

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

AIR MARSHAL LAL NEW HAL CHIEF

New Delhi: Bhadra 10, 1888
September 1, 1966

The appointment has been announced of Air Marshal P.C. Lal, D.F.C., as the Managing Director of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. He will take over from Air Vice-Marshal Ranjan Dutt, Vr.C. who will revert to his parent service -- the Indian Air Force.

Air Marshal Lal is at present Vice Chief of the Air Staff at Air Headquarters. He will take over his new appointment during September 1966.

AIR MARSHAL LAL

Air Marshal Pratap Chandra Lal, Vice-Chief of the Air Staff, was born in December 1916. He was educated in Delhi and London, where he graduated from King's College. He was preparing for the Bar at the Inns of Court when studies were interrupted by World War II.

Air Marshal Lal learnt to fly as a hobby in 1933. At the outbreak of the 2nd World War he volunteered for air force service and was commissioned in the I.A.F. in November 1939.

He was a navigation and flying instructor at No.1 Service Flying Training School and No.152 Operational Training Unit, before being posted to No.7 Squadron, I.A.F. in October 1943.

The squadron, equipped with dive-bomber aircraft, was part of the force which, in 1944, supported General Wingate's long-range penetration groups in Burma and helped in relieving the siege of Imphal. Air Marshal (then Squadron Leader) Lal assumed command of the squadron in June 1944 and, having been re-equipped with fighters, took it into Burma for a second tour early in 1945. Serving in the tactical reconnaissance role, the squadron operated in close support of the Army all the way from north Burma to Rangoon. For his part in the operations of 1944 and 1945 Air Marshal Lal was mentioned in despatches and awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

At the end of the war, Air Marshal Lal was absorbed into the permanent cadre of the I.A.F. After Independence he did a course at the RAF Staff College, Andover, and held several senior appointments, including those of Director of Plans at Air Headquarters, Deputy Secretary (Military) to the Cabinet, and Air Officer Commanding, Training Command. He was also a member of several Government Missions abroad. While leading a team to evaluate new aircraft in 1954 he became one of the first pilots of the IAF to fly faster than the speed of sound.

In November 1957 his services were loaned to the Indian Airlines Corporation, of which he was General Manager for five years. He was concurrently a Member of the Board of Directors of IAC and Air India. It was during this period that the IAC showed its first profits and began the modernization of its fleet, leading up to the present-day Caravelle.

Since returning to the Air Force in 1963, Air Marshal Lal has held the posts of Air Officer in-charge, Maintenance, at Air Headquarters, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Air Command and, since 1964, the appointment of the Vice-Chief of the Air Staff. He continues to be an active pilot on all types of service aircraft.

Air Marshal Lal was awarded Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of a high order during the recent Indo-Pakistan conflict.

AIR VICE MARSHAL RANJAN DUTT

Air Vice-Marshal Ranjan Dutt, Vr.C. has been the Managing Director of the HAL for the last 5 years, first of the Bangalore Division and since 1964 of all the five Divisions (Bangalore, Kanpur, Nasik, Koraput and Hyderabad).

Air Vice-Marshal Dutt joined the Indian Air Force in 1940 and, after receiving training in England, served a tour of

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training and operational duty with the Royal Air Force during World War II. He, thereafter served in the Middle East and took part in the Arakan and Burma campaign.

In 1948, when holding a senior staff appointment at the Operational Group (now known as the Western Air Command) at Palam, Air Vice-Marshal Dutt volunteered to lead a number of fighter sweeps over some of the most difficult enemy strongholds in J. & K., for which he was awarded the Vir Chakra.

A Graduate of the R.A.F. Staff College, Andover, he has also commanded the erstwhile No.1 Air Force Academy at Hyderabad.

Before taking over as the Managing Director of the HAL, Air Vice-Marshal Ranjan Dutt was Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Training Command at Bangalore.

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