretary, Department of Defence to S. Landau and V. Quealy, 3 September 1947. S. Landau was the Assistant Secretary, Defence Planning and V.W. Quealy was the Assistant Secretary, Joint Service Personnel, Department of Defence.

<sup>40</sup> National Archives of Australia, A816/1/66/301/517, minute from Secretary, Department of Defence to Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, 4 September 1947. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was awarded the US Medal of Freedom (with Silver Palm) in 1946, and Air Commodore Bladin was awarded the US Silver Star in 1943.

is regretted that, as Air Marshal Jones service does not come within this category, the Government is unable to agree to the bestowal of the proposed award.

You will doubtless recall that, during the war, operational control of the Australian Forces was assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, Southwest Pacific Area, and was not vested in the Australian Chiefs of Staff.<sup>41</sup>

So, even after the war had finished, the divided command structure still worked against Jones.

### **Jones Adapts to a Change of Government**

In December 1949, the Australian Federal political scene changed. The Labor Government of J.B. Chifley was voted out of office in the general election and replaced by a Liberal Government, led by R.G. Menzies. Jones' sometime ally, Drakeford, was no longer Minister for Air. Instead, CAS would now have to deal with T.W. White. Also entering Parliament at this time, as the Liberal member for the House of Representatives seat of Indi, was Air Vice-Marshal W.D. Bostock (Retd).

Following the change of Government in 1949, Jones again tried to expand his Service. His reasoning was that the force comprising 16 squadrons was a peacetime compromise, much smaller than he wished for. It was, however, a well-trained and equipped force.<sup>42</sup> Perhaps he thought that the Menzies regime, with its anti-communist rhetoric would be more receptive to larger armed forces. In 1951, Jones approached the Minister for Air with a new development plan, supported now by his claim that Plan 'D' had not been drawn up to meet Australia's strategic needs. Rather, it was a plan to maintain a Service within the confines of the previous Labor Government's annual budget allocations of £12.5 million. Jones also may have been thinking that he could take advantage of the new Government and gain the support of a Minister who was a former RAAF officer, when he proposed the Service be expanded from 16 to 25 squadrons. Jones' thinking proved to be wrong and the Government took no notice of the new plan.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1068/7/IC47/35/1/8, cablegram from Prime Minister to Ambassador, the Australian Embassy, Washington, 4 September 1947.

<sup>42</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 122.

<sup>43</sup> Stephens, *RAAF Policy, Plans and Doctrine 1946–1971*, p. 10.

Jones was, however, very successful in gaining Government support for re-equipping the RAAF. Following the end of World War II, the RAAF's policy for strategic reserve and replacement materiel had been to use the remaining wartime accumulation. By October 1950, this accumulation was either depleted or obsolescent. Therefore, procurement of a wide range of assets was necessary. Jones proposed the re-equipping of the service with 222 new aircraft, together with sufficient materiel to last for six months of war, including works equipment, tractors, trucks, buses, armaments, POL, barracks and hospital equipment, and communication equipment. The total cost was estimated to be £52 000 000.<sup>44</sup> Jones also pressed the need for the Australian production of war materiel and his aim was to maintain industries within the country that could turn to armaments production in time of crisis. This turned out to be a very positive initiative and very successful on Jones' part as it gained Government support. As we will see, the RAAF benefited from a wideranging aircraft acquisition program that started during Jones' final years as CAS.

### **The Berlin Airlift**

The Allied powers that defeated Germany in World War II divided the country in two—West Germany, which was initially controlled by the US, Britain and France; and East Germany, which was controlled by the Soviet Union. The city of Berlin (itself divided into four sectors, each controlled by the same powers) lay within East Germany. The three Western powers relied on road and rail links through East Germany to keep their forces and Berlin's civilian population supplied with food and other necessities.

After the war, relations between the Western powers and the USSR gradually deteriorated and, by late 1947, the Soviet Union started to impose various impediments to the land transport routes through East Germany, which slowed trains and vehicles. Then, in April 1948, the Soviet military forces turned back vehicles and trains attempting to use the roads and railway lines. Finally, on 24 June

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<sup>44</sup> National Archives of Australia, 'RAAF Preparedness for War – Requirements for Aircraft, Equipment etc, on Mobilisation', Air Board Agendum No. 10804, 'R.A.A.F. Preparedness for War – Requirements of Aircraft, Equipment and Supplies', 30 October 1950. The estimate included 12 Lockheed P2V-5 Neptune LRMP aircraft, 44 English Electric Canberra bombers and 24 Vampire trainers.

these lines of communication were closed completely, thus starting the first act of confrontation of what became known as the Cold War.<sup>45</sup>

On the day after the blockade began, United States Air Force (USAF) aircraft started to fly supplies from West Germany into Berlin. This was the beginning of a 13-month aerial supply operation known as the Berlin Airlift, during which USAF, RAF and civilian transport aircraft flew continual supply sorties from West Germany to sustain Berlin's 2.5 million residents. Other air forces, including the RAAF, were asked to assist with the Airlift.

At first Jones planned to send 10 RAAF C-47 transports from Australia, together with their crews and as many maintenance staff as could be carried safely aboard these aircraft.<sup>46</sup> This plan did not eventuate as the RAF had a glut of transport aircraft but insufficient personnel to crew them. So instead of fully-crewed aircraft, the Australian Government sent 41 RAAF personnel to Europe to fly RAF aircraft. After training in Britain, they joined the RAF's No 46 Group at Lübeck in northern Germany. The first RAAF sortie flown in the Airlift (albeit with an RAF C-47) was on 15 September 1948.<sup>47</sup>

Jones visited Germany in April and May 1949 and he flew into Berlin as a passenger aboard one of the RAAF-crewed C-47s. On his arrival, he met with Major General F.G. Galleghan, the head of the Australian Military Mission in Berlin (who Jones incorrectly described as General Callaghan, the military commandant of the British sector of the city).<sup>48</sup> Galleghan insisted on showing Jones the city and they proceeded down Unter den Linden in the General's bulletproof Daimler sedan, with the Australian flag flying. They drove through the Brandenburg Gate and toured parts of East Berlin. Jones noted that the Russians gazed at them in astonishment but did not interfere with their passage. He also commented sadly on the bomb

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<sup>45</sup> Steve Eather, *Odd Jobs: RAAF Operations in Japan, the Berlin Airlift, Korea and Malta 1946–1960*, RAAF Museum, Point Cook, Vic., 1996, pp. 21–22.

<sup>46</sup> Jones papers, 'The Organisation of the Post War R.A.A.F.'; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 130–131. Jones incorrectly states that 'a squadron of twelve Dakotas from No. 86 Wing, Richmond, flew from Australia to Germany'; however, the Government initially offered 10 aircraft and crews, and ultimately only the men were needed. See Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 196.

<sup>47</sup> Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 196.

<sup>48</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 131; and Chris Clark, *Operation Pelican: The Royal Australian Air Force in the Berlin Airlift, 1948–1949*, Air Power Development Centre, Canberra, 2008, p. 66.



damage to Berlin, writing that 'All the principal buildings which had once been so beautiful had been completely wrecked'.<sup>49</sup>

While in Germany, Jones took the opportunity to visit Cologne, the city in which he lived when No 4 Squadron was part of the Army of Occupation following the end of World War I. This city too had been devastated by the Combined Bomber Offensive and Jones was unable to find the remains of the Kaiser Wilhelm Hotel.<sup>50</sup>

### **Educating the Service**

One of the more important areas of postwar RAAF development that Jones and his staff worked on was the education of Service personnel, which took different forms. The first was the establishment of an officer school, similar to the Royal Australian Naval College at Jervis Bay or the Royal Military College at Duntroon. That is, a college to provide officer cadets with leadership skills and a university education. The Air Force counterpart was the RAAF College at Point Cook, which accepted its first students in February 1948. Jones had some doubts about divisions between Service members that might occur with setting up a college to train cadets to become Permanent Air Force officers, while officers on short service commissions would be trained elsewhere. In Jones' view, such a situation would lead to two different classes or types of officers and there may be rivalry between them in the workplace. Nevertheless, he recognised that the RAAF was a Service that depended directly on a high level of technology to undertake its functions and he reasoned that a four-year university standard course, for new officers, was justified.<sup>51</sup>

The next educational establishment was the RAAF Staff College, which was also opened at Point Cook and took its first students in June 1949. Its purpose was to provide advanced Service education to selected officers to prepare them for staff or command appointments.<sup>52</sup> The establishment of the Staff College was brought about by necessity. As we know, prior to 1939, RAAF officers had the opportunity to attend the RAF's education establishments. However, the outbreak of World War II ended this practice, as the RAF needed all its education resources to train its own officers and officers from the Dominion air forces were excluded from RAF courses. As a result, the RAAF established its own staff school at Mount Martha,

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<sup>49</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 131.

<sup>50</sup> Jones papers, 'The Organisation of the Post War R.A.A.F.'

<sup>51</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 125.

<sup>52</sup> Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 142.

Victoria, which began its first 12-week course in September 1943. The school was a worthwhile initiative and during the war years eight courses were conducted, which demonstrated the benefits of officer training within Australia.<sup>53</sup>

The establishment of RAAF Staff College was quite a significant defining moment in the establishment and development of the postwar Service. Modelled from Australian and overseas military colleges, the Staff College was a tangible demonstration that RAAF officers required the same intellectual development as their Navy and Army brethren. This was an essential element in the recognition of the RAAF as an independent Service. Apart from being an officer training unit, the Staff College also represented the start of an intellectual journey into the field of warfare that would become air power. As such, it provided an intellectual centre for the RAAF to educate its future leaders in the unique features and potential of air power.<sup>54</sup>

Another form of education was that for ground-based technical staff. After much debate and deliberations, the RAAF established an apprenticeship scheme, which started training its first intake of students in 1948.<sup>55</sup>

In a different direction, another of Jones' legacies to his Service, which has remained up until the present day, was the formation of the RAAF Museum at Point Cook. The Museum grew from a collection of surplus materiel (including tools and weapons) that were initially stored in a hangar at the base. Most of the materiel placed on display initially was of a technical nature—no doubt reflecting Jones' interests. The collection moved to its first permanent site—a small room in the Education Section at Point Cook—and was officially opened by the Officer Commanding RAAF Base Point Cook, Wing Commander E.B. Courtney, in June 1949.<sup>56</sup> Jones had his reasons for establishing the Museum. He believed the policies of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra were more directed to recounting and displaying the efforts of the RAN and Australian Army, and he felt that the RAAF's

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<sup>53</sup> 'The end of an era', in *Air Force News*, vol. 42, no. 9, October 2000, p. 16.

<sup>54</sup> Discussions with Wing Commander John Matthews, Department of Defence, at Russell Offices, ACT, 5 March 2002.

<sup>55</sup> C.D. Coulthard-Clark, *From the Ground Up*, Air Power Studies Centre, Canberra, 1997. This book provides a very comprehensive study of the training of RAAF technical ground staff.

<sup>56</sup> Office of Air Force History, RAAF Museum file, 'RAAF Museum Point Cook'. Discussions with Wing Commander John Matthews, 21 February 2002. I have visited the RAAF Museum several times since 1995 and have not seen any acknowledgment or recognition of Jones' role in its formation. On my last visit to the Museum, in April 2002, I mentioned this lack of recognition to a few staff members. A Museum guide asked, 'Who's Jones?'

memorabilia should be retained at Point Cook.<sup>57</sup> The Museum is another of Jones' achievements because, from this small beginning, it has grown to a world-class collection of aircraft and air power related exhibits.

## **Malaya**

While RAAF transport crews were helping prevent starvation among the populace of Berlin, some of their colleagues became involved in a drawn-out campaign on the other side of the world, in the federated states known then as Malaya. The campaign had its roots in World War II when the British had provided assistance to Malay-Chinese communists who were engaged in guerilla activities against the Japanese in occupied Malaya. Following the end of the war and the repatriation of the Japanese, the communists then started a campaign against the British.

By 1948, a guerilla campaign was well underway, with the communist terrorists (CTs – also referred to as 'Bandits') perpetrating acts of violence against British and Malay civilians and government officials. British and Malay military forces went into action against the CTs. These forces were under strength and additional support was canvassed from Commonwealth countries, including Australia. Australia's contribution to what became known as the 'Malayan Emergency' was minimal, up until the Menzies Government was elected in 1949. Menzies quickly proclaimed the CTs activities to be part of the USSR and People's Republic of China's plan for communist world domination and announced that Australia would support the British effort in Malaya.<sup>58</sup>

Although the RAAF had been reduced greatly in size and aircraft numbers, the Government was keen to send aircraft, as well as land forces, to assist the British. Jones outlined his plans for the RAAF's commitment to Malaya to the Defence Committee (DC) at its meeting on 27 April 1950. He advised that the Service could provide a transport squadron comprising eight Douglas C-47s and 168 personnel, and a flight of four Lincoln bombers with 162 personnel. Jones told the Defence Committee it was impractical to send ground staff to Malaya. Instead, he recommended that the Australian aircraft, as well as those of the RAF, be serviced in Australia. The Defence Committee agreed to Jones' proposal and advised Cabinet that the RAAF could meet the British Government's requests for

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<sup>57</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 16 June 2000.

<sup>58</sup> Eather *Odd Jobs*. pp. 40–45.

assistance.<sup>59</sup> Jones then briefed R.G. Casey, the acting Minister for Air, on his proposal. His rationale was that the C-47s would be able to transport land forces and supply them from the air, thus increasing their mobility, while the Lincolns could harass the CTs and keep them on the move by bombing their jungle bases.<sup>60</sup> The Government took heed and on 31 May 1950, Menzies announced that an RAAF transport squadron would be deployed to Malaya.

Jones, naturally, was well aware that during World War II, RAAF personnel sent to Britain under EATS had been dispersed through the RAF. This practice had been counterproductive for the RAAF because it meant Australian officers were not placed in high-level positions and were denied the opportunity to gain operational command experience. He had been advised that this would happen again in Malaya (i.e. the two RAAF units would be absorbed into the RAF). Jones was not prepared for a repeat of the situation and, without consultation with his Government, formed the units into a unique Australian command—No 90 (Composite) Wing, RAAF. Jones' intention was for the Wing to operate as an independent force, under the general direction of the AOC Malaya.<sup>61</sup>

Jones then cabled the British Air Ministry, giving them the audacious advice that if the RAAF units did not come under the command of an Australian officer, they would not be deployed to Malaya.<sup>62</sup> Fortunately, and much to Jones' surprise, the Air Ministry agreed to his wishes.<sup>63</sup> We might expect that had they not agreed, or taken the matter further, Jones would not have been supported by Menzies or White. Jones' decision proved to be beneficial for the RAAF because it led to the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal F.R.W. Scherger as AOC Malaya in 1952 (an appointment that placed an Australian officer as the commander of all Commonwealth air forces in Malaya) and Air Vice-Marshal V.E. Hancock was also appointed AOC Malaya in 1957. Both these officers gained experience in commanding a large multinational force and both went on to become CAS of the RAAF.<sup>64</sup> The 'Malayan Emergency' was a long conflict for the RAAF, as it

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Edwards with Gregory Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948–1965*, Allen & Unwin, North Sydney, NSW, 1992, pp. 90–91.

<sup>60</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, pp. 138–139.

<sup>61</sup> Jones papers, 'The Communist Insurgents in Malaya.'

<sup>62</sup> Eather *Odd Jobs*, p. 48; and Jones papers, 'The Communist Insurgents in Malaya.'

<sup>63</sup> Jones papers, 'The Communist Insurgents in Malaya.'

<sup>64</sup> Eather *Odd Jobs*, p. 48.

continued to deploy combat squadrons to Malaya to fight the CTs up until 1960. Jones was pleased with the RAAF's role and the outcome of the conflict:

It had not been a wasted effort. The R.A.F. crews in contact with Australians made some lasting friendships; the Malaysians who were employed on the periphery of operations came to hold the Australians in high regard, and the demonstration of practical Commonwealth solidarity in pursuing the common cause could only have done good.

The remarkable achievement of pacification without antagonisation was brought about, seemingly miraculously.<sup>65</sup>

## **Korea**

Almost five years after the end of World War I, the RAAF became involved in another major conflict. In June 1950, North Korean military units attacked targets in the Republic of Korea (South Korea). Menzies was quick to denounce the attacks as another instance of communist expansionism and committed elements of the Australian Services to fight in South Korea. The Prime Minister phoned Jones at home on the afternoon of Saturday 1 July 1950 and directed him to send a squadron of fighter aircraft to support a United Nations Command formed to oppose North Korea.<sup>66</sup> Jones selected No 77 Squadron which, at the time, was based at Iwakuni in Japan and was equipped with North American P-51 Mustang long-range fighters.<sup>67</sup>

US Air Force (USAF) bases in South Korea were attacked by North Korean aircraft at the outset of the war and Jones' first concern was that, while the US had air superiority, there was the possibility Iwakuni might be bombed by North Korean aircraft and the RAAF's aircraft could have been destroyed before they went into action. As one may have expected in an occupied country (Japan) in which there was no perceived threat of air attack, very little had been done at the air base in regard to anti-aircraft defences.<sup>68</sup> Fortunately, the base was not attacked and 77 Squadron flew its first operational sorties of the war on 2 July 1950.

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<sup>65</sup> Jones papers, 'The Communist Insurgents in Malaya', handwritten notes attached to typed pages.

<sup>66</sup> Alan Stephens, *The Australian Centenary History of Defence – Volume II – The Royal Australian Air Force*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, Vic., 2001, pp. 229–230.

<sup>67</sup> Office of Air Force History, No 77 (Fighter) Squadron Unit History Sheet – RAAF Form A.50. At the time the conflict started, the Squadron was preparing to return to Australia.

<sup>68</sup> Jones papers, 'The Korean War'.

On 3 July 1950, No 77 Squadron was ordered to attack targets of opportunity between Heitaku and Suwon. Eight rocket-equipped Mustangs attacked road and rail transport in that area.<sup>69</sup> The result was the destruction of two locomotives, one truck, two staff cars and four other vehicles, while a bridge was damaged.<sup>70</sup> As it turned out, the 77 Squadron pilots had been provided with incorrect information and the transports they destroyed had been used by US and South Korean troops, and the attacking aircraft had killed 29 soldiers.<sup>71</sup> This tragic incident became the cause of a disagreement between Jones and aviation historian, George Odgers.

In 1952, Odgers wrote a book on the RAAF's operations in Korea. Jones commented that it was a very factual book—'A bit too factual. He included that the Australian squadron had killed 29 Americans by attacking a train.'<sup>72</sup> The book had been drafted during the war and Odgers asked Jones to write a forward to it. Jones refused, 'I wasn't going to lend my name to the fact that we'd killed 29 Americans while the war was going on.'<sup>73</sup> Jones later admitted he made a mistake by refusing the request and his refusal led to a falling out between himself and Odgers. Regardless of Jones' refusal, the book was published, with a forward by Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson.

Initially, 77 Squadron was tasked with escorting USAF aircraft and ground attack missions. The P-51, with its Merlin engine, had the well-deserved reputation as being one of the best piston-engined fighter aircraft ever built. However, November 1950 saw the appearance of the first Chinese Air Force MiG-15 swept-wing, jet fighter aircraft, and the RAAF pilots found themselves well and truly outclassed in air-to-air combat against the jet fighters. Quite clearly, the RAAF needed a suitable jet fighter to regain superiority in combat. The RAAF had the jet-powered de Havilland Vampire in service in Australia but this aircraft was primitive when compared to the North American F-86 Sabre or the MiG-15. The F-86 was the RAAF's preferred choice as a suitable fighter, but at the time there were insufficient

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<sup>69</sup> Office of Air Force History, No 77 (Fighter) Squadron Unit History Sheet: Detail of Operations – RAAF Form A.51, 3 July 1950.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> David Wilson, *Lion Over Korea: 77 Fighter Squadron RAAF 1950–53*, Banner Books, Belconnen, 1994, p. 15; and George Odgers, *Across the Parallel: The Australian 77th Squadron with the United States Air Force in the Korean War*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, Vic., 1952, pp. 46–50.

<sup>72</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection, c. 1976.

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.*

to meet the USAF's needs, so the Australian Government turned to the UK for fighters to re-equip 77 Squadron.

The selection of the new fighter was a compromise. The Australian High Commissioner to Britain advised the Australian Government that there were three aircraft types available—the de Havilland Venom, the Hawker P1081 and the Gloster Meteor. He recommended the Venom as first choice. When it came to availability, however, things were a lot different as de Havilland was unable to deliver Venoms until 1952 and the P1081 was still under development. The RAAF had to take the Meteor, which Jones consequently accepted as the best aircraft available for 77 Squadron. At the time of its selection, the inferiority of the Meteor vis-à-vis the MiG-15 does not appear to have been realised in either Australia or the UK.<sup>74</sup> In November 1950, Australia ordered 36 Meteor F Mk 8 fighters and four Meteor T Mk 7 two-seat trainers, which were delivered during the first half of 1951.<sup>75</sup> The Meteor was a straight-wing, World War II vintage fighter and proved to be no match for the MiG-15 in combat. Despite a small number of combat victories, 77 Squadron's pilots eventually found themselves relegated to flying ground attack missions in their new 'fighters'.

Unlike his travel regime during the World War II, Jones made only two trips to Korea during the course of the war. There appears to be little on record about his first trip, other than that he noted that he made a flight over the front lines aboard a C-47 in the company of the Commanding Officer of 77 Squadron, Wing Commander Lou Spence, and two journalists—John Ulm and Randolph Churchill.<sup>76</sup> Jones made his second trip in September 1951. On this occasion, the Minister for Air, William McMahon, told Parliament that Jones had been sent to Korea to investigate the Meteor's combat capabilities, as there had been some criticism about the aircraft's performance vis-à-vis the MiG-15.<sup>77</sup> This visit was

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<sup>74</sup> Jones papers, 'The Korean War'. Jones claims the UK Air Ministry was aware the Meteor was inferior to both the F-86 and the MiG-15, and this proved to be the case when 77 Squadron started to fly them operationally in July 1951.

<sup>75</sup> Robert J. O'Neill, *Australia in the Korean War 1950–53 – Volume 1: Strategy and Diplomacy*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1981, pp. 150–151; and Wilson Lion Over Korea, pp. 64–65.

<sup>76</sup> Jones papers, 'The Korean War'.

<sup>77</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Session 1951, Vol. 214, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Tuesday, 2 October, 1951, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1951, p. 174. McMahon, quite inaccurately, told the Parliament that the assertion the Meteor was inferior to the MiG-15 was entirely without foundation and that in dogfights it was superior to the Soviet fighter!

well documented, as Jones prepared a report on RAAF and USAF fighter squadrons in Korea and, in addition, made some comments on RAAF personnel and activities in Hong Kong and Malaya. Visits to these other two countries were included as part of the trip.<sup>78</sup>

In relation to the fighter aircraft in Korea, Jones reported that the USAF fighter groups (equipped with F-86 Sabre aircraft) were usually made up of three squadrons, each of 25 aircraft. The Sabre, he claimed, had the edge over the MiG-15 in terms of firepower and performance below 30 000 feet. He judged the RAAF Meteors to be the equivalent of the USAF F-84 Thunderjet, 'they are the second best allied fighters in Korea. Meteor may have the edge on the F-84 because of superior fire power.'<sup>79</sup> The US Commanders, he wrote, still consider the Meteor to be too valuable to be used on ground attack missions. Instead, they were primarily used to escort bombers or reconnaissance aircraft, while the Sabres were used for offensive patrols between the bombers' targets and the Manchurian border. Under these conditions, he advised, the Meteor was most useful.

One problem noted with the Meteors was the urgent need for additional aircraft. If the type was unavailable, Jones considered another aircraft, such as the Sabre, would have to be acquired quickly. More importantly, he commented on the need for trained pilots:

New role of Air Fighting requires specialised tactics and techniques which should be taught initially in Australia. Training should therefore

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<sup>78</sup> National Archives of Australia, A1196/6/37/501/576, 'Report on visit to Korea & Japan by CAS (Chief of Air Staff) Sept – Oct 1951', 'Report on visit to Korea, Japan and Malaya by the Chief of the Air Staff—September to October 1951', G. Jones, Air Marshal, CAS, 3 October 1951. Much of the report (at least four pages) dealt with technical subjects, such as aircraft mechanical requirements and weapons trials (such as the testing of rocket projectiles or the fitting of napalm tanks to ground attack aircraft).

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*, p.1. Jones appears to be inaccurate in his statement that the Meteor was the equivalent to the F-84. In terms of aircraft performance, the F-84 had a higher top speed (620 mph) than the Meteor F.8 (600 mph) and a considerably greater range (1485 miles (2390 km) against the Meteor's 600 miles (965 km)). The F-84's ceiling of 43 240 feet was slightly higher than the Meteor's 43 000 feet. The Meteor was armed with four 20 mm cannon, while the Republic F-84 Thunderjet carried six .50 calibre machine guns. We may question Jones' statement that the F-86 Sabre had the advantage over the MiG-15 in firepower. The F-86 was armed with six .50 calibre machine guns, while the MiG-15 carried one 37 mm cannon and two 23 mm cannon. The F-86 could carry a greater quantity of ammunition and the .50 calibre machine guns had a higher rate of fire, whereas the MiG's cannon shells would cause greater damage to their target. Machine gun armament for US fighters was abandoned after the Korean War and later versions of the F-86 (and the F-84) were armed with cannons. The majority of US fighter aircraft designed and constructed after the Sabre were armed with cannon and/or air-to-air missiles.



be concentrated on air fighting and in addition to visits by senior officers concerned, most of the capable pilots returning within the next few months should be posted to No 78 Wing.<sup>80</sup>

On the return trip to Australia, Jones visited RAAF personnel and units based in other parts of Asia. The first stop was Hong Kong where 11 RAAF personnel were stationed with an RAF unit. His main comments related to their accommodation and uniforms. He found that their quarters were 'fair' and the standard of messing far below that provided to RAAF personnel in Australia. It is not recorded whether he put in place any initiatives to remedy the poor conditions.

Jones next stop was Malaya where he visited 1 Squadron, a Lincoln bomber unit whose aircraft were used on operations against the 'Bandits' (CTs). Jones found the aircraft serviceability and the morale of squadron personnel were both excellent. A transport unit (No 38 Squadron) was also in Malaya and Jones noted that, while morale was high, 'by the nature of their duties they have not the cohesiveness of No 1 Squadron.' One interesting recommendation he made concerned the command of No 90 Wing, which had initially been led by a Squadron Leader. This position had been upgraded to that of a Wing Commander, when it was found that a Squadron Leader could not accomplish much when working within the hierarchical system of the RAF. Jones recommended the command position be upgraded further to a Group Captain and added, 'A great deal of importance is attached to rank in the R.A.F. and generally in Malaya.'<sup>81</sup>

### **Jones' Views of Air Combat over Korea**

After the cessation of fighting in Korea in 1953, Jones, by this time in retirement from the RAAF, put together some thoughts on the use of air power during the conflict. His initial comments were that the limitations placed on the UN commanders affected the conduct of the war. That is, in respect to land warfare, the UN commanders had to decide whether they would halt their advance against the North Koreans at the 38th Parallel, which would sacrifice all the advantages gained from hard fighting and having the enemy on the run, or whether they should push on to the Yalu River and risk conflict with China and the Soviet Union. Jones noted that General MacArthur wanted to go on to the Yalu because 'he realised that to halt his forces and leave the North Koreans undefeated must, at best, lead

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>81</sup> *ibid.*, p. 8.

to a military stalemate, and this was not his idea of how a war should be fought.’<sup>82</sup> Jones reminded his readers that the UN ground forces occupied much of North Korea but air forces were not allowed to fly north of the border with China, ‘and consequently were forced to operate at a grave disadvantage.’<sup>83</sup> The disadvantage was:

The North Korean Air Force, equipped with highly efficient Russian fighter aircraft, were all based in Manchuria outside Korean territory. The only logical way for an Air Commander to deal with such a situation was to destroy them at their bases, and in fact destroy, by bombing, the sources from which all North Korean war equipment came, also their communications running deep into territory from which these supplies were drawn. This however, was forbidden.<sup>84</sup>

Generally, it appeared that the UN policy was for ground forces to occupy all of Korea and to defeat the North Korean Army. The air forces were restrained from hitting the enemy ‘where it hurt’ for fear of causing an extension of the war. Korea, Jones wrote, was a war limited in regard to the area into which attacks could be made and the types of weapons used. In his opinion, the UN had to choose either to fight an unlimited war until the enemy was crushed, or to fight a war of limited objective. A clear decision on this was essential, yet it was never reached.<sup>85</sup>

A limited war could not be fought successfully when the aggressor had powerful friends occupying contiguous territories into which its forces could retreat and from which they could receive support. Therefore, the UN decision to engage in the land campaign was unfortunate but perhaps unavoidable. Jones considered that the USAF could have caused tremendous and sustained destruction to North Korean cities and industrial targets. By this comment, he did not mean using the atomic bomb because ‘The supply was probably limited, and the situation in Europe had to be considered.’<sup>86</sup> Instead, he considered heavy and sustained conventional bombing, the effect of which, on the aggressor, would have been considerable and it could have continued until the North Koreans capitulated. He added:

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<sup>82</sup> Australian War Memorial, AWM Collection Record: 3DRL/3414 – Jones, George (Air Marshal, Director of Training and Chief of Air Staff, RAAF), ‘The Lessons of Korea’, p. 3. These notes were published as ‘Lessons of the Korean Campaign’, in *The Age*, 27 August 1953.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*

It will be remembered that the submission of Japan was brought about very largely in this way, nearly all her large cities having been destroyed by fire bombing.<sup>87</sup>

Jones proposed three lessons that could be learnt from the Korean conflict:

1. No matter how good the cause, or how lofty the ideals to uphold, for which the UN takes up arms, strategic considerations must first be carefully thought out. Principles may have to be placed in 'cold storage' temporarily, rather than enter into an unsound struggle from which no favourable and lasting decision is likely to be obtained.
2. Western Countries with relatively limited man power can no longer afford to become involved in land campaigns in Asia, but must seek to redress their inferiority in numbers by building up strong air and naval forces.
3. First-class air weapons are now so terribly destructive that their full effectiveness is not likely to be used in other than a life-and-death struggle between the nations which produce such weapons.

Jones concluded with the comment, 'A powerful strategic Air Force at the disposal of the United Nations Organisation could, however, deter aggression in all parts of the World.'<sup>88</sup>

### **Re-equipping the Service**

Postwar aircraft acquisition was another area where the RAAF benefited from Jones' decisions. As we know, the RAAF finished World War II equipped with a huge number of aircraft—far too many for the reorganised postwar Service, and so many were sold off to the scrap metal industry. Sufficient aircraft were retained to equip the 16 squadrons proposed in Plan 'D', but Jones encountered another issue. The aircraft, while only constructed a few years earlier, were old in the terms of technology and design. The Service's most numerous fighter, the P-51 Mustang, was designed in the late 1930s, the RAAF's first jet fighter (the de Havilland Vampire) was designed in 1943, while the Avro Lincoln heavy bomber (introduced into the RAAF inventory in 1946) was based on the wartime Lancaster bomber. Jones was well aware, even before the Korean War, that weapons system technology

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<sup>87</sup> *ibid.* Jones commented in 1945, Japan still had large, well-equipped and well-trained armies, [but] no invasion by land forces was necessary.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5.

(including aerospace technology) had advanced considerably quickly during World War II and his 16 squadrons would need to be re-equipped with the very latest combat aircraft types, meaning those powered by jet engines. In his final years as CAS, Jones was responsible for the procurement of four aircraft types that served the RAAF extremely well for the next 20 years.

The jet bomber to replace the Lincoln turned out to be a very successful acquisition for the RAAF. The prototype of the twin-engine English Electric Canberra first flew on 13 May 1949. Jones and a team of technical experts visited Britain during 1949, examined the prototype, and selected the aircraft for the RAAF. While the version eventually selected for the RAAF lacked some of the advanced electronic warfare aids fitted to the Canberras operated by the RAF, it nevertheless proved to be an excellent choice and 48 were built by the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF) at Avalon, Victoria.<sup>89</sup> The aircraft type remained with the RAAF until June 1982 and saw operational service over Vietnam between 1967 and 1971. The selection of a jet fighter was a more complicated business.

The RAAF's first operational jet powered fighter was the de Havilland Vampire—a straight-wing, single-engine aircraft. The first examples of the type were introduced into RAAF service in 1947. Despite its advanced appearance, this aircraft employed dated technology in its design and construction (for example, the fuselage was constructed from fabric-covered plywood)<sup>90</sup> and Jones recognised a more advanced type was needed. He was in a difficult situation when it came to choosing a fighter as he had been directed by the Government to only consider British aircraft (as opposed to US-produced types) because of Australia's lack of foreign exchange in the form of US dollars.

The P1081 swept-wing fighter was developed by the Hawker company as a private venture to investigate flight at high Mach numbers.<sup>91</sup> It was still under development when it attracted the interest of the Labor Government and, in 1949, Prime Minister Chifley discussed with a representative of the Hawker company, Sir Keith Park, the possibility of building the aircraft in Australia.<sup>92</sup> Jones had an

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<sup>89</sup> Air Vice-Marshal Brian Weston, *The Australian Aviation Industry – History and Achievements Guiding Defence and Aviation Industry Policy*, Paper No. 12, Aerospace Centre, Fairbairn, 2003, p. 35; and Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 363.

<sup>90</sup> Stewart Wilson, *Vampire, Macchi and Iroquois in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, ACT, 1994, p. 14.

<sup>91</sup> RAAF Museum, 'A86 Hawker P1081', at <http://www.airforce.gov.au/RAAFmuseum/research/aircraft/series2/A86.htm>, accessed 4 January 2010.

<sup>92</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred

opportunity to look over the prototype P1081 during the trip to Britain in 1949 and concluded that it needed a larger or more powerful engine to replace its Rolls-Royce Tay. Regardless of Jones' opinion on the aircraft's power plant, the Australian Government decided, in February 1950, to order 72 P1081s, which were to be built in Australia and powered by the Rolls-Royce Nene engine (already in production in Australia and used to power the Vampire).<sup>93</sup> Unfortunately, the P1081 acquisition plan was fraught with problems, starting with the production arrangements for Australia. Without any prior consultation, the Australian Government told the management of Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) that they were to build the aircraft. There were problems in Britain as the Hawker Company's project management techniques were deficient and, as a result, the company was not able to supply production drawings to CAC, nor were they able to conclude satisfactory licensing arrangements with the Australian Government. The aircraft itself had an unremarkable career. Only one aircraft was built and it was destroyed in a crash (in which the pilot was killed) on a test flight on 3 April 1951. Hawker then became disenchanted with the project and dedicated their design effort to developing the P1081's successor—the Hawker F3/48.<sup>94</sup> The RAF was in a situation similar to the RAAF—it needed an advanced swept-wing fighter, but it decided not to order the P1081. Without the RAF order, Hawker completely lost interest and cancelled further development of the aircraft,<sup>95</sup> leaving the RAAF in an awkward situation.

The solution to the RAAF's problem was found, by CAC engineer, L.J. Wackett, in North America. Before the P1081 project was cancelled, but after being told his company was to build the aircraft for the RAAF, Wackett travelled to the UK to examine the aircraft firsthand. He observed the problems Hawker was experiencing, concluded that the P1081 was unsuitable and, on his own initiative, decided to look at the possibilities of selecting a US-designed fighter for Australian production. While in the US, he met with General George Kenney, who persuaded him to consider the North American F-86 Sabre as a the most suitable candidate for his company to build. Wackett concurred and on his return to Australia put

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Morton in the Fred Morton collection.

<sup>93</sup> Vincent Orange, *A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, GCB, KBE, MC, DFC, DCL*, Methuen, London, 1984, p. 255.

<sup>94</sup> Weston, *The Australian Aviation Industry – History and Achievements Guiding Defence and Aviation Industry Policy*, pp. 36–37; and Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 346.

<sup>95</sup> Derek Wood, *Project Cancelled: A Searching Criticism of the Abandonment of Britain's Advanced Aircraft Projects*, Macdonald and Jane's, London, 1975, pp. 42–45.

forward the proposition to Jones that CAC build the Sabre and fit it with a Rolls-Royce engine.<sup>96</sup>

Jones now ran into problems with the Government, as the Minister for Air (T.W. White) was convinced that the RAAF should procure a British fighter aircraft (despite the fact that nothing suitable was available). Cabinet rejected the Air Board's first submission to acquire the Sabre. One reason for the rejection was because the Minister doubted the Nene engine, which had been proposed as the aircraft's power plant, would be powerful enough. Jones sought further advice on the matter and, at the Air Board meeting on 19 February 1951 (at which White was present), he organised a telephone conference with Lord Hives, the Managing Director of Rolls-Royce Ltd. Hives advised that the Nene would be unsuitable for the Sabre and suggested that the Avon engine would be the ideal engine for the aircraft. White was convinced and approved the manufacture of 72 Sabre aircraft in Australia.<sup>97</sup> CAC eventually built 112 Sabres and the aircraft served with the RAAF until 1971.

At the same time the Sabre was being built, CAC also designed and built the Winjeel trainer. Despite objections from the Government about the aircraft's cost and the fact it was not British, Jones placed the initial development and purchasing orders for the Winjeel with CAC. He encountered a few problems in placing these orders, as the Menzies Government, with their strong leanings towards all things British, had expressed a preference for the Provost aircraft.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, Jones persisted with his belief in Australian aircraft production and his view that the Winjeel was a superior design. His persistence paid off and CAC eventually delivered 64 Winjeels to the RAAF. The other major aircraft acquisition Jones presided over was the Lockheed P2V-5 Neptune long-range maritime patrol (LRMP) aircraft, which he ordered in 1951. The first Neptunes were delivered to the RAAF after Jones retired from the Service.

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<sup>96</sup> Weston, *The Australian Aviation Industry – History and Achievements Guiding Defence and Aviation Industry Policy*, p. 37; and Stephens *Going Solo*. p. 347.

<sup>97</sup> Office of Air Force History, Air Board Minute, 'Sabre Aircraft', 19 February 1951. Ironically, the RAF was without a locally developed fighter aircraft and it eventually acquired 430 F-86 Sabres, which served with 12 squadrons between January 1953 and June 1956, when they were replaced with Hawker Hunters. Paul Ellis (ed.), *Aircraft of the RAF: A Pictorial Record 1918–1978*, Macdonald and Jane's, London, 1978, p. 133.

<sup>98</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection.

## **Retirement**

While Jones knew nothing of the plans to appoint him as CAS, it is likely, however, that he must have been able to guess there were moves afoot for his retirement. Labor, while they were still in government in the late 1940s, had been keen to apply a rotation policy for senior RAAF officers. A similar policy was also mooted for the Army. In fact, there had been no objection from that Service to a proposal for the transfer of officers (irrespective of their seniority) from the position of Chief of the General Staff (CGS) to a major command appointment of similar rank. When the Government started to look into the situation with the RAAF, it found that Air Board members, because of their age were not due for retirement for some time but due to their rank they had been in their positions for a long time. The Government recognised the problems associated with this (i.e. the possibility of senior officers becoming out of touch with the day-to-day running of the Service) and to overcome the stultifying atmosphere at RAAF Headquarters, the Minister for Defence considered it was essential for senior officers to be rotated through command as well as administrative positions. Jones agreed with the rotation initiative, stating it was in the interests of the Service that Air Board members should not hold their positions for too long and he advised the Government:

In my opinion a period of approximately five years should be the aim for Board appointments. They should be interchanged with officers holding senior commands thereby introducing fresh experience and new ideas on higher policy matters.<sup>99</sup>

In October 1948, Drakeford proposed that Air Board and senior command appointments (i.e. those at Air Vice-Marshal level) be for a period of no longer than four years. However, this idea ran into problems straight away as CAS was the RAAF's only Air Marshal and there was no position into which he could be transferred, and because of the specialised natures of the duties of the Air Members for Supply and Equipment (AMSE) and Technical Services (AMTS), it was claimed they could not be rotated to other positions. The alternative to rotation for these three officers was 'their retirement would appear to be the most logical course to

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<sup>99</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], 1912–1992, folder MS9148/9/1, minute from Secretary to Minister, 'Policy Rotation of Higher Appointments in R.A.A.F.', 10 October 1950.

follow'.<sup>100</sup> The Labor Government was voted from office before the proposal took effect.

The incoming Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, and the new Minister for Air, Thomas White, had criticised, in private, the poor quality of the RAAF's senior officers in general and Jones in particular. After taking over the Ministry, White's early task was to attempt to reorganise the upper echelons of the RAAF, starting with CAS. His Government's aim was to replace Jones with an RAF officer. Menzies initially started negotiations to obtain a suitable officer, with the British Air Ministry and RAF during his visit to the UK in early 1950.<sup>101</sup>

The Air Ministry initially did not support the idea, basing their disagreement on comments made by the Inspector-General of the RAF, who had recently carried out an inspection of the RAAF. The Inspector-General reported back to his Chief, Marshal of the RAF Sir John Slessor, stating that, while Jones and other senior RAAF officers were delighted to see a senior RAF officer in Australia, there was a view in some quarters that the inspection was made with the aim of making drastic recommendations on the Service's senior appointments. Many of the senior RAAF officers retained negative memories of the outcomes of the visit by Sir Edward Ellington in 1938.

White was advised that the Inspector-General considered it to be most unwise for the Air Ministry to comment or make suggestions on Australia's next CAS. The Air Ministry advised White that the appointment of an RAF officer to head the RAAF:

Might do more harm than good, and that the possible increase in efficiency of the R.A.A.F. would be more than offset by causing bad feeling between the R.A.F. and R.A.A.F., which I am sure you would wish to avoid.

I hope, therefore, you will agree not to pursue the matter further.<sup>102</sup>

The Government was not going to take 'no' for an answer but, at the same time, they were faced with another problem. They had to find alternative employment for Jones and one possible area was a position with the Australian National

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<sup>100</sup> National Library of Australia, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, minute from Secretary to Minister, 'Policy Rotation of Higher Appointments in R.A.A.F.', 10 October 1950. It is not known whether, at this time, the Government considered an overseas placement or temporary transfer for Jones or the other Air Board members.

<sup>101</sup> Stephens, *Going Solo*, p. 73; and Stephens, *Power Plus Attitude*, p. 135.

<sup>102</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, letter from A. Henderson, Air Ministry, to White, 20 June 1950.



Airlines Commission. The chairmanship was vacant and White's first choice for the position, Sir Keith Smith, was unable to accept it due to other commitments. Menzies was scheduled to make another visit to the UK in early 1951 and White reasoned that if Jones was given a new job quickly (i.e. a position with the Airlines Commission), the CAS position would be vacant before Menzies went overseas and the Prime Minister would have been in a better position to make approaches personally to the Air Ministry or Slessor for an RAF officer.<sup>103</sup>

White continued to press the Air Ministry himself, claiming the hostilities in Korea and Malaya and the looming Cold War position made the need for an RAF officer even more urgent.<sup>104</sup> The Minister also had second thoughts on Jones' future employment, and advised Menzies that it would be better to appoint the Air Marshal to one of the ordinary commissionerships with the Australian National Airlines Commission, rather than chairman.<sup>105</sup>

In other advice to Menzies, White reminded the Prime Minister of the staffing and promotion stagnation within the RAAF due to one CAS (Williams) being in the position for 18 years and Jones' [then] eight-year term. As a remedy, White was keen to introduce the four year term for the CAS and told the Prime Minister that the selection of a suitable RAF officer should not be deferred for too long. (White based his view on the RAF's experience. He had been advised of the Air Ministry's belief in fixed term appointments of two years—plus an additional two years if the appointee proved satisfactory.) In his view, two years would be the necessary period of appointment for the imported officer.<sup>106</sup> There was still, however, the issue of what to do with Jones as the Australian National Airlines commissionership did not eventuate. As an Air Marshal, there was no other RAAF position into which Jones could be rotated. White suggested a transfer to the RAF but considered it unlikely. So retirement was the only solution. It is surprising that Jones, with almost 10 years experience in dealing with politicians and senior public servants, had not managed to engineer himself a position somewhere within the Federal Bureaucracy to which he could have been appointed. There is no mention in any of his papers or writings of when and how he planned for retirement (other than his comment to

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<sup>103</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, letter from White to Menzies, 16 December 1950.

<sup>104</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, letter from White to A. Henderson, 19 January 1950.

<sup>105</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, letter from White to Menzies, 22 January 1951.

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*

MacMahon, after the decision was made, that he expected to be retired). We may wonder whether he really expected that he would remain in the CAS position until he reached the mandatory retirement age. Jones, however, had seen that Williams had been appointed as head of the civil aviation authority and, based on this, he would have had good reason to expect a similar appointment for himself.<sup>107</sup>

The Australian Government continued to pester the British Government for an officer. The Air Ministry eventually agreed to the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Sir Donald Hardman to the CAS position. The Australian Government's initial task for Hardman was for him to conduct an inspection and to submit a report on the RAAF. He was then to occupy the position of CAS for two years.<sup>108</sup> On his appointment as CAS, Hardman was made an acting Air Marshal. He was confirmed in this rank in July 1952.<sup>109</sup>

White himself had a job change and was appointed Australian High Commissioner to the UK during 1951. He was succeeded as Minister for Air by William McMahon. White recommended to McMahon to keep pushing for the rotation of senior RAAF officers. He claimed the usefulness of the Air Board had been nullified by the long tenure of some of its members. White also gave his opinion on senior RAAF officers and their suitability for further employment. Jones, he considered, had a good knowledge of the RAAF and Service matters generally and was still able to fly. Nevertheless, his opinion of Jones' personality was low and White stressed this in his advice to McMahon, 'in a post where imagination and personality are needed, changes should regularly be made'. Hewitt 'is alert and efficient' and White recommended he be appointed Air Member for Personnel (AMP). 'Bladin has a good appearance and was a most competent flyer', but White did not consider him to be as good a staff officer as Hewitt and recommended Bladin's transfer to Southern Command. Ellis Wackett was a capable engineer but should have been transferred to some overseas post or local command. Waddy had ability and was tactful (these comments might have been expected as Waddy was White's appointee to the Air Board as the representative of the Reserve forces). Scherger

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<sup>107</sup> On his retirement, Williams was appointed Director-General of Civil Aviation in July 1946. Sir Richard Williams, *These are Facts: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams KBE, CB, DSO*, Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1977, p. 336.

<sup>108</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, inward telegram to Commonwealth Relations Office, 7 August 1951.

<sup>109</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Air Marshals of the Royal Australian Air Force 1935–1995*, Department of Defence (Air Force Office), Canberra, 1995, p. 40.

was seen as a potential CAS. White advised his successor, 'In case he [Scherger] may feel peeved by the appointment of a R.A.F. Chief of Air Staff, he might well be advised how temporary this is, otherwise there might be a chance of losing him as the Americans think highly of him, and he gets on well with them.' McCauley was considered to be a good officer but the advice was that he should remain with Eastern Command. White told McMahan he could discuss these staffing arrangements quite safely with Langslow. Langslow, he advised, had been criticised in the past 'when the criticism should have been directed against Drakeford, whom he had to carry for years.'<sup>110</sup>

McMahan, asked Jones to meet with him in his Sydney office in December 1951. McMahan told Jones that Cabinet had decided he was to be retired and replaced by an officer on secondment from the RAF. Jones simply replied, 'Yes, I've been expecting that.' McMahan admitted that Menzies had guessed Jones would give such a reply.<sup>111</sup>

Jones' retirement stirred up disagreement in Federal Parliament. The Labor Opposition claimed that the Government's action in replacing Jones was 'rather a cavalier way of dealing with an officer of high rank'. They considered the replacement of an Australian officer by one from Britain to be a step backwards to the days when Australia was a British colony. The Opposition claimed there were Australians who could have filled the CAS position 'had they been sent overseas to gain greater experience', and F.R.W. Scherger and J.P.J. McCauley were nominated as two such officers.<sup>112</sup> One wonders why the Labor Party, when it was in government, did not take the initiative and post those officers to positions where they could have broadened their experience.

McMahan replied for the Government. He spoke of his discussions with Jones, claiming CAS told him he believed Chiefs of Staff should be in office for a limited time. Jones, he claimed, added that it was not for him to make recommendations, it was for the Government to decide on appointments. McMahan, adopting White's advice, told the Parliament he considered the ideal duration for a Chief of Staff position to be four years. He added that it would be in the best interests of the

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<sup>110</sup> National Library of Australia, MS 9148, Papers [of Sir Thomas White], folder MS9148/9/1, letter from White to McMahan, 31 August 1951.

<sup>111</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 146.

<sup>112</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Session 1951, Vol. 214, Senate and House of Representatives – House of Representatives, Thursday, 11 October, 1951, Government of the Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, ACT, 1951, pp. 595–596.

Service for Jones to be retired. Jones, he stated, had displayed no bitterness over the decision 'because he realised that a wise decision had been made'. The Minister explained that an Australian was not appointed for the simple reason that it was believed better to bring into the country, for two years, a man with the necessary experience for the job. McMahon then fell back on to the excuse given by a previous Conservative Government when it had bypassed Australian officers and appointed Burnett—he claimed there was no-one in Australia with the necessary qualifications. McMahon considered the choice of an RAF officer to be in the best interests of the RAAF.<sup>113</sup>

Hardman arrived in Australia in early 1952 and immediately set out on an Australia-wide inspection of the RAAF, accompanied by Jones. The trip ended in Canberra, where both officers met with Menzies. Jones claims that the Prime Minister displayed surprise when Hardman reported the RAAF to be in good shape and a going concern. Jones then spoke privately with Menzies, stating that he never sought to be CAS and, had the command positions been reversed, he would have served Bostock loyally.<sup>114</sup> Despite Jones' claims that Hardman found the RAAF to be in good shape, soon after the latter took over the position of CAS he set about improving the relationship between the RAAF and the Department of Air, and he embarked on a 12-month reorganisation of the Service that included the adoption of Jones' plan for decentralisation, a reform of the Air Board (including a definition of the role of the Secretary of the Department of Air), and a restructuring of the Service into three functional commands—Home, Training and Maintenance. To overcome the problems of the divided command arrangements, Hardman arranged that, in the event of RAAF units being deployed overseas under a Supreme Commander, the AOC of those units was to be given warranted powers fully set out by CAS. Thus, the AOC would have direct access to the Supreme Commander and would act under his command but at the same time would not be independent from CAS.<sup>115</sup>

On 18 January 1952, Air Marshal Jones took part in his last public function as CAS and one of his last official duties before leaving office. He took the salute at a passing out parade of 450 National Service trainees at Laverton. The trainees were

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, p. 597. One of the Government's aims was a reorganisation of the RAAF. In light of this, McMahon was correct in his claim about the lack of experience in RAAF officers.

<sup>114</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 147.

<sup>115</sup> John McCarthy, 'Air Power and Australian Defence: A Study in Imperial Relations, 1923–1954', PhD thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1971, pp. 331–332 and 336.

from units based at the East Sale Flying School, the Ballarat Radio School, the Point Cook Training Group and Froggnall Communications School.<sup>116</sup>

*The Age* reported that Jones told the trainees that the future security of Australia rested in their hands. They would be on the RAAF Reserve when they were discharged, but he hoped many of them would join the active Citizen Air Force. The newspaper noted, 'The parade was a brilliant finale for one of Australia's brilliant officers. Here were 450 young men, trained for only six months, but neatly efficient as they marched past a man who had worked himself through the ranks of the air force to its highest post. Air Marshal Jones commended them on their bearing and efficiency, and after the parade dropped into the afternoon tea party the trainees provided for their relatives and friends.'<sup>117</sup>

At the time of Jones' retirement, the Minister for Air asked his Department whether there was a formal ceremony that should be conducted to mark Jones' departure from the Service. That is, 'some formal ceremony at Point Cook at which his flag could be officially hauled down and he could be formally honoured on his termination of office.'<sup>118</sup> The Department considered the proposal and then rejected it, advising that there was no tradition associated with the relinquishment of the CAS position. Things were different in the Navy where a departing Admiral would have his flag hauled down and the incoming Admiral would have his raised. Furthermore, the idea of a parade had been discussed with Jones but it was decided not to proceed as there was insufficient time to make the appropriate arrangements before Hardman's arrival. Therefore, it was considered that no further action was appropriate, apart from a press statement by the Minister for Defence and a letter of acknowledgment by the Prime Minister.<sup>119</sup>

Jones' departure ceremonies included a formal farewell dinner given by the Service as a whole at a dining-in night at the Officers' Mess at Point Cook on 31 January 1952.<sup>120</sup> Guests at the dinner included Hewitt, Bladin, Charlesworth and

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<sup>116</sup> 'Air Chief's last parade', in *The Herald*, 17 January 1952.

<sup>117</sup> 'Air Chief takes salute at his last big parade', in *The Age*, 19 January 1952.

<sup>118</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/163/39/183, 'Jones, G, Air Marshal – Letter of Appreciation of Service on His Retirement', minute from Minister for Air to Secretary Department of Air, 9 February 1952.

<sup>119</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/163/39/183, 'Jones, G, Air Marshal – Letter of Appreciation of Service on His Retirement', minute from Secretary Department of Air to Minister for Air, 15 February 1952.

<sup>120</sup> Office of Air Force History, George Jones file – 'Dinner to Air Marshal G. Jones, CB, CBE, DFC, on his retirement from the Service', menu.

McCauley.<sup>121</sup> Other celebrations included a buffet dinner given by the Headquarters Mess at St Kilda Road, Melbourne and a dinner at the Australia Club in Melbourne. The latter celebration was attended by Menzies and other prominent entities, such as Essington-Lewis and Hardman. In his speech to the assembled dignitaries, Jones said that his two greatest achievements were the organisation of EATS and the expansion of the RAAF in the SWPA. After the dinner, Menzies asked, 'If I recommend you for a knighthood, will you accept it?' Jones replied he would be proud to accept.<sup>122</sup>

The Hon. P.A.M. McBride, Minister for Defence, formally announced Jones' departure from office on 8 February 1952. In his press statement, he noted Jones' distinguished World War I record, the fact that he was the last serving of the World War II Chiefs of Staff, Jones' role in the development of EATS, and that he was appointed CAS during a most critical stage of the war. The statement continued with:

He has served continuously in that capacity for the remainder of the War, during the period of post-war re-organisation, and more recently, during the build-up of the R.A.A.F, as part of the overall programme of Defence preparedness, including air commitments in Korea and Malaya.

Mr McBride said he wished to express the appreciation of the Government for the loyal and notable service which Air Marshal Jones had rendered this country and the contribution he had made to the development of the R.A.A.F. during the momentous and crucial period of its history. The Minister said that in his new sphere in the Aircraft Industry, Air Marshal Jones would no doubt continue to be closely associated with the R.A.A.F. in the production of its material requirements.<sup>123</sup>

McMahon drafted a letter of appreciation to Jones to be sent under the Prime Minister's signature. In his covering note to Menzies, McMahon wrote that Jones had 'filled the position of Chief of Air Staff with distinction and outstanding devotion to duty'. It was, therefore, appropriate that the Prime Minister should

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 16 June 2000.

<sup>122</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 147.

<sup>123</sup> National Archives of Australia, 163/39/183, statement by the Minister for Defence (The Hon. P.A. McBride, MP), 8 February 1952.

send Jones a letter 'expressing the appreciation of the Government for his notable and loyal service and the contribution he made to the air defence of his country'.<sup>124</sup>

The letter thanked Jones for his valuable work:

I desire to express, on behalf of the Government and myself, the appreciation felt for the notable and loyal service you have rendered. Your valuable contribution to the air defence of this country during the period of over 9 years when you were Chief of Air Staff, and which included a most critical stage of the war and the difficult period of post-war organisation, will long be remembered.<sup>125</sup>

Jones was gracious to the politician responsible for his retirement and thanked Menzies for his letter stating that it would 'be placed among my most cherished possessions'. He told Menzies:

It has always been a great pleasure to me to be associated with you and your government in defence matters, and I have always felt assured of kindly understanding on your part.<sup>126</sup>

Despite the mutual exchange of pleasantries, there was animosity on Jones' part, as he would claim later that he was unpopular with some members of the Liberal Government who were suspicious of him because he had been appointed by Labor and 'they imagined I had some secret affiliation with the Labor Party'.<sup>127</sup> One must wonder whether this was really the case. The Menzies Government was elected in 1949 and it was not until December 1951 that Jones was advised of his own retirement. If he was unpopular with certain sections of the Government, why was he not retired sooner? Even if a suitable RAF officer was unavailable in 1949 or 1950, the Menzies Government could have appointed an RAAF officer as a temporary measure, as they had done with W.H. Anderson in 1939, until such a person became available.

On 27 February 1952, the Department of Air notified the Treasury that Air Marshal Jones ceased active duty with the RAAF on 22 February 1952. The following day he

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<sup>124</sup> National Archives of Australia, 163/39/183, minute from Minister for Air to Minister for Defence, 7 April 1952.

<sup>125</sup> National Archives of Australia, 163/39/183, letter from Menzies to Jones.

<sup>126</sup> Jones papers, letter from Jones to Menzies, 23 April 1952.

<sup>127</sup> 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.

was enrolled on the Retired List.<sup>128</sup> In so far as remuneration went, the Defence Force Retirement Benefits Board advised the Department of Air that 'approval has been given for payment of a pension at the rate of £514.08.07 per annum on and from 23rd February, 1952'.<sup>129</sup>

During his time in the Australian Army, AFC and RAAF, Jones had held 15 different ranks. In addition to the CBE, CB and DFC, he had also been awarded the 1914–1915 Star, the General Service Medal, the Victory Medal, the Coronation Medal, the Pacific Star, the Defence Medal, the War Medal 1939–1945, and the Australian Service Medal 1939–1945.

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<sup>128</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/162/7/285, '031 Air Marshal G Jones D.F.R.B. Scheme,' minute from Secretary Department of Air to Assistant Secretary, Department of the Treasury (Defence Division), 27 February 1952.

<sup>129</sup> National Archives of Australia, A705/1/162/7/285, minute from Assistant Secretary, Defence Force Retirement Benefits Board to Secretary, Department of Air, 5 March 1952.





Air Marshal Jones inspects the guard of honour during a visit to RAAF Williamtown, 1947. At left is Wing Commander R.C. ('Dick') Cresswell, the Officer Commanding RAAF Williamtown.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. P01254.073)*



(From left) Lieutenant Colonel W.R. Hodgson, Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson, General Douglas MacArthur and Air Marshal George Jones awaiting the arrival of the Australian Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. R.G. Menzies, at Haneda Airfield, Tokyo, Japan, 14 August 1950.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 042907)*



Air Marshal Jones (right) and Lieutenant General Sir Horace Robertson (left), the Australian Commander-in-Chief of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF), accompanied the Prime Minister of Australia, the Rt Hon. Robert Menzies, on his tour of BCOF units and bases in Japan, August 1950. The Prime Minister has removed his suit coat due to the summer heat on this visit to a Japanese Shinto shrine at Kure, Japan.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. HOB11193)*



Air Marshal Jones talks with Sergeant Brooks while inspecting a parade of No 1 Squadron, Malaya, 1950.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. P01144.007)*



General Kenney, USAF (left), and Air Marshal Jones at RAAF Laverton, during Kenney's visit to Australia in September 1950.

*(Australian War Memorial ID No. 042899)*



George Jones designed and built this house in Mentone, Victoria, and lived there between 1957 and 1967. His 1956 Ford Customline motor car is parked in the driveway outside the garage and the 1951 Holden, which he purchased after leaving the RAAF, protrudes from the building.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Sir George Jones and Gwen Bauer on their wedding day, 1978.  
*(Mrs Anne Jones)*



Sir George Jones re-familiarises himself with horseriding at a suburban stable prior to leading the Melbourne ANZAC Day Parade in April 1988.

*(Mrs Anne Jones)*

## *Life After the RAAF*

We can look on retirement as an unhappy time for Jones. There was no family farm to retire to, nor was there a business to manage or an appointment to a senior public service position by a grateful Government. Instead, George Jones retired from the RAAF at the age of 55, with no real plan for his future employment. He had loyally served the RAAF and the Government for over 30 years and it was reasonable for him to expect some form of post-Service separation employment with a government agency. This, unfortunately, was not forthcoming and Jones suddenly found himself unemployed.

Others, however, were speculating on the nature of Jones' next job. Some media commentators expected that he might be appointed Director of Aircraft Production. Had this been the case, an interesting scenario could have evolved. In this position, Jones would have controlled the Division of Aircraft Production, within the Department of Defence Production.<sup>1</sup> Journalists speculated that, if the RAAF was administered along contemporary RAF lines, then, in his new position, Jones would continue to serve with the RAAF and attend Air Board meetings! (These journalists were possibly expecting the new CAS, Hardman, to reform the RAAF's command structure so that it resembled that of the RAF.) The speculation was further fuelled by a Government proposal for RAAF equipment design staff to be taken over by the Department of Defence Production, which was then managing Navy and Army design work. As the RAAF was in the throes of reorganisation, this seemed to be a feasible option. The press reported that part of the reorganisation proposal was not unanimously supported within the RAAF, because some senior officers feared that they would not be able to say what their Service wanted in terms of materiel but, rather, would be told what they would get by the Director of Aircraft Production.<sup>2</sup> Under this scenario, Jones would have had considerable influence over the Service's structure and equipment selection and procurement. In hindsight, it seems unlikely that it would have happened because, given the Government's attempts to replace Jones as CAS, it would have been absurd to then reinstate him to another position where he would continue to exercise some power over the RAAF. Nevertheless, we might imagine that this would have been a position for which Jones would have

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<sup>1</sup> 'Airman may get big job', in *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1951.

<sup>2</sup> 'Air Chief may head plane production', in *The Herald*, 27 October 1951.

been highly suitable, with his good administrative skills and his strong dedication towards Australian aircraft production.

Possibly, much to the relief of the senior RAAF officers, the position did not eventuate and Jones was appointed Director of Co-ordination with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) at Fishermans Bend, Victoria. This position, at last, moved Jones closer to the manufacture of aircraft in Australia. The main task associated with his new job was to maintain liaison between the three major parties involved in military aircraft production—CAC, the RAAF and the Department of Aircraft Production (DAP). The problems Jones had procuring aircraft for his Service during World War II still conditioned his thinking while he worked in his new job. He believed that CAC was a vital defence asset and he saw the main purpose of his job was to keep the company in business because he ‘reckoned the value of the aircraft industry was such that if we let it die, when we needed it again it just wouldn’t be there.’<sup>3</sup>

CAC’s major aircraft projects at the time were the production of the Sabre fighter and the Winjeel trainer for the RAAF<sup>4</sup>—aircraft that had been selected for the Service while Jones was CAS. Because of his previous position with the RAAF, Jones was in an ideal position with CAC as he was aware of the RAAF’s needs and expectations, and of CAC’s capabilities to meet the RAAF’s requirements. Production of the Sabre started in 1954 and a task Jones undertook in his new position was to organise the handover ceremony of the first Australian-built Sabre to the Australian Government. This was an elaborate affair, held on 30 August 1954 and attended by Menzies and other political identities. Eric Harrison, the Minister for Defence Production, made a speech in which he praised the aircraft and emphasised the need for Australian aircraft production. After Harrison’s speech, Menzies commented to Jones, ‘I hope he will never have to eat his words.’<sup>5</sup>

When he was CAS, Jones had been instrumental in placing the initial development and purchasing orders for the Winjeel with CAC. Now at CAC, he had the opportunity he had the opportunity to do some ‘hands-on’ work with the project. As CAS he had encountered a few problems with placing the orders for the aircraft

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<sup>3</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection, c. 1976.

<sup>4</sup> Sir George Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal: The Autobiography of Air Marshal Sir George Jones KB [sic] CB DFC*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1988, p. 148.

<sup>5</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), ‘Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC’, chap. 21, p. 4; and Stewart Wilson, *The Meteor, Sabre and Mirage in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, 1989, p. 78.

as the Menzies Government, with their strong leanings towards all things British, had expressed a preference for the UK-designed Provost aircraft. Now at CAC he would experience further difficulties—this time with its development. He flew the first prototype and ‘thought that it was a pretty good trainer. And so it was.’<sup>6</sup> The ‘customer’, however, thought otherwise and Jones became involved in some arguments with Service officers. The RAAF maintained a test flying unit known as the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) at RAAF Base Laverton.<sup>7</sup> ARDU was given the prototype Winjeel for testing and, as a result of these tests, the RAAF claimed the aircraft was unspinnable.<sup>8</sup> To which Jones replied, ‘It’s the first non-spinnable aeroplane that’s ever been designed, we’ve really achieved something!’ Jones undertook a test flight on behalf of CAC and found that he was able to spin the Winjeel in a climbing turn. When the aircraft’s problems were sorted out (through repositioning the fin and rudder), Jones represented CAC at a conference convened at RAAF Headquarters, where the Service representatives discussed whether they would purchase the aircraft. Jones listened to the discussion and then, based on what he knew from his time as CAS, reminded them, ‘It’s no use discussing this thing. You’ve already bought it!’<sup>9</sup>

Although he was no longer a government employee, Jones was kept aware of some aspects of Defence policy, thanks in part to Sir Frederick Shedden, who continued to head the Department of Defence. Shedden forwarded Jones copies of Defence statements usually on the same day that the Minister made relevant announcements or statements in Parliament. These documents were beneficial to Jones’ work with CAC and, in reply, he provided brief comments on the statements and occasionally sent air power related papers to Shedden. Jones used this channel of communication to push for more local aircraft development. Now it was not only his belief but also his source of income, so it was essential for him to keep the Department of Defence abreast of air power issues, especially those relevant to self-sufficiency in aircraft

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<sup>6</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection.

<sup>7</sup> Melissa Weller, ‘Laverton: A Historic and Significant Airfield’, in *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 129, March/April 1998, pp. 56 and 59. ARDU was initially known as 1 Air Performance Unit (APU) and was established at Laverton on 1 December 1943. Its task was to undertake full scale flight testing in concurrence with laboratory research. It was renamed ARDU in September 1947. The unit moved to RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia in 1977.

<sup>8</sup> Stewart Wilson, *Tiger Moth, CT-4 and Winjeel in Australian Service*, Aerospace Publications, Weston Creek, ACT, 1994, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> National Library of Australia, audio tape ORAL TRC 712, George Jones interviewed by Fred Morton in the Fred Morton collection.

production. Jones used overseas material to stress his belief, such as a transcript of a speech given by William M. Allen, the then President of Boeing, titled 'Industry and National Defence', which he sent to Shedden in 1952.<sup>10</sup> The paper discussed the role of industry in assisting with the attainment of a nation's air power goals. Jones considered the same principles that existed in the US applied to Australia, despite the disparities between the Australian and US air forces and aircraft industries and he told Shedden, 'We might have written it ourselves.'<sup>11</sup>

In June 1953, Jones was appointed President of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association.<sup>12</sup> At the end of that month, following an invitation from Sir Reginald Ansett, he joined the Board of Ansett Transport Industries Ltd, filling a gap left by H.J. Youngman.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the CAC position, Jones took on a few other tasks during his post-RAAF retirement. He joined the Victorian branch of the Returned Sailors, Soldiers' and Airmen's Imperial League of Australia (RSSAILA)<sup>14</sup> and, in October 1952, he was made a member of the League's Shrine Trust, filling a vacancy caused by the death of Sir Harry Lawson.<sup>15</sup> Jones was Chairman of the committee that organised the official opening of the World War II section of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, by Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Australia in 1954. The committee's Secretary was Mr Bruce Ruxton, who remembered that the Shrine was 'a big deal at the time.'<sup>16</sup> Jones was delighted to meet the Queen on two occasions during her first visit to Australia.

The other meeting was at the conferring of his knighthood, notification of which was published in the New Year Honours List in January 1953. Jones became a Knight Commander of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire

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<sup>10</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/51/17, 'Personal correspondence – Australia, Air Vice-Marshal G (George) JONES, CB, CBE, DFC', reprint of a talk before the American Bar Association, San Francisco, CA, 17 September 1952. On the cover of this document was stamped the words 'We might have written it ourselves. A/M G. Jones.'

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/51/17, letter from Jones to Shedden 11 December 1952.

<sup>12</sup> The Association was renamed the Royal Australian Air Force Association (RAAFA) in 1991.

<sup>13</sup> 'Sir G Jones on Ansett Board', in *The Herald*, 30 June 1953. Youngman left Ansett to look after his pastoral interests.

<sup>14</sup> The RSSAILA changed its name to the Returned Services League of Australia (RSL) in 1965, and then to the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL) 1990.

<sup>15</sup> 'Air Marshal on Shrine Trust', in *The Age*, 22 October 1952.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton of Beaumaris, Vic., 24 April 2001.



(KBE).<sup>17</sup> In recognition of the honour, he received messages of congratulations from politicians, such as Evatt, Menzies and McMahon (who sent heartiest congratulations on behalf of himself and the Air Board).<sup>18</sup> Menzies later confided to Jones that he had some difficulty in securing a KBE for the retired Air Marshal.<sup>19</sup> It was over a year later, on 4 March 1954, when Queen Elizabeth II conferred the honour at Government House, Melbourne. Present at the same ceremony were other former RAAF officers who had received knighthoods—Sir Richard Williams and Sir Lawrence Wackett.

Jones' interest in the local development of weapons systems did not waiver. On 12 April 1954, the Minister for Defence presented a policy statement to Parliament.<sup>20</sup> Jones received a copy of the document from Shedden and replied with the following comments, once again stressing his beliefs:

Circumstances are certainly changing, and the need for a change in policy is indicated. I am more than ever convinced that the basis for national power is the ability to produce up-to-date weapons under our own control. If we provide a substantial proportion of the effort in this direction our friends overseas might help us, and we have the absolute right to the product.

In my opinion, the chances of Australia having an independent foreign policy are very slim unless she can produce at least a proportion of her own weapons.<sup>21</sup>

Retirement from the RAAF and remoteness from the Government obviously did not suit Jones. He had a problem securing permanent employment and was

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<sup>17</sup> *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, no. 1, Thursday 8 January 1953, p. 1. The same Gazette gave notice of the award of KCMG to the former Minister for Air, Philip McBride, and the CBE to Air Commodore (acting Air Vice-Marshal) Valston Hancock.

<sup>18</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, minute from William McMahon to Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC. Strangely, this minute has the date 5 December 1952 stamped on it and the January date handwritten above—one suspects some sort of clerical error. Interestingly, Bostock did not receive a knighthood, despite his distinguished war record and his time as a Liberal politician. Jones also received letters and telegrams from his Service colleagues and other renowned entities, such as Henry Winneke, Sir John Latham, Hudson Fysh, Essington Lewis, Charles Lowe and Owen Dixon. Jones papers, file titled 'Letters for Attention.'

<sup>19</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC', chap. 20, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> 'Defence Policy and the Programme', statement by the Minister for Defence, 12 April 1954.

<sup>21</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/51/17, letter from Jones to Shedden 21 April 1954.

disappointed he was not appointed to a permanent senior public service position.<sup>22</sup> He suspected that there was some political manipulation behind him not being offered such a position:

I had the ability, I knew how to train and utilise people. I was still relatively fit and young. The trouble is the Liberals only reward well their favourite sons; and I was a bit on the outer.<sup>23</sup>

Nevertheless, he offered his services to Shedden on a few occasions. Unfortunately, each offer was met with a rebuttal, such as his approach to Defence in November 1954, when he was advised by F.O. Chilton<sup>24</sup> (Shedden was on leave) that 'at present there are no suitable openings in this Department, but it occurred to Sir Frederick that the Department of Defence Production might be a more appropriate avenue for enquiry, especially in view of your recent experience.'<sup>25</sup>

Jones persisted and in the following May made another offer to Shedden after the latter forwarded him a copy of the Prime Minister's statement on Defence:

Action envisaged by the paper obviously means an enormous task for your Department and I only wish that I could be of some assistance in solving the difficult problems of supply of air weapons.<sup>26</sup>

Once again this approach came to nothing.

Jones was a prominent member of the Victorian Division of the Air Force Association for most of his post-Service life. In 1954 and 1955 he held the position of President, at a time when the Association membership numbered about 2000. It would appear that the Association had some financial problems during the early 1950s and Jones, during his presidency, set out to rectify them. Jones' administrative skills came to the fore in this position and he was successful in his aims, so that towards the end of his term in office he advised members of the following news: total income had, at last, started to exceed normal expenditure, plans were underway

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<sup>22</sup> Jones was entitled to this expectation because up until the early 1970s it was Federal Government practice to appoint senior ex-armed forces officers as Secretaries of Government Departments.

<sup>23</sup> 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.

<sup>24</sup> F.O. Chilton, DSO was Deputy Secretary of the Department of Defence in 1954.

<sup>25</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/51/17, letter from F.O. Chilton to Jones, 29 November 1954.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*, letter from Jones to Shedden. 13 May 1955.

to re-establish the Association's licensed club, and *Contact* (the Association's magazine) was relaunched on a self-funded basis.<sup>27</sup> The Association continues to exist to this day and Jones was, for many years, its President of Honour. In addition to his Air Force Association activities, Jones was, for a short time during the 1950s, the President of the BP Guild of Old Scouts<sup>28</sup>—a fitting reflection on the times he enjoyed as a scout in his early teenage years in Rushworth.

In mid-November 1955, Jones collapsed while attending a dinner given by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. He was diagnosed as having suffered a mild heart attack and was placed in Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital.<sup>29</sup> Shedden, upon hearing of Jones' hospitalisation, immediately sent him a 'get well' message.<sup>30</sup> Jones used his reply to remind Shedden of his employment situation:

Fortunately it appears to have been only a minor attack but sufficient to keep me in bed for another three or four weeks. No one can say it was caused by over work – on the contrary, my main trouble is the mental embarrassment of having to endure semi-idleness.<sup>31</sup>

Jones ended up staying in Heidelberg for two months, which suggests that the heart attack may have been more than a mild one.

The Department of Repatriation was another Federal Government agency where Sir George Jones sought employment. In August 1956, he wrote to the Minister for Repatriation, seeking employment as a Repatriation Commissioner. Supporting his application he gave a brief summary of his Defence service and listed his skills as experience in organising, preparation for and conduct of meetings, financial planning and budget control, and knowledge of Service regulations and repatriation activity. In addition, he stated, 'I may claim to have a fairly wide knowledge of industry, housing and agriculture.'<sup>32</sup> The application was unsuccessful but, undaunted, Jones applied again in February 1958. This time it was for appointment

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<sup>27</sup> RAAF Museum, A.H. Cobby file, letter from Jones to Cobby, 27 October 1955.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton, 24 April 2001.

<sup>29</sup> National Archives of Australia, A5954/69/51/17, minute to Secretary, 16 November 1955; and Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 150.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, note from Shedden to Jones, 16 November 1955.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, handwritten note from Jones to Shedden, 21 November 1955.

<sup>32</sup> Jones papers, letter from Jones to the Minister for Repatriation, 'Application for Appointment as Repatriation Commissioner', 3 August 1956.

as a member of the War Pensions Entitlement Appeal Tribunal.<sup>33</sup> Once again, the application was unsuccessful.

At the age of 60, in 1957, Jones retired from the CAC. Apart from the position on the Ansett Board and some work with various community and service associations, Jones was unable to secure permanent employment for the remainder of his life. To keep himself busy he undertook volunteer work for charities. In this role, he spent a lot of time soliciting charitable donations from prominent Australians.<sup>34</sup>

On 31 March 1960, the then CAS, Air Marshal F.R.W. Scherger, hosted a dinner at the Point Cook Officers Mess for serving and retired RAAF officers, where he achieved something that at one time would have been unthinkable. At the meal, Scherger sat at the head of the table. On his right sat Jones and on his left sat Bostock. During the course of the meal, Scherger persuaded Jones and Bostock to shake hands and put aside their destructive feud. As the dinner progressed, those present observed Jones and Bostock chatting pleasantly across the table.<sup>35</sup>

### **Political Interests**

George Jones began to participate in politics after he left the RAAF. Throughout his life he had an intense interest in politics and always enjoyed political discussion but as a member of the Service he was expected to be apolitical—serving the government of the day, regardless of its policies. After he left the RAAF, he joined a succession of political parties. Regardless of party membership, his views were ‘middle-of-the-road left wing.’<sup>36</sup> As we shall see, Jones moved between political parties trying to find something that best aligned with his views but, as his long time acquaintance Bruce Ruxton explained, ‘He couldn’t find what he wanted politically.’<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Jones papers, letter from Jones to the Minister for Repatriation, ‘Application for Appointment as a Member of War Pensions Entitlement Appeal Tribunal’, 7 February 1958.

<sup>34</sup> During the 1960s, Jones served as the Chairman of the Spastic Children’s Society of Victoria ‘Road to Hope Club’. National Library of Australia, MS 2505/1/7570, Series 1, folder 50, letter from Jones to J.V. Barry, 28 November 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Harry Rayner, *Scherger: A Biography of Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1984, p. 141.

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Mrs Rosemary Ruddell of Glen Waverly, Vic., 16 June 2000.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton, 24 April 2001.

## **Parliamentary Candidate**

In 1961, Sir George Jones surprised a lot of people by standing for election to the Federal Parliament as the member for the House of Representatives seat of Henty. Over the years, other Defence force officers had been elected to political offices, so that aspect of Jones' political aspirations should not have been surprising. The surprise is that Jones stood as a candidate for the Australian Labor Party. This was not, however, his first attempt at being elected to the Federal Parliament.

The Liberal Party initially made contact with Jones some time after he left the RAAF. The secretary of the Party's local branch approached him in Beaumaris and offered him membership. Despite his interest in politics, at that time Jones had no strong political conviction towards either Labor or the Conservative parties. He had been appointed CAS by a Labor Government but had been a United Australia Party (UAP) and then Liberal voter and had served under both Labor and Liberal Governments. No doubt, the Liberals at the time thought that Jones, as a former Service Chief, with a knighthood, would be an ideal Party member. He joined the Liberals and, in 1952, stood for preselection for a by-election for the Federal seat of Flinders,<sup>38</sup> which had become vacant following the death of the sitting Liberal member, Rupert Ryan. Jones was unsuccessful with his preselection bid and John Rossiter was selected as the Liberal candidate.<sup>39</sup>

However, it would appear that Jones was not cut out to be a Liberal. He attended numerous Party meetings and functions but gradually found he had differing views to the Party line:

I gave them an address too, which I don't think they liked very much because I had certain rather socialistic views – and still have I don't mind admitting. They got rather nasty with me – wouldn't give me a fair go – so I resigned and joined the Labor Party.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> 'Air Marshal to Stand,' in *The Age*, 11 September 1952.

<sup>39</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia – Twelfth Edition, 1951 to 1956*, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 1957, p. 408. Rossiter lost the election to the ALP Party candidate, Keith Ewert.

<sup>40</sup> Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Interview with Air Marshal Sir George Jones of Beaumaris, Victoria – 21 January 1988,' transcript of interview; and Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Soldiers in Politics: The Impact of the Military on Australian Political Life and Institutions*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1996, p. 135.

Jones' resignation from the Liberal Party in 1958 was also over a matter of principle—he disagreed with the Party supporting the salary increase for Members of Parliament!<sup>41</sup> The Australian Labor Party (ALP) welcomed him to their ranks and asked him to stand for the seat of Henty in the 1961 Federal election.

Henty was a metropolitan south-eastern Melbourne electorate, which in 1961 had 48 523 voters enrolled.<sup>42</sup> Within its boundaries were the suburbs of Ormond, Malvern East, Chadstone, Oakleigh and Bentleigh.<sup>43</sup> The sitting member for Henty was Edmund M.C. Fox, who represented the Liberal Party.<sup>44</sup> Jones, the endorsed ALP candidate, with a knighthood was a novelty within that party, 'an unwelcome novelty, some Labourites [sic] grumbled'. One newspaper described him as a distinguished candidate but with a tough constituency to contest.<sup>45</sup> Jones took the election very seriously and engaged in a campaign of canvassing throughout the electorate, meeting people and enlisting support, while other members of the Jones family were coopted into supporting his campaign by handing out leaflets on polling day.<sup>46</sup>

There were three candidates for Henty at the 1961 election. In addition to Jones and Fox, Henry Francis Moore represented the Australian Democratic Labor Party (ADLP). At the end of the first count, Fox led with 21 011 votes, while Jones was second with 18 416 votes. On the second and final count, Fox retained the seat with 26 377 votes, while Jones collected 19 352 votes.<sup>47</sup> Despite losing, Jones had achieved a 4.2 per cent swing to the ALP, 2 per cent higher than the state average.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> 'Air Marshal will have another fly', in *The Australian*, 4 July 1967; and 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.

<sup>42</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* – Fourteenth Edition, 1959–1962, Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 1962, p. 487.

<sup>43</sup> The Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* – Twenty-Second Edition, 1984, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1984, p. 476.

<sup>44</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* – Fourteenth Edition, 1959–1962, p. 100. Fox had held the seat since 1955. He was an ex-RAAF NCO, having enlisted in 1942 and reached the rank of Sergeant (Wireless Maintenance Mechanic) before being discharged in December 1945.

<sup>45</sup> National Library of Australia, Biographical file, 'Sir George Jones', copy of newspaper clipping titled 'Labour [sic] knight'.

<sup>46</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones of East Bentleigh, Vic., 21 February 2003.

<sup>47</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* – Fourteenth Edition, 1959–1962, p. 487.

<sup>48</sup> '95 now, and I'd like to meet the Queen again', in *Mordialloc-Chelsea News*, 17 March 1992.

Jones' 4.2 per cent swing caused quite a sensation in political circles at the time because it opposed the national trend whereby the electorate Australia-wide tended to vote for the Conservative parties.<sup>49</sup> A point to note here is that W.D. Bostock was no longer a Member of Parliament when Jones contested the 1961 election. Bostock's term as Member for Indi ended in 1958, so there was no chance that old rivalries would be fought out again in the House of Representatives.

Despite Sir George's enthusiasm, Lady Jones never saw herself as a Labor Party supporter or sympathiser, but she supported her husband in his political campaign, even to the extent of hosting a post-election party at the family home.<sup>50</sup> Things were not perfect within the ALP and Jones became dissatisfied with the Party's internal squabbles and its attacks on Ansett Transport Industries.<sup>51</sup> The event that led to his final break with the Party occurred after Ansett had been granted a licence to operate the Victorian television, Channel 0. Following this, the ALP leader, Arthur Caldwell, expressed the Party's disapproval by announcing to the Federal Parliament that Ansett was bankrupt and he condemned the granting of the licence. A few days later, Jones was having lunch at the Naval and Military Club with Frederick Howard of the *Herald* newspapers. Jones expressed his disagreement with Caldwell and was told, 'Tell that to one of the Herald reporters.'<sup>52</sup> Jones did just that and the paper published his statement, which in turn led to a big argument at the Trades Hall and Jones resigned from the ALP in 1965.<sup>53</sup>

At the age of 70, Jones made another foray into politics. He was approached by the Liberal Reform Movement to stand in a by-election for the Federal seat of Corio on 22 July 1967. The election gave him the opportunity to state publicly his opposition to the Vietnam War, which was being fought at the time.<sup>54</sup> He said, in a newspaper interview, that his main concern was to warn the people of Australia where they were being led. He claimed that 'the danger is that we tend to become the front line and receiving end in any conflict between the US and Russia and China'. Jones had some quite definite views on contemporary Australian foreign

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<sup>49</sup> D. Gadd, 'War veteran finds peace', in *Herald-Sun*, 21 April 1992, p. 52. Fox remained as the member for Henty until 1974, when Joan Child won the seat for the ALP. The electorate of Henty was abolished on the redistribution of seats in 1989.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 21 February 2003.

<sup>51</sup> 'Air Marshal will have another fly', in *The Australian*, 4 July 1967.

<sup>52</sup> AWM MSS0738 – Jones, George, Sir (Air Marshal, KBE, DFC, CB [sic]), 'Air Marshal Sir George Jones, KBE, CB, DFC', chap. 22, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

policy and they differed from those of the government of the day. He believed that there was no evidence China was likely to pursue an expansionist policy, which would be detrimental to Australia and, in a criticism of the Liberal Government's policies, he said, 'I do not accept this communist bogey which is being used for political purposes.'<sup>55</sup> Jones was also quite outspoken in his opposition to nuclear weapons and was quite concerned about their proliferation during the 1950s and 1960s, claiming the world had learned nothing from the death and destruction of World War II.<sup>56</sup>

The political atmosphere in Australia at the time of the Vietnam War allowed Jones to express publicly some of his long-held views of war in general. Despite a long career in the Defence Services, Jones hated wars. His general solution to the situation that leads to conflict was to keep all parties talking and negotiating. He believed that it was when the talking stopped that the fighting began.<sup>57</sup> In the case of Vietnam, he believed that Australia should have done all it could, through the United Nations, to bring about a ceasefire, although he suspected that the Australian Government had been told by the United States not to make any peace initiative. He told the press that the possibility of achieving sufficient unity in South Vietnam alone to hold a democratic election was receding day by day and, even if the US succeeded in crushing all military opposition, it would have been obliged to keep its forces in Vietnam to maintain its policy. He concluded the interview by telling the press that the US's main objective in Vietnam was ideological, together with an effort to expand its financial and commercial undertakings.<sup>58</sup>

The 1967 Corio by-election did not go well for Jones. The Labor candidate, Gordon Scholes, won the seat with 25 679 votes, while Jones gained 923 votes.<sup>59</sup> He did not hold too much hope of success in the by-election and later commented, 'I knew I hadn't a dog's chance and I lost my deposit.'<sup>60</sup> Some time later, he tried, unsuccessfully, to become involved in local government politics but, by 1971, had dropped out of the political scene, claiming that he would have made a poor

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<sup>55</sup> 'Air Marshal will have another fly', in *The Australian*, 4 July 1967.

<sup>56</sup> Gadd, 'War veteran finds peace', in *Herald-Sun*, 21 April 1992, p. 52.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>58</sup> 'Air Marshal will have another fly', in *The Australian*, 4 July 1967.

<sup>59</sup> Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, *Parliamentary Handbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* – Seventeenth Edition, 1971, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1972, p. 720.

<sup>60</sup> 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.



politician because 'I'm a little too honest.'<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, he maintained his very keen interest in politics and in 1991 wrote to former Federal Treasurer Dr Jim Cairns expressing his disappointment, 'like everyone else', at the direction the ALP had taken.<sup>62</sup>

Despite his slightly left-wing views Jones was very pro-monarchy. He always looked forward to meeting the Queen again, and he thought 'she was so pleasant'. Late in his life, he realised that would not be possible and instead he hoped for a telegram from her on his 100th birthday. He did not appear to have strong views on the question of an Australian republic but hoped the country would always remain a member of the Commonwealth and he was adamant about keeping the National Flag unchanged: 'Why should they change it? It should be cherished.'<sup>63</sup>

Following the death of Lord Louis Mountbatten, in April 1979, Jones became the last surviving commander from World War II. He was then 82 and had quite definite views on Mountbatten's death, which seem to suggest that his political views had moved to the right. He believed that those responsible should have been hanged and 'anyone who supports murder should be deported where legally possible.'<sup>64</sup>

These right-wing sentiments were pronounced publicly again when Jones returned to Rushworth to celebrate Australia Day in January 1989. As part of the celebrations, he attended a service in High Street, where he spoke on local and national issues. Some of his comments suggest how reactionary his political opinions had become. Speaking on migration, Jones told his audience that Australia should be careful about people who cannot fit in:

We know what has happened in the past. Be very careful in the future – be on the lookout for the signs which are not in accord with our membership of the British Commonwealth.<sup>65</sup>

Politics was not the only sphere in which Jones had trouble finding something that best suited his views. It was the same with religion. In later life, he attended the

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<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Gadd, 'War veteran finds peace', in *Herald-Sun*, 21 April 1992, p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> '95 now, and I'd like to meet the Queen again', in *Mordialloc-Chelsea News*, 17 March 1992.

<sup>64</sup> 'Mountbatten was about to take a bath when I met him', in *The Sandringham & Brighton Advertiser*, 12 September 1979. Mountbatten was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in South-East Asia during World War II.

<sup>65</sup> 'A great day for Sir George', in *Kyabram Free Press*, 2 February 1989.

local Methodist and Baptist churches<sup>66</sup> but, after his retirement from the RAAF, he also became involved with other groups, such as the Moral Re-Armament Movement.

### **The Moral Re-Armament Movement**

The Moral Re-Armament Movement (MRA) was a religious group established by an American Lutheran minister, Dr Frank Buchman. The MRA was a modern non-denominational, revivalistic movement. It sought to deepen the spiritual life of individuals and, at the same time, encouraged participants to remain as members of their own churches. The Movement sent 'task forces' to many parts of the 'free world' to carry out its programs. The MRA aimed at converting the rich and influential to its beliefs and was steadfastly opposed to communism. The MRA's theology was simple and conservative—it focused on surrender to Jesus Christ and sharing with others whose lives had been changed in pursuit of four moral absolutes: purity, unselfishness, honesty and love. The MRA's influence declined after the deaths of Buchman (in 1961) and his successor Peter Howard (in 1965).<sup>67</sup>

Soon after his retirement from the RAAF Jones joined the MRA and it was not too long before he became involved in its activities. On 22 October 1952, the former CAS departed from Sydney in the company of 11 other delegates to attend the MRA conference in Colombo, Ceylon. *The Argus* reported that Dr Buchman would open the conference and quoted George Jones as saying, 'I joined the movement only recently, but I am interested in promoting good relations with Asiatic peoples'.<sup>68</sup>

The conference was, from Jones' point of view, a success and when he returned to Australia, he announced to the press that Asian countries were adopting Moral Re-Armament as the only weapon with which to stop the spread of communism and the Moral Re-Armament Movement had tremendous appeal to Asian countries because of its essential basis for friendship. He added, 'These countries genuinely desire to be friendly with the West, and we must reciprocate this feeling if we are to halt the spread of communism'.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>67</sup> 'Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group', at <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Pointe/6524/buch2.html>, accessed 27 August 2009.

<sup>68</sup> 'Ex-Air Chief off to Asia', in *The Argus*, 22 October 1952.

<sup>69</sup> 'Asians look to West', in *The Herald*, 5 November 1952.

Despite its well intentioned ideology, the MRA faded away and Jones' religious interests were directed towards other organisations. On 7 September 1964, Brother Sir George Jones was initiated into the Peace Commemoration Lodge No. 519.<sup>70</sup> He reached the level of Master Mason on 1 February 1965 and attended this Sandringham-based Masonic Lodge until it folded in 1988. Then he became affiliated with the United Service Lodge No. 330.<sup>71</sup> Despite his early Methodist upbringing and church attendance, he became disillusioned with established religions, claiming they had strong deficiencies which caused confusion among young people. As an alternative, he found faith in physical things he could detect with his five senses and so did not accept the supernatural, unless it was collaborated by supportive evidence.<sup>72</sup>

During the second half of the 1950s, Jones filled in some of his spare time by building houses. In 1955, he built a house for his son, Ronald, in Belgravia Road, North Box Hill. His aim was to help his son lead a 'normal life', and it also gave him the opportunity to move Ronald out of his own home.<sup>73</sup> Jones moved into the new home he built for himself in Cochrane Avenue, Mentone in 1957. He would live at this address for the next 10 years. The next house he built was in Chesterville Avenue, East Bentleigh. This house was for his other son, Ian, who married Anne in 1959. The house plans were drawn up by a designer employed at CAC. Jones undertook some of the framework carpentry himself but fell during this work and broke a few ribs. Consequently, the house was then finished by a building contractor.<sup>74</sup> Jones was more than just a house builder; he was engaged in every aspect of the construction and, in the case of Ian and Anne's place, went so far as selecting paint colours and furniture. Anne found the bright pink kitchen cupboards hard to get used to, but Sir George explained that he had selected this finish because the colours she had initially chosen were not bright enough.<sup>75</sup>

Sir George Jones built a holiday house during 1966. The previous year, he and Lady Muriel had bought a block of land at the Victorian beach resort town of Cowes. On this land he constructed a small, eight square (74 square metres), kit home during

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<sup>70</sup> Jones papers, Bible of Bro. Sir George Jones.

<sup>71</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'Sir George Jones, Funeral Service', transcribed by Peter Helson, 6 May 2002.

<sup>72</sup> 'A thunderer loses some of the old fire', in *The Herald*, 8 November 1971.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* Mrs Jones still resides in this house.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 21 February 2003.

the summer months.<sup>76</sup> Jones gained considerable satisfaction from building and claimed that his greatest contribution to 'his existence on this planet' was to have built five houses 'with my own hands.'<sup>77</sup>

Surprisingly for a man who was interested in mechanical things, Jones' taste in motor vehicles was fairly orthodox. During his term as CAS, he had a RAAF staff car (and driver) but he retained his prewar Chevrolet sedan until the mid 1950s for Muriel to drive. After leaving the RAAF, he purchased a 1951 Holden for himself. The Chevrolet was replaced, in 1956, by a new Ford Customline. The dark blue Customline was, for its time, a large and comfortable sedan and, with its 272 cubic inch (4.5 litres) Y block V8 engine, it was also one of the fastest cars available in Australia at that time. Most of Jones' cars were ordinary Holdens and the Customline stands out as an exception. Despite all its good points, it was, however, replaced a few years after its acquisition by a Holden station wagon, which Jones considered to be a very practical vehicle.<sup>78</sup> Holdens would remain the standard form of transport for the Jones' family for many years, although Sir George would eventually switch brands and his final car, before he handed back his driver's licence to the roads and traffic authority (because of his failing eyesight), was a Mitsubishi Sigma. As he grew older, Jones driving skills deteriorated and he was involved in a few traffic accidents—a couple of which were quite dramatic. On one occasion, he drove through a roadworks site on the Nepean Highway, scattering road workers and orange traffic cones in every direction. Another incident happened one Christmas Day, outside Anne Jones' house in East Bentleigh. Sir George and Lady Muriel's car was struck by another vehicle and, as a result of the accident, the part of the Christmas dinner that Lady Muriel had prepared and was taking to the family celebration was scattered throughout their car.<sup>79</sup> Regardless of his driving ability, Jones maintained his mechanical skills and at the age of 84 told his granddaughter, who was having car trouble, to start her car and drive slowly down the street. Jones ran alongside the car and, from listening to the engine noises, was able to diagnose the problem and fix it.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>77</sup> 'Crystal clear memories of one of the greats', in *The Age*, 27 April 1987.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Mr Alistair Jones of Mentone, Vic., 11 July 2001.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

## **Family Tragedy**

Ronald Jones lived a hermit-like existence in Prospect Street, Box Hill.<sup>81</sup> He had moved from the house Sir George built him into an older house. Ronald made his living by buying and selling second-hand goods and, surprisingly, he had rented out most of his house to a Dutch immigrant family. Surprisingly, because he did not relate to other people and he especially did not like people from non-English backgrounds who had migrated to Australia. If George Jones' political views tended towards the middle left, those of his eldest son were of the extreme right. He was known to the local police, who had cautioned him for spreading 'anti-migrant literature around Box Hill'.<sup>82</sup> He had fortified and booby trapped the portion of the house in which he lived and had built a cage from steel pipes around his Holden utility.<sup>83</sup>

Things came to a head between Ronald and his tenants on 9 September 1962, after he beat Aloysius Bonte, the 17-year-old son of the Dutch family. Bonte went to Box Hill Police Station to lodge a complaint. Soon after, Ronald made his own way to the same Police Station. As police officers questioned him, Ronald produced a pistol and started shooting at the officers. He shot and wounded two officers before a third shot him dead.<sup>84</sup> While he could not relate well with other people, Ronald was quite fond of 'Dalla', his pet Dalmatian dog. After his death, the dog was given to Sir George and Lady Jones to look after.<sup>85</sup>

The Jones family suffered another tragedy on 21 August 1969, when Muriel died of a heart attack during the night before her 71st birthday. As may be expected after a long marriage, Jones was at a total loss following her death. One consequence of their relationship was that he had become used to having all the domestic tasks (such as cooking and cleaning) done for him at home and so, for the next year following the death, he would go to Ian and Anne's each night of the week for the evening meal. So far as meals were concerned, Sir George Jones would 'eat anything

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 16 June 2000.

<sup>82</sup> Ronald had distributed copies of a leaflet that he authored, which alleged that members of ethnic communities were involved in vice and that immigrants exploited women in espresso bars and sold heroin-doped fish and chips to children.

<sup>83</sup> 'I killed him before he killed us', in *The Herald*, 10 September 1962.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*; and 'Man Killed, 2 Police Wounded in Shooting at Station', in *The Age*, 10 September 1962. Neither newspaper mentioned the connection between Ronald and Sir George Jones.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones and Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

as long as it was three courses.<sup>86</sup> He also enjoyed dairy products such as milk and cream and, on occasions when cream was not served with the final course, he would pour milk on to his dessert as a substitute.<sup>87</sup>

Alistair Jones, Sir George's grandson, became very interested in many forms of competitive sport (especially cricket) and found it difficult to understand that his grandfather had absolutely no interest in any form of sport.<sup>88</sup>

### **Unidentified Flying Objects**

'Another interest he had was UFOs. He was fascinated with them for a few years.'<sup>89</sup> Sir George Jones had a long-term interest in unidentified flying objects (UFOs). It was noted earlier that he undertook what was one of the RAAF's earliest investigations into the phenomenon, in 1930. His interest in the subject increased as a result of personal experiences later in his life. On 16 October 1957, while driving near Barwon Heads, Victoria, he personally observed a UFO, which he described as 'a brilliant white light at the bottom of a shadowy shape like a transparent balloon.' It travelled silently 'in a purposeful way', at about 650 kilometres per hour at an altitude of 1500 feet (460 metres). Jones was certain that it was neither a meteor nor reflected light:

Nothing could shake me from my belief in what I saw. But I wished I had 4 or 5 witnesses. I have reported it, but have been loath to talk of it publically [sic] lest people should think I was either an incompetent witness or getting a little screwy in the head.<sup>90</sup>

The UFO made no noise and disappeared in the direction of Melbourne. Coincidentally, the apparition appeared three days after the former Minister for Air, Sir Thomas White, had died at Barwon Heads. At the time, Jones was still mystified by what he had seen and, the following day, jokingly told some RAAF personnel

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with Mr Alistair Jones, 11 July 2001. Amazingly, even though he was a Melbourne resident, Jones had no favourite Australian Rules football team.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Mrs Rosemary Ruddell, 16 June 2000.

<sup>90</sup> Bill Chalker, 'UFOs Sub Rosa Down Under: The Australian Military & Government Role in the UFO Controversy – Part Two', 1996, at <http://project1947.com/forum/bcoz2.htm>, accessed 4 January 2010.

that he had seen ‘Tommy White, last night returning in his celestial chariot’. His audience dismissed Jones’ account as a joke.

Jones maintained his interest in UFOs well into the 1960s. He was a patron of the Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigation Organisation (CAPIO – a civilian body, despite its title) and was also a member of the Victorian UFO Research Society (VUFORS).<sup>91</sup> On 27 February 1965, he attended the first Australian convention of UFO groups, convened in Ballarat, Victoria, where he was quite outspoken in his support for serious UFO research and stressed the need for keeping an open mind towards reports of UFO sightings.<sup>92</sup>

### **Life in Retirement**

Sir George Jones retired from his position on the Board of Ansett Transport Industries at the age of 82, in early 1978. He had been with the company for 24 years and had been the longest serving director, apart from Sir Reginald Ansett himself. Jones regarded Sir Reginald very highly, claiming him to be a tremendously energetic man. At the time of his retirement, Jones reflected on the success of the airline and commercial air travel in general:

When I joined Ansett it was very doubtful each year whether it would make a profit; now the company is paying a 10 per cent or 12 per cent dividend.

There has been a tremendous growth in passenger services, with bigger aircraft, faster aircraft and more comfortable travel.<sup>93</sup>

For future air travel, Jones predicted a steady increase in the number of passengers carried by individual aircraft until saturation point was reached in five or ten years into the future (i.e. 1983–1987); ‘the size of aircraft will probably not increase because there are certain fundamental principles which limit size.’<sup>94</sup>

Following an operation and subsequent hospitalisation in the late 1970s, Jones went on a sea cruise to recuperate. The cruise was organised by the Returned Services League of Australia (RSL) and took passengers to visit New Guinea war

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<sup>91</sup> Bill Chalker, ‘Air Marshall [sic] Sir George Jones and the UFO’, 2000, at [http://www.theozfiles.com/air\\_marshall\\_george\\_jones.html](http://www.theozfiles.com/air_marshall_george_jones.html), accessed 4 January 2010.

<sup>92</sup> Chalker, ‘UFOs Sub Rosa Down Under: The Australian Military & Government Role in the UFO Controversy – Part Two’.

<sup>93</sup> ‘Aviation gave full life to Ansett pioneer after brush with death’, in *The Australian*, 5 May 1978.

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.*

cemeteries. Among the other passengers was Ms Gwendoline Bauer, a widow from Sydney's western suburbs. A romance developed between Sir George and Gwen, which he kept secret from his family. Jones would visit her in Sydney but explain his absence to family members by saying that he was going to visit his old comrade Jack Wright, who was living in Terrigal, NSW. The first time family members heard of the relationship was after a friend met Jones in a jewellers, where he was buying an engagement ring. The friend passed the news on to Anne and Ian, who were amazed.<sup>95</sup> Sir George married Gwen in 1978 in an unpublicised ceremony at St Andrews Church. His best man was Charles Gallwey, AFC, who, as a Flight Lieutenant, had served as Jones aide-de-camp between 1948 and 1950. Sadly, the marriage was to be a short one as the new Lady Jones died in September 1980.

Jones' health began to fail later in his life and he came to expect his son, Ian, to look after him. Sadly, Ian had been diagnosed with cancer and had been advised by doctors not to spend too much time looking to his father's every whim. Regardless, Jones senior expected Ian to do things for him and became quite irritable when Ian sent his youngest son, Alistair, to visit him. He seemed unable to understand that he was not the centre of his family's attention and that the needs of other people were more important than his.<sup>96</sup> Jones continued to live at home (in a flat in Cromer Road, Mentone) even though it was suggested to him that he should move into a nursing home. Jones had no need to move as he had all the care he needed at home—a nurse visited twice a day to shower and dress him, while Mrs Irene Gallwey prepared his meals.<sup>97</sup> At the age of 93, Jones finally took up living in a nursing home, with occasional stays in hospital.

In November 1987, shortly after Jones had been admitted to hospital again, the newly appointed RAAF Principal Air Chaplain, Reverend Roger Boerth, was walking through Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. He noticed a number of RAAF members performing the drill for a funeral ceremony and was surprised because he had not been advised of the death of a Service member. After making inquiries, he was earnestly informed that Sir George Jones was unwell and had been taken to hospital. The RAAF members were practising for an anticipated funeral service should Jones pass away during the hospital stay! The RAAF had good reason to become concerned about Jones' health on this occasion. He had suffered a fall in August that year and had been taken to hospital at the Kingston Centre in

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 23 March 2003.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Mr Alistair Jones, 11 July 2001

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 23 March 2003.



Cheltenham, where he was to remain for the next six months.<sup>98</sup> Boerth later recounted the story to Jones, who was very amused. He laughed at the thought of so many men and women being trained for his funeral and then being transferred through the Service posting cycle, before the ceremony took place. The RAAF, he explained, would have to train more personnel when the time eventually came.<sup>99</sup>

Jones was a stronger and healthier man than the RAAF expected, and his health recovered sufficiently for him to lead the Melbourne ANZAC Day March the following April.<sup>100</sup> This made him the first person to lead the march on two separate occasions. On this occasion, he travelled in a vehicle, unlike the first time, when he was mounted on a horse (a reminder of his original permanent Army unit – the 9th Light Horse).

### **Air Chief Marshal Jones?**

On 30 March 1988, Mr Ian Gollings, the National Secretary of the RSL wrote to the then CAS, Air Marshal R.G. Funnell, AO, advising him that the RSL had been asked by the Victorian Branch of the Air Force Association to support a proposal to promote Sir George Jones to Air Chief Marshal in his retirement. The RSL was reluctant to do this on its own without CAS endorsing the recommendation.<sup>101</sup>

The RSL's approach was not the first proposal to promote a retired officer. A precedent for post-Service promotion of senior RAAF officers had already been set several years earlier, when a similar proposal was made for Sir Richard Williams. Between October 1963 and May 1976 there had been 10 such proposals, for a promotion for Jones, made by a variety of interested parties (including Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Scherger, the Air Force Association, Air Marshal Sir James Rowland and the Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians). All the proposals had been rejected by Federal Cabinet, the Air Board and the Chiefs of Staff.

Funnell was advised by his staff that no precedent existed for the promotion of retired officers to the honorary rank of Air Chief Marshal (or Marshal of the

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<sup>98</sup> 'Sir George at Home', in *Contact*, vol. 42, no. 1, 1987. p. 15.

<sup>99</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'Sir George Jones, Funeral Service'; and Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>100</sup> 'Anzac Day March 1988', in *Contact*, vol. 43, no. 1, Autumn, 1988, p. 14.

<sup>101</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, letter from Ian Gollings to Air Marshal R.G. Funnell, 30 March 1988.

RAAF).<sup>102</sup> There was, however, authority for the promotion in the Air Force Regulations but it would also require Cabinet endorsement before authorisation of the promotion was sought from the Governor-General in Council. Thus, the RAAF's reply to the RSL, noting opposition to such promotion in the past, advised that the Service could not endorse the recommendation and concluded the matter with the following comment:

An inspection of Air Marshal Sir George Jones' Service record does not reveal any circumstances that are different from previous requests which would warrant support of the proposal.<sup>103</sup>

### **From Private to Air Marshal**

Friends had long pestered Jones to write an autobiography. They argued that it would give him a chance to tell his side of the story of his time in the RAAF and to counter any accusations made against him over the years.<sup>104</sup> Jones waited many years before he commenced work on his story. One reason was that, fearing legal action, he waited for his antagonists to die before he wrote about them,<sup>105</sup> even though he had been advised by a journalist, 'If you want to sell that book, get into Bostock'.<sup>106</sup> When he finally put together his memoirs, 'George played the gentleman', declining to write too much that would put his contemporaries in a bad light.<sup>107</sup>

Sir George Jones' autobiography, *From Private to Air Marshal*, was published in 1988. It was launched by Air Marshal J.W. Newham at Point Cook on 1 May 1988, to coincide with the RAAF's 75th Anniversary Air Show, which was staged at that base.<sup>108</sup> As part of the launch celebrations, Jones was driven in an official RAAF vehicle to RAAF Base Laverton and then flown by an RAAF helicopter to Point Cook. As Jones was being assisted into the helicopter, one of the aircrew was

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<sup>102</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, 'Summary of Recommendations made seeking higher honorary rank for AM Sir Richard Williams'.

<sup>103</sup> DISPREC 660/3/31, RAAF Personnel History: Jones, George, letter from Bradford to Ian Gollings, 24 June 1988.

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton, 24 April 2001.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Mrs Anne Jones, 11 July 2001.

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton, 24 April 2001.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> 'Book launch at Air Show', in *Contact*, vol. 43, no. 1, Autumn, 1988, p. 7.

heard to remark to a colleague, 'I hope the old bugger doesn't die before we get him there!'<sup>109</sup>

Jones presented a few autographed copies of the book to friends. On meeting these people some time after the presentation, he would quiz them on the subject matter of the book. To avoid embarrassment, it was considered a wise thing by anyone who received a copy to read the autobiography.

*From Private to Air Marshal* is a disappointing book because of what it does not tell the reader. Its 155 pages are a collection of Jones' recollections about certain events in his life. However, he did not explain the majority of events in his life, for example: why he undertook certain actions, why he joined the RAAF in 1921, his relationship with politicians and why he entered politics himself (his election campaigns are totally omitted from the book, as are most details of his family life). Jones had the opportunity to produce a work that could have been regarded as a key historical reference on the RAAF between 1921 and 1951. Unfortunately, this was not his intention as he wanted to write about how he saw things.

### **I am a Man of Peace**<sup>110</sup>

Sir George Jones lived his last years in a nursing home in Mentone, Victoria. As he grew older, he found it difficult to make the occasional return to Rushworth to do the things he enjoyed—to see the wildflowers and to breathe in the fresh country air. Instead, he found solace around Port Philip Bay, claiming 'I don't expect to live much longer, so I want to live the rest of my life in this part of the world, as best I can.'<sup>111</sup> Even though he was in his twilight years, Jones maintained an interest in the things that were important to him throughout his lifetime. When Bruce Ruxton visited him in the nursing home, Jones would always question him on the latest happenings within the RSL.<sup>112</sup>

Some former RAAF members visited Jones in the nursing home, from time to time, and Sir George, who was now legally blind, would ask them to read him his accounts of his fighter combats during World War I.<sup>113</sup> Jones lamented the disappearance

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with Ms Irene Gallwey of Beaumaris, Vic., 11 July 2001.

<sup>110</sup> Jones, *From Private to Air Marshal*, p. 155.

<sup>111</sup> Gadd, 'War veteran finds peace', in *Herald-Sun*, 21 April 1992, p. 52.

<sup>112</sup> Interview with Mr Bruce Ruxton, 24 April 2001.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Mr Tom King of Paradise Waters, Qld, 3 January 2000. Mr King added that he thought Jones' final days in the nursing home were a very sad and lonely way for him to finish his life.

of the pre-World War II Australian society—a place where a person could walk alone at night without the fear of being attacked, or where strangers travelling on public transport would talk with each other. He would have questioned the society that has evolved in this country. He was also concerned about contemporary social issues, such as crime, narcotic drug abuse and the plight of single parents.<sup>114</sup>

Air Marshal Sir George Jones KBE, CB, DFC died of pneumonia in the nursing home, on Monday 24 August 1992, at the age of 95.<sup>115</sup> He was the last surviving commander from World War II and the last surviving fighter ace from World War I. He outlived his two wives and his two sons. He managed to keep his promise to the RAAF's Principal Air Chaplain that he would not die between 18 October and 22 November as 'it would make things too difficult' for the funeral arrangements.<sup>116</sup>

The funeral, with full RAAF honours, took place on Thursday 27 August 1992. The funeral service was conducted at the RAAF Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Point Cook by the Principal Air Chaplain, Chaplain (Air Commodore) Roger Boerth. There were over 150 serving and retired RAAF members in attendance, including former Chiefs of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Neville McNamara, KBE, AO, AFC, and Air Marshal J.W. Newham, AC. Other mourners included family members, friends and members of Jones' Masonic Lodge. Air Vice-Marshal I.B. Gration (CAS elect) represented the retiring CAS, Air Marshal Funnell, who was overseas. Gration also delivered the eulogy and the readings during the service, including the 23rd Psalm and passages from Chapters 14 and 15 of the Gospel of Saint John. As the cortege left the Chapel a 15-gun salute was fired. Jones was the last deceased CAS to be accorded a full 200-member guard of honour.<sup>117</sup> Sir George was buried alongside his second wife, Muriel, at the Cheltenham Lawn Cemetery. As the coffin was lowered into the grave, four CT-4 Airtrainers from No 1 Flying Training School flew over the cemetery in a 'missing man' formation. They were followed by a Douglas DC-3 owned by Ansett Airlines.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Interview with Dr Ron Benson of Toorak, Vic., 19 January 2000.

<sup>115</sup> 'Honours for RAAF chief', in *The Herald-Sun*, 27 August 1992, p. 33.

<sup>116</sup> Jones papers, audio tape, 'Sir George Jones, Funeral Service'.

<sup>117</sup> 'From air mechanic to Air Marshal', in *RAAF News*, vol. 34, no. 8, September 1992, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> 'Full honours for wartime leader', in *Contact*, vol. 47, no. 3, Spring, 1992, p.3; and D. Gadd, 'George Jones: Farewell to a man of peace', in *Mordialloc-Chelsea News*, 2 September 1992, p. 7.

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### **Interviews/Discussions**

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