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HOW NOT TO RUN AN AIRFORCE!

The Higher Command of the Royal Australian
Air Force During the Second World War

Volume 1 - Narrative

Norman Ashworth



WINNER OF THE 1999 HERITAGE AWARD



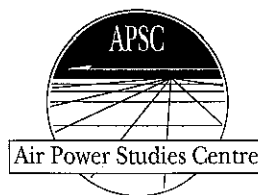
1999 RAAF HERITAGE AWARDS

HOW NOT TO RUN AN AIR FORCE!

THE HIGHER COMMAND OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR
FORCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

VOLUME ONE – NARRATIVE

NORMAN ASHWORTH



AIR POWER STUDIES CENTRE

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Foreword

Air Marshal Ray Funnell (Ret'd)

The Second World War was a defining event in the development of Australia's air force. Founded as a very small force in the aftermath of the First World War, the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) struggled to maintain its separate existence throughout the 1920s and the depression years of the early 1930s. The RAAF of those years was hardly a force of any significance.

The rise and increasing power and belligerence of Fascism and Nazism in the mid-1930s led to greater national emphasis on security and increased spending on defence. Even so, the expansion of the RAAF was modest, from a force of 800 regulars in 1934 to one of 3,500 in 1939. What happened then was extraordinary. In five years the service expanded 50 times in numbers and in even greater proportions in terms of capabilities. A token force became one of great power, responsibility, and organisational complexity. Although many of its members had seen combat in the First World War, until 1939 the RAAF itself had never been engaged in combat. In these circumstances, if the RAAF were to perform effectively and give the Australian people the air power they needed, its leadership and management had to be of the highest quality.

How the RAAF and the people who led and managed it performed during those critical years is the subject of this work by Air Commodore Norman Ashworth. With a keen and well-practised eye for the significant, and a critical but objective capacity for judging what he sees, Air Commodore Ashworth has set before his readers an account that is both interesting and educational. Although students of the development of the RAAF have been well aware of the organisational and functional issues and difficulties within the service during the critical years of the early 1940s, I have not seen until now such a comprehensive account of the events, the organisational arrangements and rearrangements, and the inter-personal interactions which formed the wartime RAAF.

The methodology is both interesting and effective. Using documentary sources (files, documents, books, and official histories), the author describes the actual events with commendable objectivity. He then comments on those events and offers opinions and judgments.

The account starts in 1939. From there, we are guided through the complex arrangements needed to expand the force and undertake the major task of providing air crews to the RAF for the war in Europe through the Empire Air Training Scheme. Hardly had the expansion of those tasks gathered momentum than the service was required to develop a fighting force to defend the homeland and prosecute the war against Japan.

The account continues through the years of greatest combat activity (1942-45) and concludes with the return of Australian forces to national command on 2 September 1945. Throughout these years, the RAAF recruited, trained, equipped and operated in highly dynamic and increasingly complex combat and operational environments.

In his final Overview chapter, Air Commodore Ashworth offers a summary critique of both decisions and people and gives his view of what lessons we should draw from these great events.

This work shows in bold relief both the virtues and the faults of Australia and Australians, the nation and its people. It tells how in a remarkably short time a small and insignificant air force of a nation that was essentially agricultural and pastoral expanded to a combat force of size, complexity and great power supported by a highly developed manufacturing and logistics base. The organisational, leadership and management skills needed for that were remarkable and must be acknowledged. The story also, however, describes squabbles, inter-personal animosities, pettiness and sheer bloody-mindedness that diminished those who were so involved.

The best-known example of inter-personal dysfunction, to which the author devotes considerable attention, was the relationship between the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal George Jones, and the RAAF's senior operational commander, Air Vice-Marshal William Bostock. The dispiriting combination of politics, personality and pettiness that characterised that relationship makes for a sad and sobering tale. Such behaviour must never be allowed to happen again.

The RAAF of today is a very different force from that which Air Commodore Ashworth surveys in this volume. The RAAF of the future, whatever form it takes and however it is managed and led, will be even more different. The lessons that can be learned from this work and the events it describes are, however, as relevant now and will be in the future as they were when those events were evolving.

Ray Funnell
Canberra
August 1998

Acknowledgments

The prime acknowledgment for this book must go to the late Sir Frederick Shedden, the former Secretary of the Department of Defence. Throughout his long tenure in office, which included the period before, during and after the Second World War, Sir Frederick accumulated and filed a vast collection of documents related to the workings of the Defence organisation in Australia. These documents survive in the National Archives as the *Shedden Papers* and are an invaluable source of information. Indeed, without them work of the nature set out in the following pages would be wellnigh impossible.

My acknowledgment of the *Shedden Papers* leads me on to acknowledge and to thank all of the many staff members of the National Archives, in Melbourne, Canberra and Perth, with whom I came in contact during my research. Their assistance was willingly given and much appreciated; indeed it was all that one might expect and hope for from a group of dedicated professionals. Similar thanks go to the research staff at the Australian War Memorial.

Help, in large and small amounts, was also generously given by many friends and colleagues, including: Dr Alan Stephens, the RAAF's Official Historian; Dr David Horner of the Australian National University; Mr David Wilson and Ms Molly Angel of Air Force Historical Records; Dr Leigh Edmunds of Murdoch University; Mr Lindsay Peet, Military Historian; Air Vice-Marshal John Paule; Air Vice-Marshal Peter Scully; Air Commodore John Radford; and Mr David Pullen of RAAF Personnel Records. Help, by way of encouragement, also came from numerous former RAAF colleagues who I met with over the past two years. To all of them go my thanks.

Finally, thanks to Air Marshal Ray Funnell who kindly wrote the Foreword and who gave me his enthusiastic encouragement.

All of that said, the normal caveat applies; all mistakes, errors and omissions are my responsibility alone.

Norman Ashworth
Perth
November 1998

Introduction

This account of the higher command of the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War has been written by a military professional primarily for his fellow professionals so that they might see some of the mistakes that were made by their predecessors from times past. Such mistakes have been revealed here, not to lay blame, but rather so that those who may be responsible for the control of Australia's Defence Forces now and in the future may learn from the mistakes of the past. Political figures with an interest in Defence might also care to take note of how their predecessors handled, and mishandled, the higher direction of one of Australia's fighting Services during the challenging times of the Second World War.

It is also hoped that this account might reveal to the non-professional with an interest in defence or military history something of the background to the events that occupied that critical period from September 1939 to September 1945

This account is based, in the main, on documents from the period held in various government archives. As these documents are not readily available to most readers, they have been reproduced, in full, in Volume Two. Volume One contains the narrative, which can be read, if so desired, without reference to Volume Two. However, if the reader should wish to go to the source documents he or she can do so with relative ease. Also, a reading of the source documents may give the dedicated reader a better feel for the various issues and for the times.

The fundamental approach taken in the Narrative (Volume One) has been to try, as far as possible, to separate the facts, as revealed by the source documents, and the opinions of the author. The narrative in normal type is intended to be a factual account of the development of the higher organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, as revealed by documents from the period, supplemented by accounts written by contemporary players, such as for example Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, and as set out in the relevant volumes of the official history, *Australia in the War of 1939 – 1945*. To this factual segment the author has added his own observations and comment, all of which are set out in separate 'comment' boxes.

In setting out the story of the higher organisation, extensive use has been made of quotes from the various source documents. This has been done, not to save the author the effort of putting the story into his own words, but rather in an attempt to tell the story in the words of the time; to thus give the reader a feel for those times. It has also been done to try to avoid the danger of biasing the story to the author's own interpretation and viewpoint.

With this approach the reader can more easily place his or her own interpretation on the facts as set out by the author, and can, if he or she so wishes, go to the source documents in Volume Two, and other places, to check on the author's interpretation as to what are the facts as best we know them. All this is not to say that there is no bias or error in the source documents. Clearly such faults occur quite frequently. Occasionally such bias or error is obvious; sometimes it can be corrected, or at least countered, by reference to other source documents; and, other times it can only be countered by expressions of doubt or disbelief.

Finally, it should be made clear that the story as set out in this work is not complete in every aspect. While the search for relevant documents has been extensive, it has not been exhaustive (even though at times it may have been exhausting!). Many items of interest no doubt still lay gathering dust in some corner or other of the many government archives, or even in private hands. However, this said, the author is reasonably confident that the main framework has been revealed; what remains is the confirmation, or otherwise, of various tantalising issues. And, in this regard, where possible, the author has tried to point to some of these unresolved issues in his comments.

For anyone interested in the Royal Australian Air Force and its history, this account of the higher command of the Service during its period of greatest trial should fill a gap in the recorded history to this time. And, while the story itself may reflect rather poorly on many of those intimately involved in it, its telling is necessary so that others may learn how not to run an air force!

Time Line

| Year | Month | Event |
|-----------|--|---|
| 1939 | September | War with Germany ; War Cabinet formed. |
| | October | |
| | November | Service Departments formed; Nos 1 and 2 Groups formed. |
| | December | Goble resigned as CAS. |
| 1940 | January | Anderson Acting CAS. |
| | February | Burnett assumed duties as CAS. |
| | March | Air Board reorganised – CAS, AMOE, AMP, DGSP, FM, BM; Williams AMOE; Nos 1 and 2 Group renamed Southern and Central Areas. |
| | April | |
| | May | |
| | June | |
| | July | |
| | August | |
| | September | |
| | October | |
| | November | |
| | December | |
| 1941 | January | Western Area formed. |
| | February | |
| | March | Northern Area formed. |
| | April | |
| | May | |
| | June | |
| | July | |
| | August | Nos 1 and 2 (Training) Groups formed; Central Area disbanded; Fadden became Prime Minister in lieu of Menzies. |
| September | | |
| October | Change of Government with Curtin as Prime Minister. | |
| November | | |
| December | Overseas Headquarters formed with Williams as AOC; War with Japan. | |
| 1942 | January | North-Eastern and North-Western Areas formed out of Northern Area. ABDA Command formed; Rabaul captured; Anzac (Naval) Area formed. |
| | February | Surrender in Singapore; Darwin bombed; ABDA Command dissolved. |
| | March | Surrender in NEI; Lae and Salamaua captured; General MacArthur arrived in Australia. |

| | | |
|------|-----------|---|
| | April | South-West Pacific Area established; Allied Air Forces formed; Department of Defence Coordination became Department of Defence. |
| | May | Bostock appointed CoS, AAF; Jones appointed CAS; Williams appointed to Australian Military Mission, Washington; Eastern Area formed; Battle of the Coral Sea; surrender in the Philippines. |
| | June | Air Board reorganised – CAS, AMP, AMEM, AMSE, FM; No 5 (Maintenance) Group formed. |
| | July | GHQ and AAF HQ moved from Melbourne to Brisbane. |
| | August | Kenney replaced Brett as Commander, AAF; Japanese defeated at Milne Bay. |
| | September | No 9 (Operational) Group formed; US Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command formed; No 4 (Maintenance) Group formed; Forward Echelon, RAAF HQ formed. |
| | October | |
| | November | |
| | December | Struggle over recognition of RAAF Command. |
| 1943 | January | |
| | February | |
| | March | Headquarters RAAF Command recognised as RAAF unit; Battle of the Bismarck Sea. |
| | April | Proposal to replace Bostock with Hewitt. |
| | May | Search for an AOC, RAAF. |
| | June | Longmore and Joubert both rejected as AOC, RAAF. |
| | July | |
| | August | |
| | September | Lae recaptured. |
| | October | |
| | November | |
| | December | Hewitt replaced as AOC No 9 Group by Lukis. |
| 1944 | January | |
| | February | Bostock tendered his resignation as AOC RAAF Command; Drakeford proposed RAAF Command be disbanded. |
| | March | No 10 (Operational) Group formed. |
| | April | No 9 Group renamed Northern Command; Allies occupied Hollandia. |
| | May | |
| | June | United States Far East Air Forces formed. |
| | July | No 10 Group separated from Northern Command. |
| | August | Search for British officer to be CAS. |
| | September | Park rejected as CAS, RAAF. |
| | October | No 10 Group renamed First Tactical Air Force. |
| | November | |
| | December | Pacific Echelon, RAAF HQ formed. |

1945

| | |
|-----------|--|
| January | |
| February | Drakeford proposed changes in higher organisation. |
| March | |
| April | |
| May | AOC-in-C RAAF Command incident; Germany surrendered. |
| June | |
| July | No 11 Group formed; Curtin died; Chifley became Prime Minister. |
| August | Hostilities Ceased. |
| September | Japan surrendered, South-West Pacific Area Command dissolved. |

Summary

In February 1946, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal George Jones, submitted his War Report to the Minister for Air, Mr Arthur Drakeford. In the report he summarised the main activities and achievements of the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War

The following extract from the *War Report of the Chief of the Air Staff* should serve as a summary of major changes that took place in the higher organisation of the RAAF during the War.

HIGHER ORGANISATION

The twelve squadrons in existence on the 3rd September 1939 were controlled by RAAF Headquarters through four station headquarters. This higher control was adequate at that time, but some reorganisation of the higher control was essential with the growth of the Force. The story of the higher control organisation is one of expansion and fairly frequent changes in conformity with the ever-growing Force and the changing strategic situation.

The first step was the formation, on the 20th November 1939, of Nos 1 and 2 Groups, the headquarters of which formed in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. This was an interim measure pending consideration of some more comprehensive scheme to cover Australia as a whole, for it was obvious in the very earliest stages of the war that RAAF organisation would extend throughout the whole Commonwealth and Territories. These two groups at once served, however, to relieve RAAF Head-Quarters of the direct command of many of the stations and units then formed and in process of forming.

In determining the pattern of a higher organisation considerable thought was given to the question of whether a geographical or functional system should be adopted. A geographical organisation would simply be one where formations would be determined by geographical boundaries. Under the functional system, on the other hand, formations would be established to carry out a particular major function, such as operations, training or maintenance, and would command units concerned with these particular functions irrespective of their geographical location. Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, RAF, was due to arrive in February 1940, to assume appointment as Chief of the Air Staff, and the decision on this question was deferred until his recommendation could be obtained after he had had time to give some thought to the matter.

The system ultimately recommended by Sir Charles was the geographical one and involved the creation of four areas, to be known as Southern, Central, Northern and Western. The number and

the position of these areas was conditioned by the spread of population throughout the Commonwealth and the use of existing stations and aerodromes as sites for flying schools in order to save both time and money. Accordingly, on the 7th March 1940, Nos 1 and 2 Groups were renamed Southern and Central Areas respectively; Western Area, with its Headquarters in Perth, was formed on the 9th January, 1941, and on the 8th March 1941, Northern Area with Headquarters at Townsville was constituted.

Under the area organisation the air officer commanding each area assumed full responsibility for the command of all units within his area, with the exception that certain units such as aircraft depots, whose operations were not confined to a particular area, but were Commonwealth-wide, were placed under the higher functional control of RAAF Head-Quarters. The area organisation had envisaged an ultimate subdivision within areas into groups, possibly functional; but training began to assume such a degree of importance in 1941 that separation of training and its control independent of the areas became a necessity. The plan for this involved the constituting of two training groups which would control training units in the eastern states. The areas would remain, but would be confined to the command of operational and maintenance units, except for Western Area, which would remain a composite operational, training and maintenance formation.

Pursuant to this plan, No 1 (Training) Group, with headquarters at Melbourne, and No 2 (Training) Group, with headquarters at Sydney, formed on the 2nd August 1941, and it was found possible at the same time to disband Central Area and allot its units to Northern or Southern Area or No 2 (Training) Group, as convenient. Under this revision plans had been made for the forming ultimately of two other training groups, but subsequent events made it unnecessary to do so.

The flow of EATS personnel overseas to the European and Middle East theatres of war began towards the end of 1941. It was therefore decided to form an Overseas Headquarters to deal with the many problems affecting RAAF personnel and the Empire Air Training Scheme, and to safeguard the interests of Australian officers and airmen serving overseas. On the 1st December 1941 Overseas Headquarters was formed in London and, in addition to the above duties, assumed the functions of the Australian Air Liaison Office.

The entry of Japan into the war and the early success of the Japanese in occupying territories to the north of Australia, together with the arrival of American Air Forces in Australia and the decision early in 1942 to expand our Home Defence Force, necessitated a revision of the higher organisation which had been established in August, 1941. The Japanese advance had produced a two pronged threat; one prong directed towards Darwin and the other towards North Eastern

Queensland. It will be remembered that at this time Northern Area was responsible for the whole of the northern portion of Australia; and these two threats, coupled with the lack of land communications between North West Australia and Queensland, made it essential to divide Northern Area into two. The two new areas thus established were named North Western Area and North Eastern Area, the headquarters of which formed respectively at Darwin and at Townsville on the 15th January 1942. Southern Area, also, covered too much territory. Consequently, on the 15th May 1942, Eastern Area, with headquarters at Sydney, was formed and relieved Southern Area of the responsibility for New South Wales and the southern portion of Queensland. Later that year it was decided to group together maintenance units under separate command, and two maintenance groups were formed. Headquarters No 5 (Maintenance) Group formed at Sydney on the 1st June 1942 and Headquarters No 4 (Maintenance) Group at Melbourne on the 14th September. Thus the RAAF higher organisation consisted at this time of five areas, of which four were confined to operations and one to operations and training, two training groups and two maintenance groups.

Concurrently with the change in organisation at formation level a change took place at the highest level in order to conform with the decision to set up a South-West Pacific Area. With the arrival of General MacArthur in Australia from the Philippines on the 17th March and his appointment as C-in-C, South-West Pacific Area, on the 18th April, three operational commands were established, known as Allied Naval Forces, Allied Land Forces and Allied Air Forces. Allied Air Forces, under the command of Lieutenant General G H Brett, US Army Air Corps (later US Army Air Force), consisted of United States Army Air Corps tactical units and associated service elements in Australia, and RAAF and NEI ancillary units assigned to the operational control of Lieutenant General Brett.

Headquarters Allied Air Forces was set up with a combined RAAF and USAAC staff. It was the intention also to form combined staffs at the various area headquarters but to retain the national identity of elements below area level. Some progress took place in implementing the combined staff idea at headquarters of areas, but was never completed. This Allied Air Force organisation relieved RAAF Head-Quarters of operational responsibility but RAAF Head-Quarters still retained full administrative control over all RAAF units in SWPA.

Headquarters Allied Air Forces moved with General Headquarters to Brisbane on the 20th July, leaving a small rear echelon in Melbourne to maintain contact with RAAF Head-Quarters and Headquarters US Army Air Services. With the arrival of Major General G C Kenney, who relieved Lieutenant General Brett on the 4th August, a change was made in the Allied Air Forces organisation. The Americans decided to abandon the project of combined staffs at headquarters of

areas and to constitute the American Air Force elements as a separate formation, to be known as the Fifth Air Force. The combined staff arrangement was retained at Headquarters Allied Air Forces in principle only. This change made necessary the setting up of some form of RAAF controlling organisation at a level with Headquarters Fifth Air Force and through which Major General Kenney's overall operational control could be exercised. Accordingly, Headquarters RAAF Coastal Command was formed at Brisbane on the 5th September 1942, but on the 23rd September its name was changed to Headquarters RAAF Command. The Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command was assigned the operational command only of RAAF service squadrons and associated ancillary units.

Due to the withdrawal of the bulk of the RAAF staff from Headquarters Allied Air Forces it became necessary for me to have direct contact with the Commanding General Allied Air Forces. Consequently, a Forward Echelon of RAAF Head-Quarters was formed at Brisbane on the 9th September 1942. The commander of this echelon was my accredited representative with the Commanding General.

The gradual change taking place during this period from a strategic defensive to the beginnings of a strategic offensive, resulted in the formation at Port Moresby on the 1st September 1942 of No 9 (Operational) Group. This was the first of several projected mobile formations to take part in the forward offensive operations. Initially, Headquarters No 9 (Operational) Group exercised operational control only of RAAF elements in Papua, administrative control of these elements being retained by Headquarters North Eastern Area. On the 1st January 1943, however, No 9 (Operational) Group became a separate command, and all RAAF units in New Guinea were separated from North Eastern Area and placed under both the operational and administrative command of Headquarters No 9 (Operational) Group.

By the end of 1943 operations were moving northwards from the Milne Bay-Goodenough Island region where RAAF units, under No 9 (Operational) Group, were operating. With the planned forward Allied moves in 1944 (the landings at Tadjil and Noemfoor Islands), however, re-organisation in New Guinea became necessary. The boundaries dividing the areas of responsibility of Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command were revised and a zone covering south eastern New Guinea was created as an extension of conditions prevailing on the mainland of Australia. On the 1st March 1944 the responsibilities of this zone were transferred from the Fifth Air Force to RAAF Command. South-Eastern New Guinea now became a more or less L of C area and No 9 (Operational) Group became the holding formation. To conform with this new role, namely that of an area

rather than a mobile operational formation, the name of the group was changed to Northern Command with effect from the 14th April 1944.

No 10 (Operational) Group, a subordinate formation within Northern Command, then became a mobile formation and was fully operational at Nadzab by the 1st March 1944. It was assigned to the operational control of Headquarters Fifth Air Force. On the 1st July 1944 No 10 (Operational) Group was completely separated from Northern Command and became a formation directly under the administrative control of RAAF Head-Quarters. Towards the end of 1944 the forces of this group had become greatly in excess of those normally controlled by a group. This was mainly due to the lengthening of its lines of communication with the mainland and with Northern Command and the consequent necessity to include additional supply and maintenance units in it. It was decided, therefore, to abandon the title of group and to re-name the formation First Tactical Air Force, RAAF.

With the forward move of General Headquarters and Allied Air Forces SWPA and other Allied organisations from Brisbane to Hollandia towards the end of 1944 it became increasingly difficult and finally impracticable for RAAF Head-Quarters to maintain the required contacts through Forward Echelon at Brisbane. A Pacific Echelon of RAAF Head-Quarters was therefore established on the 1st December 1944 at Hollandia as a detached section of RAAF Head-Quarters. The duties of Forward Echelon were then restricted to liaison with Headquarters RAAF Command and certain Allied agencies still remaining within the vicinity of Brisbane. The commander of Pacific Echelon thus became my accredited representative at General Headquarters and Headquarters Allied Air Forces. Pacific Echelon subsequently moved forward with General Headquarters to Tolosa (Leyte) at the end of January 1945, thence to Manila on the 14th April 1945.

The further lengthening of communications of First Tactical Air Force, resulting from the Borneo operations, made it necessary to establish a garrison or static command in the Dutch New Guinea-Morotai zone. Accordingly, No 11 Group was formed on the 16th July 1945 and assumed operational and administrative command of all units at Morotai with effect from 30th July. This process of re-organisation was very similar to that which had occurred earlier when No 10 (Operational) Group had been formed. It enabled the First Tactical Air Force to retain its mobility and at the same time relieved Northern Command of L of C duties in this zone.

The forming of No 11 Group chanced, as it happened, to be the last major development in our higher organisation before the war ended. The final pattern as at August 1945, is shown in the diagram. [See *Figure 1*]

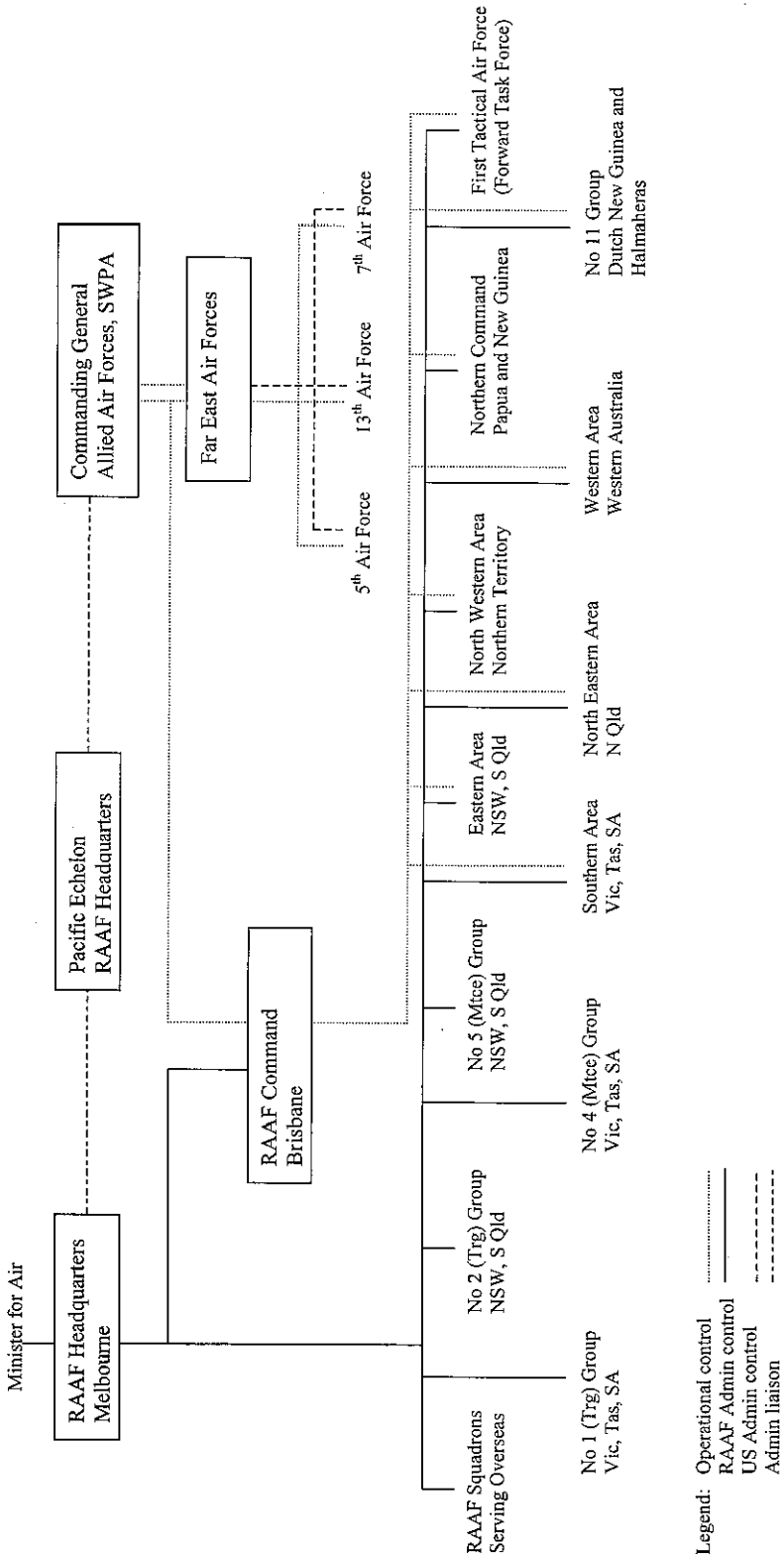


Figure 1: Higher Organisation of the RAAF as at August 1945

Section One

The British Connection

Introduction

This Section covers the period from before the outbreak of war up to the start of the Pacific War early in December 1941. The dominating influence in this period was British. Virtually all of the RAAF's operational and administrative concepts and procedures were copied from the Royal Air Force, while for the years 1940 and 1941 a senior British officer led the RAAF in the key post of Chief of the Air Staff.

An alternative title for this Section could be 'Transition to War'. Although the RAAF was, strictly speaking, already at war, the period was more accurately one of rapid expansion (from 4,000 to 60,000 in two years) to meet the needs of war, rather than one of active engagement in combat operations. During this period the RAAF's effort was devoted mainly to training aircrew for service with the Royal Air Force in Europe and the Middle East. Thus, while many members of the RAAF and several of its squadrons were either actively engaged in combat, or on standby for combat, the RAAF itself had only a small combat role, which was in the defence of trade around the Australian coast.

Hence the leadership adopted a form of organisation – a static, area organisation with strong central control – tailored to meet the demands of training, small-scale defence readiness, fixed defences and minor operations to defend trade.

Chapter 1 deals with the prewar era, Chapters 2 and 3 with the early period of transition, and Chapter 4 with the changes in the organisation that took place in the latter part of 1941.

1

Prewar

The arrangements in place for the higher command of the Royal Australian Air Force on the outbreak of war in September 1939 were simple and well matched to the peacetime requirements and circumstances of Australia's small air force.

In September 1939 the strength of the RAAF was just under 4,000 of whom only 310 were commissioned officers. There were twelve operational squadrons, equipped in the main with twin-engined Avro Anson 'bombers' or single-engined Hawker Demon biplane fighters, neither of which, even at that time, could be classed as being 'state of the art'. These squadrons, together with a range of training and support units, were spread over nine locations – Point Cook, Laverton, Richmond, Pearce, Cressy, Darwin, Archerfield, Rathmines and Canberra. Of the nine, only the first four were fully established RAAF Stations, the remainder being in the early stages of development.

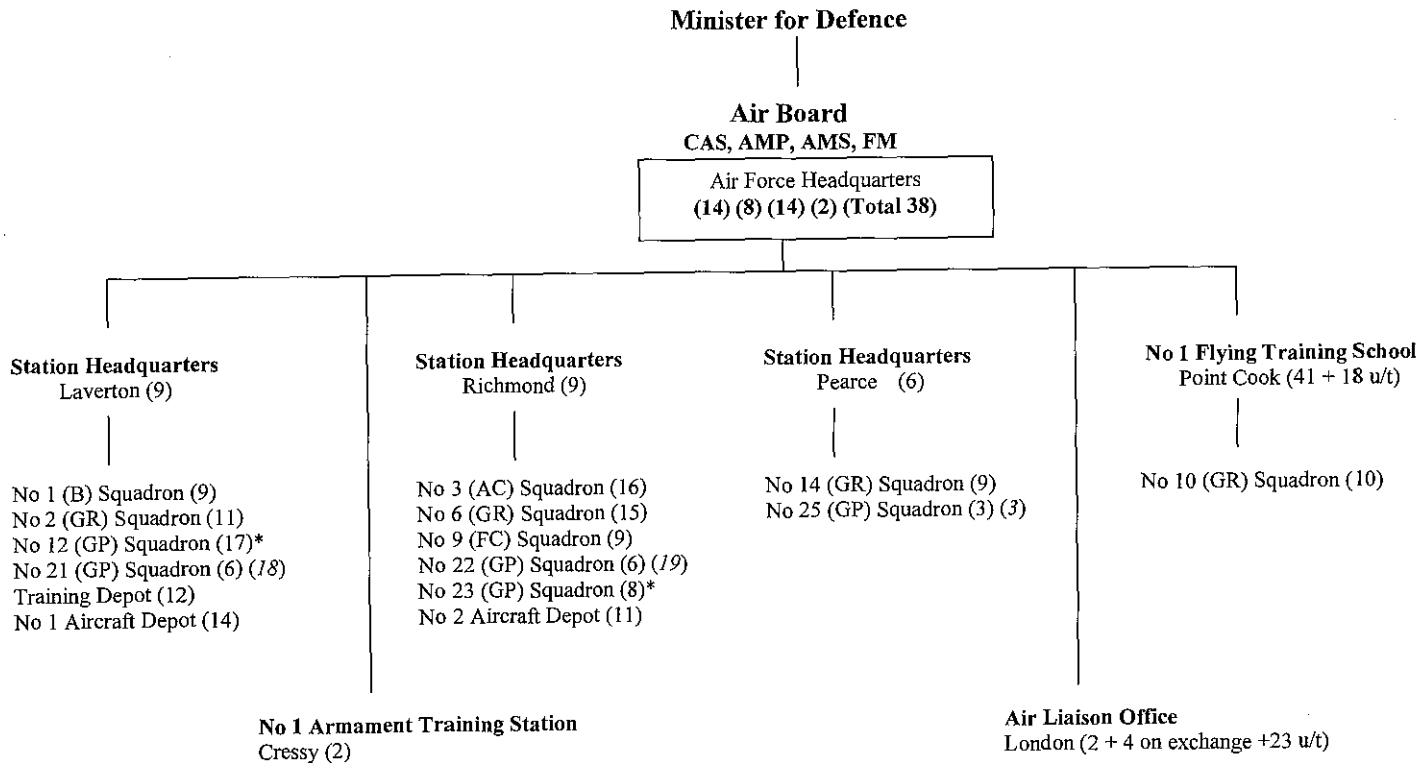
An organisation chart of the RAAF in August 1939 is at Figure 1.1

AIR BOARD

Command of the RAAF was exercised, not by a single commander, but, as with the other two Services in Australia, by a statutory committee, in the case of the RAAF, the Air Board. The Air Board consisted of four Members, three Servicemen and one public servant. The Chairman of the Board was the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble, with the other Members being: the Air Member for Personnel, Air Commodore J C Russell, RAF; the Air Member for Supply, Air Commodore W H Anderson; and the Finance Member, M C Langslow, Esq. The Secretary to the Air Board was P E Coleman, Esq.

The Air Board was in turn supported by Air Force Headquarters, which was located at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, and which was divided into four Branches, one for each Board Member. The strength of the officer staff of the Air Force Headquarters was just under 40.

Control of the Service's squadrons and units was exercised by Air Force Headquarters, either through Station Headquarters, at Laverton, Richmond and Pearce, or direct to squadrons and units at other locations. There were no intermediate Command Headquarters.



Note: Numbers of PAF officers shown in brackets, normal; numbers of ACAF officers shown in brackets, italics.
 Note: * No 12 Squadron moved to Darwin and No 23 Squadron moved to Archerfield late August 1939.

Figure I.1: Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, August 1939

SENIOR OFFICERS

At Appendix A is a part transcript of the August 1939 Air Force List, showing all officers of the Permanent Air Force of the rank of Wing Commander and above. Of the 31 officers on the List, six had completed the course at the Imperial Defence College in the United Kingdom and 18, over half, had completed the Royal Air Force Staff College, also in the United Kingdom. A sizeable majority had also completed an exchange posting with the RAF and/or had undergone some form of specialist training in addition to, or in lieu of, Staff Course. Also, on the outbreak of war four Squadron Leaders, and 22 junior officers, were in the United Kingdom on exchange or undergoing specialist training courses.

AIR VICE-MARSHAL WILLIAMS

For the whole of the prewar era, from the formation of the RAAF on 31st March 1921, Richard Williams had been its most senior officer, rising in that time from the rank of Wing Commander to Air Vice-Marshal in 1935. Apart from breaks to attend courses in the United Kingdom, he led the RAAF as its Chief of the Air Staff for 17 years.

Early in 1938 the Lyons Government became concerned with the administration of the RAAF, a concern that was heightened by press and parliamentary criticism over a number of aircraft accidents. As a consequence the Government invited Marshal of the RAF Sir Edward Ellington, a former Chief of the Air Staff, RAF, to Australia to report on the RAAF.

The subsequent Ellington Report, while not directly criticising the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Williams, was critical of aspects of supervision for which, by implication, the CAS was ultimately responsible. Perhaps not unnaturally, Williams reacted adversely to the Report, which was released by the Government to the press before being advised to the Air Board, although Williams himself was given a copy a few days earlier.

Following the release of the Report, the issues raised in it were hotly debated in Parliament, with, significantly for the future, support for Williams coming from a Government backbencher, Mr J V Fairbairn.¹

As a consequence of the Report and its aftermath, the Government decided that Williams should vacate the post of Chief of the Air Staff and proceed to England on a two-year exchange with a senior RAF officer, who would become Chief of the Air Staff in Australia. Subsequently the (British) Air Ministry recommended Air Marshal Sir William Mitchell, who was at the time Air Member for Personnel on the Air Council. However, after further consideration the Australian Government decided not to act on this recommendation and instead appointed the RAAF's second senior officer, Air Commodore S J Goble, as Acting CAS with the temporary rank of Air Vice-Marshal. In exchange for Williams, the RAF sent Air Commodore J C Russell to Australia to fill the post of Air Member for Personnel.

(See Documents Chapter 2: War Cabinet Agendum No 8/1940 - Selection of Royal Air Force Officer as Chief of the Air Staff, dated 4th January 1940)

Air Commodore Goble had, like Williams, joined the RAAF on its formation in 1921. Whereas Williams was at the time an Army officer, and nominated for the post by the Army, Goble was a Royal Australian Navy officer nominated by the

¹ For a fuller account of the Ellington Report see Coulthard-Clark C D, *The Third Brother*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1991, pp 114 - 118.

Navy. Both started with the same rank and had a similar background of flying experience during the First World War, Williams with the Australian Flying Corps and Goble with the Royal Naval Air Service and, later, the Royal Air Force. Both were Australians.

Williams' exchange with the Royal Air Force was as Air Officer-in-Charge Administration at Headquarters, Coastal Command. Although concerned primarily with administration, Williams was, in accordance with RAF practice, the deputy to the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Coastal Command.

DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

Until just on the outbreak of war the principal staff officer assisting the Chief of the Air Staff was the Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, which post was held by Wing Commander G Jones. With war looming, on 1st September 1939 the post of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff was established, with the then Director of Operations and Intelligence, Group Captain W D Bostock, being appointed to the post.

POLITICAL CONTROL

Political control of the three Services in Australia before the outbreak of war is succinctly described by (Sir) Paul Hasluck in the official history of Government activities during the war:²

From the inauguration of the Commonwealth there had been a Minister for Defence and a Department of Defence responsible for all three services, munitions and supply. During the 1914-18 war a separate minister for the navy was appointed in July 1915, but after the war the portfolio was abolished and the department again merged into Defence on 21st December 1921. Between the two wars, the forces were too small and the munitions and supply activities too restricted to require more than one portfolio.

Before the war, the Cabinet was assisted in the determination of defence policy by the Council of Defence, a statutory body created under Section 28 of the Defence Act to consider and advise upon any questions of defence policy or organisation referred to it by the Prime Minister or Minister for Defence. The Council, of which the Prime Minister was chairman, was formed of a selected group of ministers together with the three Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of the Defence Department.

The Prime Minister on the outbreak of war was Mr R G Menzies, who had no military background, and the Minister for Defence was Brigadier G A Street, MC, a First World War veteran who held a commission in the Militia. The Secretary of the Department of Defence was Frederick G Shedden, Esq., a long term public servant who had joined the Defence Department at age 19 and who had served in the Army Pay Corps during the First World War. In 1928 he attended the Imperial War College in London and afterwards was attached for a time to the (British) War Office. He became Secretary of the Defence Department in 1937.³

² Hasluck, Paul, *The Government and the People, 1939-41*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, p 439.

³ Horner, D, *Inside the War Cabinet*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1996, p 2.

Hasluck continues:

There was also a Defence Committee composed of the three Chiefs of Staff and an officer of the Secretariat of the Department of Defence, and able to consult, as required, with the Controller-General of Munitions, the Controller of Civil Aviation and the Chairman of the Principal Supply Officers Committee. This committee, which had been brought into existence by ministerial direction on 15th May 1926, had been more formally constituted on 8th March 1929 by the promulgation of a Defence Committee Regulation under the Defence Act, Naval Defence Act and Air Force Act. The functions of the Defence Committee were to advise the Minister for Defence on defence policy as a whole: the coordination of the operations and requirements of the Naval, Military and Air Boards in their administrative sphere; the coordination of the operations of the Munitions Supply Board in relation to the requirements of the several services; the financial requirements of defence policy and the allocation to the respective services of the funds made available; the coordination of civil aviation with defence requirements; and all matters of policy or principle affecting the organisation and distribution of such air forces as might be established.⁴

HIGHER COMMAND PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

When the war broke out in September 1939 the RAAF was in the middle of a three-year development program that had started in July 1938 and by which the strength of the Service, and the number of operational squadrons, was to double by June 1941. Part of that program was to establish two Group Headquarters, one each in Sydney and Melbourne, to act as an intermediate command headquarters between Air Force Headquarters, and the various Stations and independent squadrons and units. As things turned out, these two Group Headquarters were not formed until November 1939.

Further indication of the thinking within the RAAF at that time about higher command arrangements comes from the following unattributed report that appeared in the Melbourne *Herald* newspaper on 28th July 1939:

RAAF CHANGES SOON Command System

Administration of the Royal Australian Air Force is likely to be reorganised soon to provide for the establishment of a command system.

Introduction of the new system is expected to coincide with expansion of Air Force administration work which will follow the establishment of new stations at Darwin and Canberra and the delivery of new aircraft.

⁴ Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1939-41*.

Two Commands

The reorganisation plan will provide for probably at least two group commands:

Northern – Headquarters at Richmond (NSW) possibly embracing the squadrons located also at Brisbane, Lake Macquarie, Canberra, Darwin, Townsville and Port Moresby.

Southern – Headquarters at Laverton to control squadrons at Laverton, the new Flying Training School at Wagga, the specialist training school at Point Cook and Pearce (Western Australia).

Later, the formation of a far northern command to cover Darwin, Townsville and Port Moresby might be considered or, ultimately, the formation of operational commands resembling the British system.

Officers with the rank of Group Captain probably would be appointed to each command.

The basis of the present scheme will be to relieve the RAAF headquarters of a mass of operational and training detail.

Comment

In any organisation, the quality and effectiveness of its higher organisation is a compound of the ability of its leaders and the organisational arrangements within which they have to work. For the RAAF during the Second World War, changing the organisational arrangements was, with one notable exception, a comparatively simple task, compared with that of changing the leadership group. Indeed, the leadership group that the RAAF had on the outbreak of war remained in place throughout the six years of war, with little change in relative seniority one to the other, and little influx of fresh talent, notwithstanding a forty-five fold increase in overall strength of the Service.

Any assessment of the quality of the RAAF's senior officers as they were in September 1939, and their ability to effectively lead a greatly expanded war-time Service, can only be at best subjective.

Of the 56 senior officers (squadron leader and above) in the RAAF in September 1939 the top 16 (which included all group captains and above and the six most senior wing commanders) were veterans of the First World War and had served with the RAAF virtually since its establishment on 31st March 1921.

Just below the First World War veterans and in the middle ranks were a group of younger officers who had come to the RAAF initially on secondment from the Australian Army and the Royal Australian Navy. In his book, *The Third Brother: The Royal Australian Air Force 1921-1939*, Chris Coulthard-Clark points to the

shortcomings of many of the First World War group as administrators, notwithstanding their fine record as air fighters, and of the far superior administrative performance of the seconded officers, many of whom had been trained at the Royal Military College, Duntroon.⁵

There is little in the subsequent careers of these two groups, both during and after the war, to invalidate Coulthard-Clark's assessment. Indeed, this general lack of talent at the top is one of the more significant, although not always obvious, features of the higher command of the RAAF during the Second World War.

Two other features of the prewar RAAF that had a pervasive influence on the effectiveness of the higher command arrangements were the culture of centralisation that pervaded much of the thinking on command arrangements and the entrenched system of promotion by seniority.

In the prewar era, Air Force Headquarters exercised a close control over individual unit activities, with control being exercised through detailed orders, rather than through broad policy direction. As the RAAF expanded, the organisation found it difficult to effectively delegate authority to the various intermediate levels of command. This failing remained throughout the war.

Also in the prewar era, promotion, particularly at the higher levels, tended to be in strict seniority order. Thus senior officers tended to retain the same relative seniority as they progressed up the promotion ladder. Furthermore, promotion opportunities tended to come, not from the normal outflow from the top, but rather from the overall expansion of the Service and the progressive promotion, from Wing Commander in 1921 to Air Vice-Marshal in 1935, of the RAAF's most senior officer, Richard Williams.

Much is made in various accounts of the history of the RAAF before the war about the rivalry between Williams and the next most senior officer, Stanley Goble. While this quite understandable rivalry between two men of comparable ability, age, experience and ambition may have had its impact at various times, by the outbreak of war it had probably run its course. Williams had clearly 'won the race' for top place. The fact that he had been sent overseas early in 1939, and Goble appointed as CAS in his place (with the temporary rank only of Air Vice-Marshal), in no way implied that Goble had attained the upper hand. Rather, Williams' removal from the post of CAS and his posting overseas was a result of a clash between Williams and the Government in the fallout from the Ellington Report, a clash that had a far-reaching affect, as shall be seen, on Williams' subsequent career in the RAAF.

Yet another feature of the prewar RAAF that carried into the Second World War was the tendency to follow, almost blindly and in all aspects of air force activity, the example of the Royal Air Force. Indeed, one could say, with maybe a little exaggeration, that the only aspect where the RAAF did not follow the RAF was in the colour of its uniform.

⁵ Coulthard-Clark, *The Third Brother*, p 361.

2

Early Developments

Changes in Political Control

WAR CABINET

Shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Government formed the War Cabinet, in accordance with plans made and approved shortly before the war. The War Cabinet was a sub-committee of Cabinet and replaced the Council of Defence.

The War Cabinet was chaired by the Prime Minister (R G Menzies), and, initially included the Ministers for Supply (R G Casey), Defence (G A Street), Commerce (Senator G McLeay), Information (H S Gullett), and the Attorney-General (W M Hughes). Unlike the Council of Defence, the Chiefs of Staff were not members of the War Cabinet, but were to 'be invited collectively to attend the War Cabinet in an advisory capacity in matters concerning the military conduct of the war'.¹

Secretarial support to the War Cabinet was provided by the Department of Defence whose Secretary, F G Shedden, also became Secretary to the War Cabinet. Indeed the whole set up of the War Cabinet was very much due to Shedden's initiative.

(See Documents: Policy Paper – Government Machinery for Higher Direction in War, dated 30th October 1939)

MINISTER FOR AIR

In November 1939 the Government took a second step in reorganising its wartime administration by splitting Ministerial responsibility for the three Services. In place of the single Minister and Department of Defence were formed four ministries: viz., Defence Coordination (R G Menzies), Navy (F H Stewart), Army (G A Street) and Air (J V Fairbairn). All became members of the War Cabinet.

This particular reorganisation was to have a major impact on the conduct of the war by the Australian Government. As David Horner comments: 'As Minister for Defence Coordination as well as Prime Minister, Menzies had placed himself in a position to control the conduct of the war and through Shedden's position as Secretary of the War Cabinet the Department of Defence Coordination became the most important government department'.²

At the time of his appointment as Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn was in Canada negotiating the Empire Air Training Scheme on behalf of Australia. In his stead, Mr Harold Holt was appointed Acting Minister for Air until Fairbairn's return at the end of the year. *The Secretary to the Air Board (P E Coleman) was appointed as*

¹ Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1996, p 3.

² *Ibid*, pp 4–5.

Secretary of the new Department of Air, but was replaced shortly thereafter by Major M C Langslow, who had previously been Finance Member of the Air Board. Mr F J Mulrooney was appointed as Secretary to the Air Board. Both Langslow and Mulrooney held their respective posts for the duration of the war.

Comment

The War Cabinet subsequently developed into the key body directing Australia's war effort. Its deliberations were in turn heavily influenced by the Minister for Defence Coordination, later changed back to Minister for Defence, who for the most part also held the Prime Ministerial portfolio. Also, while the Chiefs of Staff of the three Services were excluded from membership of the War Cabinet, they did attend many of its meetings. For his part, Air Marshal Williams was critical of the exclusion of the Chiefs of Staff from this top political decision making body.³ However, the arrangement was entirely consistent with the principle of subordination of the military to civilian political control.

The appointment of a Minister dedicated to the political oversight of the RAAF, with his own Secretary and Department, had both advantages and disadvantages for the RAAF. While it put the Air Board one step further away from the fountainhead of decision making, the War Cabinet and the Minister for Defence Coordination, it did give the RAAF its own political voice as it were in the War Cabinet and the Government generally. Under the new arrangements the Secretary of the Department of Defence Coordination, Mr F G Shedden, gained greatly in power to influence decisions in the defence field, at the expense of the single Service Chiefs of Staff and the Service Boards.

Also, having a dedicated Minister and Departmental Secretary put the Air Board, and the RAAF generally, under closer scrutiny. Here the relative advantage of having its own 'political head' and having to accept closer scrutiny depended very much on the personalities and ability of the incumbents. In Mr Fairbairn the RAAF had a sympathetic ally. As to the Secretary of the Department of Air, Major Langslow, who held the post throughout and after the war, impressions and anecdotes only remain. He was no doubt a capable public servant who saw his prime responsibility to the Minister of the day. There is no particular evidence, or even suggestion, that he exercised anything like the dominant role of the Defence Secretary, Mr Shedden.

ADVISORY WAR COUNCIL

In October 1940 the Government formed the Advisory War Council. It was chaired by the Prime Minister, and had as its members senior Ministers from the Government and leading members of the Opposition. As with the War Cabinet the Advisory War Council remained in place throughout the war. The Council Secretary was the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, Mr Shedden.⁴

³ Williams, R. *These Are Facts*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, p 258.

⁴ Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p 6.

Air Expeditionary Force

Shortly after the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Goble, proposed to the Government that Australia offer the British Government a six-squadron Air Expeditionary Force as the RAAF's contribution to the war in Europe. Due to Australia's complete lack of front-line aircraft, the proposal was that Australia would provide the aircrew, ground staff and headquarters element, while Britain provided the aircraft and supporting facilities. The Government took up the proposal, but the British Air Ministry delayed acceptance, due no doubt to a desire to give preference to the Empire Air Training Scheme which was then in the early stages of negotiation. Finally, in late October 1939, the Government, in part on advice from the Air Ministry and Australia's High Commissioner in London, Mr Stanley Bruce, dropped the proposal for the Air Expeditionary Force in favour of the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Comment

The significance of the Air Expeditionary Force for the higher command of the RAAF during the Second World War lay in its potential to have enabled a number of senior Permanent Air Force officers to gain operational command experience at an early stage in the war. As matters transpired this and other avenues to gain operational command experience were denied to all but a few of them, with significant adverse consequences for the RAAF during the later Pacific War stage.

Change of CAS

REQUEST FOR SENIOR RAF OFFICER

In October and again in November 1939 the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Goble, wrote to the Minister for Defence, Brigadier Street, complaining of the attitude and actions of the Air Member for Personnel, Air Commodore Russell, RAF. These complaints had two consequences. The first was that Goble was told by the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, that he would not contemplate having Russell recalled and that he, Goble, 'would just have to make things work'. The second was a decision by the Government to seek the services of a senior RAF officer to be Chief of the Air Staff.

On 13th October, the day after Goble's first letter of complaint, the Prime Minister met with Mr Casey (Minister for Supply and Development) and Brigadier Street and resolved to seek the services of a senior RAF officer, who was senior to both Williams and Goble, to be CAS. It was further resolved at that meeting that Mr Casey, who was about to go to Britain, would make the selection on the spot. A cablegram to this effect was dispatched the following day to the High Commissioner in London.

(See Documents: Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 13th October 1939, and Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 13th October 1939)

In London Mr Casey was advised that the Chief of the Air Staff, RAF, had recommended Air Chief Marshal Sir John Steel who was in command of the Reserve Command. He passed this advice to the Prime Minister in Australia on 10th November, and on 20th November recommended the selection of Steel.

In the meantime, the Prime Minister had directed the newly appointed Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn, who was then in Ottawa negotiation the Empire Air Training Scheme Agreement, to go to London to 'form his own opinion about the officers available'. This he subsequently did, and as a consequence selected Air Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, one of the RAF's two Inspectors-General. On 14th December Fairbairn advised the Prime Minister that he 'had arranged with the Secretary of State (for Air) for Air Marshal Sir Charles Burnett to come out as Chief of the Air Staff for one year, and for Air Vice-Marshall Williams to return as Second Member'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 8/1940 - Selection of Royal Air Force Officer as Chief of the Air Staff, dated 4th January 1940)

GOBLE'S RESIGNATION

On 19th December 1939, Air Vice-Marshall Goble, submitted his resignation of his post and his commission in the Royal Australian Air Force to the Prime Minister. At the time, he gave no reason, but contemporary press reports indicated that it was because of 'difficulties with the Government on matters of policy and personal relations'.

In subsequent minutes, to the Prime Minister and the Acting Minister for Air, Goble set out his reason for resigning, which centred around difficulties in relations with Air Commodore Russell. Indeed, Goble described a whole litany of difficulties related to Russell's general attitude to his job and to his Australian colleagues. At one stage Russell had been posted, with Air Ministry approval, to take over one of the newly established Group commands, but had refused. On another occasion the War Cabinet called on Russell for advice, related to the manning of the proposed Air Expeditionary Force, without reference to Goble.

Goble stated that he had on numerous occasions over the past few months brought the matter to the attention of the Government, only to be told by the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies,



Air Vice-Marshall Stanley Goble, circa 1943
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

that he would not contemplate Russell's recall to Britain and 'we have just got to make things work'.

(See Documents: Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Acting Minister for Air, dated 19th December 1939, and Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, dated 22nd December 1939.)

On 22nd December 1939 the War Cabinet decided that:

- i. Air Vice-Marshal Goble's resignation from the post of Chief of the Air Staff to be accepted, but the Prime Minister to discuss with him his application to resign his commission in the Royal Australian Air Force. It was considered that it might be possible, dependent on the outcome of the discussion, to offer him a post, with his normal rank of Air Commodore, on, say, the Empire body to administer the Empire Air Scheme in Canada.
- ii. Air Commodore Russell to be returned to duty in the Royal Air Force.
- iii. Air Vice-Marshal Williams to remain on duty with the Royal Air Force until the termination of the two years' period for which he was sent abroad.
- iv. The Prime Minister to discuss with the Chief of the Naval Staff the possibility of obtaining the services of Commodore Boucher, Second Naval Member, who had considerable flying experience, as Acting Chief of the Air Staff until the arrival of a suitable officer from England.

A fascinating inside account of Goble's resignation comes from a conversation that the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, had with the UK High Commissioner in Australia, Sir Geoffrey Whiskard, in late December 1939. Following is a transcript of Sir Geoffrey's report to the Secretary of State for the Dominions, Mr Anthony Eden:

He told me that on receipt of Goble's resignation (both of his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff and of his commission in the RAAF), he sent for him and asked the reason. Goble told him that Russell was continuously intriguing behind his back, and he now found his position intolerable. Menzies said that, after all, Russell was Goble's subordinate officer, and surely it was unusual for the superior to allow his subordinate to force him to resign, to which Goble replied that he was assured that Russell had the ear of the Cabinet, so that any action by him (Goble) to check his intrigues would have been useless. Menzies then told him that the Cabinet had in fact some time ago decided to make different arrangements, necessary in view of the very large expansion of the RAAF, which would involve the return of Russell to the United Kingdom, whereupon Goble at once asked to be allowed to withdraw his resignation. Menzies said he would be allowed to withdraw his resignation of his commission, which he was foolish ever to have

tendered; but he could not be allowed to withdraw his resignation as Chief of the Air Staff, because the new arrangements contemplated not only the return of Russell to the United Kingdom but also the supersession of Goble by someone from the United Kingdom with greater seniority and experience; whereupon Goble retired hurt.

Menzies went on to say that, while Goble's resignation was undoubtedly very convenient, as it saved them from the unpleasantness of publicly superseding him, he regarded Russell as mainly to blame for the continued friction on the Air Board. Russell not only talked a great deal too much in Clubs and other congregations of tittle-tattlers, but he was undoubtedly disloyal to his colleagues. (Incidentally I met Russell for the first time at dinner at Government House, Melbourne, the other night; and both my wife, whose judgment in these matters I value, and I, took an instant dislike to him.) Furthermore (as I have already reported) while he must assume that Russell had been a success in the command which he held prior to coming to Australia, he was convinced that (apart from the disabilities of character noted above) he was not suited for any job in which he was required to advise on matters of policy. As for Goble, he had been quite adequate as Chief of Staff for the negligible Air Force such as Australia had hitherto possessed, but would be quite out of his depth in dealing with the problems arising from the creation of an Air Force which was intended to include as many as 20,000 flying personnel apart from ground personnel. He believed that Goble's service in the United Kingdom had been approved: and he was asking Bruce to arrange with the Air Ministry to send them out a really good man, of proper seniority and experience, as Chief of Air Staff, and to take Goble back into the RAF and give him a command suitable for an Air Commodore (acting Vice-Marshal) of his seniority.

Menzies then harked back to Russell, and said that, while he was satisfied that the Admiralty and War Office now appreciated that they must not use Australia as a waste-paper basket for their duds (Colvin, Custance and Squires, he said, had been most successful appointments) he was by no means sure that the Air Ministry had yet learnt this lesson. It was most important that they should. The sending out of unsuitable men here was not only bad for the Australian services (which he admitted were, in peace time at any rate, from the United Kingdom point of view unimportant) but it lowered the prestige of the United Kingdom services in Australian eyes.

(See Documents: Letter from the UK High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for Dominions, dated 1st January 1940)

MEDIA COMMENT

The following item from *Aircraft* magazine of 1st January 1940 reflects some of the contemporary 'outside' views on Goble's resignation by the usually well informed aviation press:

Who Is To Be Chief of Air Staff?

Differences which apparently have been mounting up for some time on matters of policy, or administration, between the Acting Chief of the Air Staff (Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble) and Federal Cabinet, came to a head in the week preceding Christmas.

This journal does not profess to know either the origin or extent of the discussion, but it seems significant that Air Vice-Marshal Goble wished to be allowed to relinquish his appointment and to be allowed to relinquish his commission, 'on a matter of high personal principle', soon after certain details of the Empire Air Training Scheme had been made public.

There has been an inference that several senior RAAF officers are strongly backing their chief, and that his communications to Federal Cabinet and subsequent discussions with the Prime Minister (Mr R G Menzies) have been in the nature of an ultimatum.

When this issue closed for press on December 26, it seemed possible that Federal Cabinet – very reluctant to accept the resignation – would back down and make it possible for the Air Vice-Marshal to reconsider his decision.

Acting on precedent established in the Army and Royal Australian Navy, and possibly on the idea that distance lends enchantment, a section of Federal Cabinet is believed to favour selection of an Imperial officer should the Chief of Air Staff appointment become vacant.

Disregarding all questions of sticking up for an Australian, the logical move in this eventuality would be to arrange for the return of Air Vice-Marshal R Williams, the previous appointee and the senior officer of the Royal Australian Air Force.

The outward motive of sending Air Vice-Marshal Williams to England was to let him obtain 'post graduate' experience which, for an officer of his rank, was unobtainable locally.

He has been absent 10 months, and his duties as 'No 2' or assistant to Air Marshal Sir Frederick Bowhill in the Royal Air Force Coastal Command, which has been one of the busiest to date, Air Vice-Marshal Williams has obtained experience which would be specially valuable to Australia if and when he returns to resume leadership of the Royal Australian Air Force.

Comment

While the press may not have been informed by its sources of the full story behind Goble's resignation, it quite correctly implied the presence of a deep rift between Goble and the Federal Cabinet, and posed the not unreasonable question: why not recall Williams?

FAIRBAIRN EXCEEDS HIS AUTHORITY

Mr Fairbairn's action in arranging for Sir Charles Burnett to come to Australia without War Cabinet approval drew an angry response from the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies. On 25th December he cabled Bruce:

Cannot understand how Fairbairn made any commitment regarding Chief of Air Staff without reference to us for final authority as it is invariable practice for appointments of this nature to be approved by Cabinet. ... Air Board is not functioning satisfactorily owing to clash of personalities between Goble and Russell. Goble has now tendered resignation and Government has decided to relieve him of duties as Chief of Air Staff. Would like you to explain to Air Ministry and to defer finality regarding Burnett and Williams until after War Cabinet can be reassembled immediately on Fairbairn's return. Your advice on Burnett and Steel should be available in time for this. Meanwhile I feel clear that while nothing against Russell's industry or efficiency personal factors which have arisen between him and other members of Air Board make it desirable for him to return to RAF. This need not affect completion of Williams' two years period of duty abroad if it is decided he should remain, but for remainder of time he should be considered as partly offsetting financial liability for RAF officer selected as Chief of the Air Staff in accordance rules relating to exchange officers. Goble, who at present holds temporary rank of Air Vice-Marshal, is anxious to obtain command in RAF and Commonwealth would be prepared second him if services desired by Air Ministry. Pending arrival of RAF officer selected as Chief of the Air Staff it is desired to appoint Commodore Boucher, second naval member, as Acting Chief of the Air Staff in view of his air experience and fact that present wartime functions of RAAF are largely cooperation in trade defence. Admiralty concurrence is required for this temporary appointment with which the Chief of the Naval Staff concurs. As press have obtained information of Goble's resignation I am deferring any comment until I am in a position to indicate steps to be taken to carry on duties of his position. An immediate reply regarding Boucher would therefore be greatly appreciated.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 25th December 1939)

On 28th December the High Commissioner advised that, though the selection of Air Marshal Sir Charles Burnett could be cancelled, the matter had proceeded so far that it would be embarrassing.

BURNETT'S APPOINTMENT

On 4th January 1940 the War Cabinet formally approved the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett of the Royal Air Force as Chief of the Air Staff 'for a period of twelve months, but with the option of extension'. His salary was set at £3,000 per annum. At the time the Chiefs of Staff of the Navy (Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin) and Army (Lieutenant General E K Squires) were both British officers.

The Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn, had by this time returned from the United Kingdom. He explained to the War Cabinet 'that, under the 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'.

The War Cabinet also decided 'to adhere to the arrangements made by the Minister for Air for the return of Air Vice-Marshal Williams to Australia, and directed that the High Commissioner be requested by cable to convey to Air Vice-Marshal Williams that he should clearly understand that his rate of pay would be the same as before his departure abroad, namely £1,750 per annum (£1,500 substantive rate, £250 allowance formally payable as Chief of the Air Staff, and deferred pay of £164 per annum). Air Vice-Marshal Williams is to be granted the temporary rank of Air Marshal, while holding the position of Air Member for Personnel, or in charge of the Training Command, as may be decided after the arrival of the new Chief of the Air Staff. The War Cabinet also directed that the High Commissioner should inform Air Vice-Marshal Williams that he should clearly understand that these moves do not imply any right of revision to the post of Chief of the Air Staff.'

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (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, dated 4th January 1940)



Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, RAF
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Air Chief Marshal Burnett subsequently arrived in Australia, in company with Air Vice-Marshal Williams, on 15th February 1940 and immediately took up his new appointment. Air Vice-Marshal Williams subsequently took on the duties of Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, when the Air Board was reorganised on 13th March 1940 [See Chapter 3], with the rank of Acting Air Marshal.

ACTING CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF



Air Vice-Marshal William Anderson
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

From the effective date of Air Vice-Marshal Goble's resignation in early January until Sir Charles Burnett's arrival in mid-February, Air Commodore W H Anderson was appointed as Acting Chief of the Air Staff.

In late March 1940 the Government was still trying to obtain a position for Air Vice-Marshal Goble with the RAF. However, due to a surplus of senior officers in that Service no suitable post could be found.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 20th March 1940; Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 21st March 1940; and, Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 27th March 1940)

Subsequently, Goble was appointed as the Australian Air Liaison Officer to EATS in Ottawa, with the substantive rank of Air Vice-Marshal, a post which he held to the end of the war.

Comment

Issues related to the negotiations for a British officer to be Chief of the Air Staff and the build-up of matters that led to Goble's resignation took place in parallel, in the period October to December 1939. Indeed, it may well have been that Goble's initial representation to the Government, in mid-October, of his difficulties with Russell tipped the Prime Minister to revive the Government's August 1938 proposal for a British officer to be appointed as CAS. It was also at this time that the Government appointed Lieutenant General Squires, a British Army officer already on duty in Australia, to replace Major General Lavarack, who had been Chief of the General Staff since 1935.

For his part, Goble probably had good reason to be dissatisfied with his treatment by the Government. Aside from the very serious difficulties that he was having with Russell, there was the eventual discarding of his proposal for a six squadron Air Expeditionary Force and the way in which it was handled. On top of this was the Government's search for a British officer to replace him. Whether Goble knew of these moves is difficult to know; certainly the Government did not do him the courtesy of informing him of what it had in mind.

On the other side of the coin, it is also clear that Goble lacked the political skills needed of a Chief of Staff in working within the essentially political processes of Government. There is also a hint in his resignation that his action may have come at a time when he was 'feeling rather washed out', due to a 'shocking head cold', or maybe the strain of the job.

Also tied up with the whole process is the rejection by the Government of Williams for return to the post of CAS. Indeed Menzies would appear to have preferred that he remain out of sight, as it were, in England. It was only the action of Fairbairn, acting 'inadvertently' outside his authority, that brought about Williams' return and put him potentially at least, in a position to take over as CAS at the end of Burnett's one year appointment.

The other issue, certainly at the time, was the apparent lack of faith by the Government in the ability of Australian officers to head each of the Services. At the time the RAN had no Flag officers or others of sufficiently senior rank and experience to take on the senior post. Also, the close integration of the RAN with the Royal Navy made it 'unacceptable' to promote Australian officers out of step with their RN colleagues. On the other hand, the Australian Army did have a range of experienced and talented officers in its Regular and Militia ranks.

As to the RAAF, the range of talent in its senior ranks was limited. Aside from Williams and Goble, the only other air rank officer was Air Commodore W H Anderson, of whom the Government thought so little as to suggest that a Royal Navy officer on loan should act as CAS for the month between Goble's departure and Burnett's arrival in Australia. As it turned out, the Government did not, maybe on Fairbairn's insistence, pursue this monumental slight to the senior ranks of the RAAF.

Having rejected Williams, and having apparently lost faith in Goble, the Government had little choice but to seek an RAF officer to lead the Service in its heavy task of expansion of operational capability and support for the Empire Air Training Scheme.

Whether or not Williams would have been successful as CAS over the period up to the entry of Japan into the war is a matter of conjecture. Like Goble, Williams was a zealot for the RAAF cause. Such zeal may well have brought him into further conflict with the Government, which may not have been willing to provide the necessary funds or to have challenged the British Government to the extent needed to promote the identity of the RAAF contribution, through the EATS, within the Royal Air Force.

3

Reorganisation

In determining the pattern of a higher organisation considerable thought was given to the question of whether a geographical or functional system should be adopted. A geographical organisation would simply be one where formations would be determined by geographical boundaries. Under the functional system, on the other hand, formations would be established to carry out a particular major function, such as operations, training or maintenance, and would command units concerned with these particular functions irrespective of their geographical location.

War Report of the Chief of the Air Staff

FORMATION OF NOS 1 AND 2 GROUPS

On 20th November 1939, in accordance with the RAAF development plan drawn up in June 1938, two Group Headquarters were established as 'an interim measure pending consideration of some more comprehensive scheme to cover Australia as a whole'. No 1 Group was formed in Melbourne, under the command of Group Captain N H Wrigley, to take command of stations and units in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania. No 2 Group was formed in Sydney, under the command of Group Captain A T Cole to take command of stations and units in New South Wales and Queensland. Stations and units in Western Australia and the Northern Territory remained under the direct command of Air Force Headquarters.

GOBLE'S PROPOSAL

Shortly before the termination of his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Goble submitted to the Minister for Air, for approval by the War Cabinet, an outline plan for the development of the RAAF. The plan was considered and approved by the Air Board before being submitted to the Minister, Mr Fairbairn. It was not, however, formally considered by the War Cabinet. Rather, it was held by the Minister, pending consultation with the incoming Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett.

Goble's ideas are encapsulated in his minute introducing his plan to the Air Board:

1. For some time the Air Staff has had under consideration the war effort of the RAAF as a whole. It is essential that this be outlined and the approval of the Government obtained at the earliest moment, as on it depends the plans of all branches.

2. The return of the Air Mission from Canada and the mission from United Kingdom has enabled the Air Staff to complete its review of the extent of this effort and I now submit to the Board an outline plan which, if accepted by the Government, will enable the Board to know its total commitments over the next three years and will allow the organisation of the RAAF to be modified and expanded to deal efficiently and expeditiously with the enormous commitment involved in bringing the Empire Air Training Scheme to fruition, while at the same time maintaining our Home Defence Force at the strength required by Government policy.

3. When dealing with an expansion of effort on a scale now necessary for the Service, I am convinced that considerable very real decentralisation is essential. For this reason, I am now proposing a comprehensive command organisation with the objective of establishing complete decentralisation of operational, administrative and financial control to commands – Air Force Headquarters to implement Government policy and to exercise the functions of direction and coordination.

4. The large proportion of the Empire Air Training Scheme which has been accepted by Australia places on this country a very heavy responsibility to the Empire as a whole, since failure, or even limited success, on our part may well react on the RAF war development so seriously as to jeopardise our ability to win the war.

Goble went on to propose that, in order to meet its wartime commitments, 'the RAAF ... be organised into three major functional commands in Australia with subsidiary groups as found necessary. These commands to be:

- a. Home Defence
- b. Training
- c. Maintenance

In addition, he proposed that an RAAF Overseas Base be established in the United Kingdom 'for administrative and personnel record purposes'.

He then went on to recommend that: 'as the complete air-force participation in the war can now be seen in its larger issues, the organisation shown to be implemented immediately, beginning with the introduction of the command system'.

The detail of Goble's organisation proposal is set out in Figure 3.1. As well as the three functional commands, the proposal included a command organisation for the RAAF overseas.

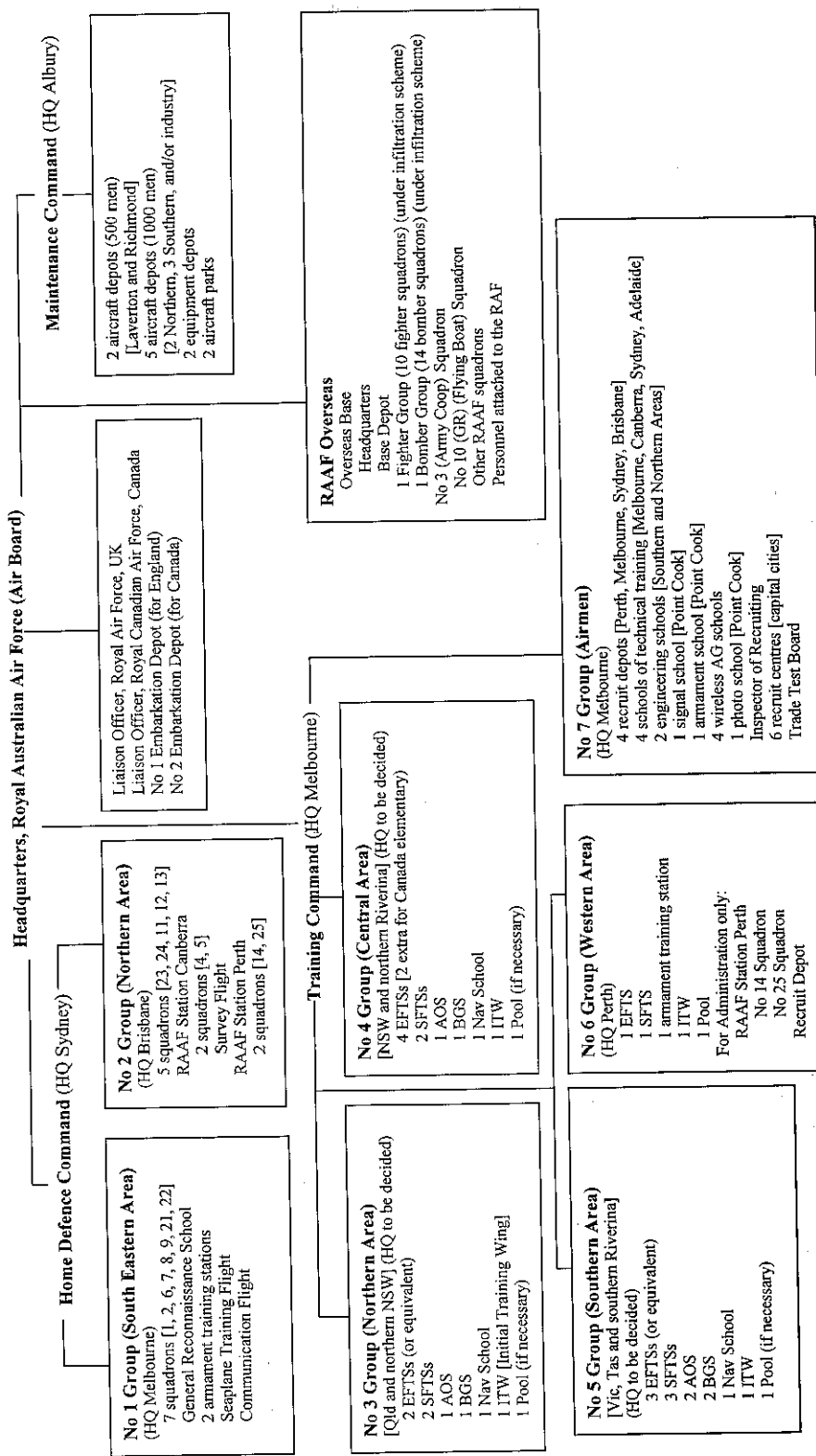


Figure 3.1: Goble's Proposal for the Organisation of the RAAF

BURNETT'S VIEWS

In order to ascertain Sir Charles Burnett's views on the proposed organisation, Mr Fairbairn, acting through the Prime Minister, sent the following message to the High Commissioner in London on 10th January 1940:

An organisation similar to RAF Command system seems necessary to implement Empire Air Training Scheme with efficiency and expedition. RAAF to be organised into three Commands namely home defence, training and maintenance commands. Decentralisation from Air Force Headquarters to Commands to be as complete as is practicable and to include operational, administrative and financial responsibilities. Groups to be formed as necessary in each Command. Propose to form three Commands, two home defence groups and two training groups immediately in order that preliminary organisation of these formations can be pressed forward particularly in regard to selection of accommodation and staff, and to organisation of staff procedure and preparation of machinery to deal with administrative details. It is proposed to appoint a staff officer to each command and group in the first place and to leave the appointments of Commanders of these formations for discussion with CAS on his arrival. It is considered essential to commence the above organisation if adequate arrangements are to be established in time to meet the requirements of the expansion time-table for the Empire Training Scheme but before I proceed on the foregoing lines I would like this outline referred to Air Chief Marshal Burnett for his views. Suggest he might consult Air Vice-Marshal Williams.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 10th January 1940)

Burnett's reply came back the following day:

I am doubtful whether it is advisable for Australia to follow RAF Command system entirely. Australia is a vast country compared with England and unit command as suggested will be widely spread also by suggested method duplication command on station would appear unavoidable.

Training and operational units may have to be shared on same aerodromes and maintenance and perhaps personnel to start with. Also Command Headquarters would have to be close to AHQ and would cause unnecessary congestion and post officing and therefore delay apart from difficulty in finding sufficient staff officers for all purposes.

Geographical command, controlling both operation and training and maintenance within their area would appear more easily controllable for quick expansion and delegating responsibility to implement Empire Training at first. If possible I would prefer to postpone final decision until my arrival and consult Air Ministry. Williams agrees.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 11th January 1940)

Comment

In view of the speed of Burnett's reply, it would appear that Goble's proposal was given scant consideration. Unfortunately, the extent to which Williams was consulted, and the degree of influence that he had on Burnett's views is not known. However, given the rivalry between Williams and Goble, it is not hard to imagine that maybe Williams played a major part in the rejection of Goble's proposal.

BURNETT'S SOLUTION

Shortly after Sir Charles Burnett took over as Chief of the Air Staff in mid-February 1940 he proposed, and the Government accepted, an area command system for the RAAF. Under his proposal the two existing Groups were converted into area commands. These two commands, Southern Area and Central Area with headquarters in Melbourne and Sydney respectively, retained the same commanders (Air Commodores Wrigley and Cole) and area of responsibility as the two Groups that they replaced. Two further area commands were proposed for later formation; Northern Area with headquarters in Brisbane, and Western Area (or Group) with headquarters in Perth.

The detail of Burnett's proposal is set out in a Memorandum dated 26th February 1940 which was attached to War Cabinet Agendum No 53/1940:

Memorandum on the Proposed Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force to Meet the Expansion Visualised as Necessary During the War

General

1. The Royal Australian Air Force is faced with a large expansion to meet war commitments, including development and maintenance of the Home Defence Force, training of aircrews under the Empire Scheme, and active participation in the war overseas. To meet these commitments, it is clear that the organisation contemplated before the war for the development program will not meet the case and must be radically altered. The first and most essential step in re-organisation is one which will permit of decentralisation from Air Force Headquarters on a large scale, so that the latter organisation is free to concentrate on major policy.

System of Command

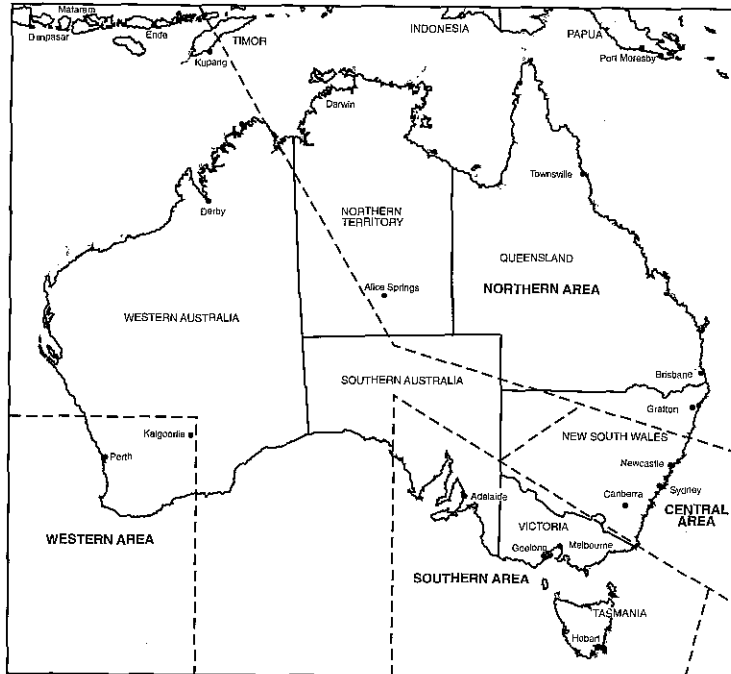
2. The system of command must remain flexible, as only experience can show the most efficient line of development. Bearing this in mind, it is proposed to divide the Service into four Areas, two of which will function immediately. The four Area Commands will be as under:

Southern Area – will comprise all units in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and the Southern Riverina.

Central Area – will comprise all units in New South Wales, except the Southern Riverina and Northern New South Wales.

Northern Area – will comprise all units in Northern New South Wales, Queensland, the Northern Territory, and Papua.

Western Area – will comprise all units in Western Australia.



3. The provisional Area Command boundaries are shown on Map 3.1.

4. The general system underlying the allocation of training units to areas is that each area will be entirely self-contained as regards training – that is, a pupil will remain in the area from the time he enters the initial training school until such time as he proceeds to the embarkation depot for service overseas. This has the advantage of reducing travelling time to a minimum and makes possible closer supervision of the progress of pupils through the various schools. The grouping has also been conditioned by the spread of population throughout the Commonwealth and the use of existing stations and aerodromes as sites for service flying training schools in order to save time and money.

5. Owing to the large number of units in each Area, it may be necessary, at a certain stage in the expansion, to form subordinate groups but this will be decided later according to experience.

Formation of Area Headquarters

6. The existing Nos 1 and 2 Groups will be embodied in the Area organisation outlined above, and the headquarters of each group will form the nucleus of an Area Headquarters. As from 1st March 1940, No 1 Group Headquarters, Melbourne, will become Headquarters Southern Area, whilst No 2 Group Headquarters will become Headquarters Central Area. Headquarters Northern Area and Headquarters Western Area will form on dates to be fixed, about 1st September 1940.

Allocation of Existing Units to Areas

7. All units in existence in Victoria and South Australia on 1st March 1940 will automatically come under the control of Headquarters Southern Area, whilst all units in New South Wales will likewise come under the control of Central Area Headquarters. Until the Northern Area is formed, all units in Queensland will come under the temporary control of Central Area Headquarters, whilst units in the Northern Territory and Papua will remain temporarily directly under Air Force Headquarters. Units in Western Australia will remain directly under Air Force Headquarters until the Western Area is constituted.

Responsibility of Area Commanders

8. Area commanders will be responsible for the training and administration of the units in their areas and for operations, except where any particular phase is specifically reserved to Air Force Headquarters.

General Reservations of Responsibility

9. The following general reservations of responsibility will apply. These reservations will be reviewed from time to time.

i. **Operations.** Operations in the defence of trade will be controlled through the Combined Operations Room at Air Force Headquarters, but all orders and instructions normally will be issued to Area Headquarters.

ii. **Training.**

a. *Bombing and Gunnery Schools.* Air Force Headquarters will be responsible for technical supervision and standards.

b. *Technical Training of Airmen.* Air Force Headquarters will be responsible for technical supervision and standards.

c. *Central Flying School.* As Central Flying School will be training instructors for service in all Areas, the unit will come directly under Air Force Headquarters for training.

iii. **Maintenance.** Maintenance units will be directly under Air Force Headquarters for technical control.

iv. **Recruiting.** Recruiting centres will be directly under Air Force Headquarters for recruiting policy.

10. Reservations are not to be taken by Area Commanders as relieving them of all responsibility. Area commanders are expected to take an interest in the reserved subjects and assist in the work so far as their staff strengths will allow in addition to the administration for which they are entirely responsible.

Group Pools

11. If the situation on the war fronts continues as at present, or does not develop to the extent visualised, it is possible that we may be asked to hold our trained crews in Australia. In this event Area pools would need to be formed, where an endeavour would be made to keep the crews in air practice. No special arrangements are being made for such pools, however, but plans will be developed to meet this situation should it arise.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 53/1940 - The Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 27th February 1940; and, War Cabinet Minute No (192), dated 28th February 1940)

REVISED AIR BOARD

Concurrently with the proposal to change the RAAF's command system, the Minister for Air submitted to the War Cabinet changes in the structure of the Air Board. War Cabinet approved the changes, which entailed the deletion of the Air Member for Supply and the introduction of two new members, an Air Member for Organisation and Equipment and a Director General of Supply and Production.

War Cabinet also approved the following appointments:

Chief of the Air Staff

Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles S Burnett, KCB, CBE, DSO

Air Member for Organisation and Equipment

Air Marshal R Williams, CB, CBE, DSO

Air Member for Personnel

Air Commodore W H Anderson, CBE, DFC

Director General of Supply and Production

still under consideration

Finance Member

M C Langslow Esq, MBE

A short time later, Mr R Lawson, the Chief Engineer of the Postmaster-General's Department was appointed as Director General of Supply and Production.

The Secretary, Department of Air was an ex-officio member of the Air Board.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 52/1940 - Reorganisation of the Air Board, dated 26th February 1940; and, War Cabinet Minute No (191), dated 28th February 1940)

The revised Air Board was a close copy of the (British) Air Council of the day, the members of which were:

- The Secretary of State for Air (equivalent: Minister for Air)
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Air (assistant minister)
- Chief of the Air Staff
- Air Member for Personnel
- *Air Member for Supply and Organisation*
- Air Member for Production and Development
- Permanent Under-Secretary for Air (equivalent: Secretary, Department of Air)
- finance member (a civilian, but without the formal title of Finance Member)



Air Board, February 1940

(Left to Right) Mr M C Langslow, Finance Minister; Air Commodore W H Anderson, Air Member for Supply; Air Vice-Marshal R Williams, Air Member for Organisation and Equipment Elect; Mr F J Mulrooney, Secretary to the Air Board; The Hon J V Fairbairn, MP, Minister for Air; Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, RAF, Chief of the Air Staff; Group Captain W D Bostock, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff; Air Commodore J C Russell, RAF, Air Member for Personnel.

[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Comment

The two reorganisation proposals - that of Goble, which was rejected, and that of Burnett, which was accepted - represent the two sides in the classic debate over military organisation: whether commands should be organised on functional or geographic lines.

Under Goble's proposal there was no suggestion that the Air Board should be enlarged. Indeed, part of the thrust of his proposal was that wide powers should be delegated from Air Force Headquarters to the three Command Headquarters. However, under Burnett's proposal, such delegation was not possible; hence his proposal for an enlargement of the Air Board, and consequent considerable enlargement of Air Force Headquarters.

The prime consequence of Burnett's area command system was to retain the high degree of centralised control that had been a feature of the prewar RAAF. While such a high degree of centralisation may have been appropriate given the small size of the prewar RAAF, as the organisation grew so did the scope for greater authority for various matters of policy to be delegated to the subordinate air officers commanding. Unfortunately, the area command system inhibited such delegation and reinforced the already existing culture of centralism.

Also, notwithstanding a degree of hype in the War Cabinet Agendum papers, Burnett's proposal was in effect a continuation of the system already in place. No 1 Group in Melbourne and No 2 Group in Sydney were merely given a change in name. Even the later formation of two additional Area Commands (Western and Northern) had been forecast in the original proposal to form the two area based Group Commands, which was drawn up in June 1938 when Williams was still CAS.

Of particular interest in Burnett's proposal is the number of items reserved for direct control by Air Force Headquarters [*See paragraphs 9 and 10 above*]. Delegation of such matters may have been difficult under an area command system, but it also reflects a general reluctance to delegate that persisted throughout the war.

While Goble's proposal was clearly far more radical than Burnett's, it did not appear to raise any particular concern with the Minister for Air when first submitted to him. It was only the imminent arrival of the newly appointed Chief of the Air Staff that caused him to delay approval.

When viewed in hindsight, Goble's proposed reorganisation was soundly based, and had it been introduced in early 1940, would have greatly improved the effectiveness of the RAAF and saved it a great deal of subsequent pain and hardship. This issue is discussed in detail in the Overview at the end of this book.

STAFF CHANGES AT AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS

The reorganisation of the Air Board in March 1940 brought with it few changes in senior appointments at Air Force Headquarters. The most significant appointment was of Group Captain G Jones to the key post of Director of Training. Jones' previous post of Assistant Chief of the Air Staff was disestablished.

Comment

It is of interest to note at this stage that the two key figures in the higher command of the RAAF in the latter part of the war held two of the key staff posts at Air Force Headquarters. As Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, then Group Captain, Bostock had staff responsibility for the conduct of operation by the RAAF, mainly in the defence of trade, and for the development of the Home Defence Force (the operational arm of the RAAF). Similarly, as Director of Training, Jones had staff responsibility for the development of the Empire Air Training Scheme (the training arm of the RAAF).

In late 1939 both Bostock and Jones were sent overseas on two key air missions; Bostock went with the Minister for Supply, Mr Casey, to London on a procurement mission; and Jones with the Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn, to Ottawa to negotiate the Empire Air Training Scheme Agreement.

Aside from Group Captain E Harrison who retired in April 1940, Bostock and Jones were the two most senior officers on the Air Force List, after the members of the Air Board, at Air Force Headquarters, from September 1939 through to May 1942. Other officers, not on the Air Board, but senior to Bostock and Jones in the main occupied command posts in the field, except Air Commodore McNamara, who was the RAAF's Air Liaison Officer in London.

4

Functional Commands

EXTENSION FOR THE CAS

Before discussing the organisational changes that took place in the RAAF's command structure in August 1941, it is necessary, in the interests of the time sequence of events, to report on the extensions that took place in Sir Charles Burnett's term of office as Chief of the Air Staff.

Sir Charles Burnett's original appointment was for twelve months from January 1940. However, in July 1940, the War Cabinet, in Minute No (392) 'on the recommendation of the Minister for Air decided to extend the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett for another year'. The Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn, then wrote to his opposite number in the British Government, the Secretary of State for Air Sir Archibald Sinclair, seeking the extension. In August, Sinclair replied with his agreement.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Secretary of State for Air, dated 9th July 1940; Letter from the Secretary of State for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 27th August 1940)

In August 1941, shortly before the fall of first the Menzies, then the short-lived Fadden Governments, the then Minister for Air, Mr J McEwen, sought a further extension of Sir Charles Burnett's appointment, to 30th June 1942. In subsequent negotiations Sir Charles agreed to serve on until 30th April 1942, 'when he anticipates his work (would) be sufficiently advanced to enable him to hand over'. All of this was agreed to before the Curtin Labor Government took office in early October 1941.

DEATH OF MR FAIRBAIRN

On 13th August 1940, the Minister for Air, Mr Fairbairn, was killed in an air accident, when the aircraft in which he was flying, an RAAF Hudson, crashed on approach to landing at Canberra. Also killed in the crash were the Minister for the Army, Brigadier Street, the Vice-President of the Executive Council, Sir Henry Gullett, the Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Brudenell White, Mr Fairbairn's private secretary, Mr Elford, and the crew.

Mr Fairbairn was succeeded temporarily as Minister for Air by Mr A W Fadden, until the appointment to the post of Mr John McEwen, on 20th October 1940. McEwen retained the post until the change of Government to the Labor Party in October 1941.

Comment

Some commentators have viewed Fairbairn's death as a particular blow for the RAAF. For example, Air Marshal Williams observed that he was 'quite sure that the history of the RAAF during the following years would have been different had Mr Fairbairn remained with us'.¹ Certainly, Fairbairn was well acquainted with military aviation and had shown a strong affiliation with the RAAF and its best interests. He had been a supporter of Williams in the face of opposition within the Government to his reinstatement as Chief of the Air Staff. It may have been that, had Fairbairn remained in control, the maintenance of the RAAF's identity in relation to its contribution through the EATS to the RAF would have been more vigorously pursued. However, against this is the lack of any evidence of action in this regard before his death in August 1940. It should also be noted that Fairbairn apparently, if not supported at least acquiesced in, seeking an extension for Burnett, rather than having Williams resume the post as CAS. Perhaps Williams' performance in that first six months of his return from the United Kingdom, during which time he reportedly clashed frequently with Burnett, caused a cooling of Fairbairn's support for him.

BUSINESS MEMBER

In December 1940, following similar action in relation to the Military Board, a new position on the Air Board was created for a Business Member. He was given wide powers to oversee and advise on matters of a commercial and financial nature related to such things as: the provision and handling of stores, repair and overhaul, transportation and works. Air Force Regulation 30 provided that he was to be 'consulted on all matters relating to [these matters] and no action contrary to his written advice shall be taken by the Board or a member of the Board without the approval in writing of the Minister'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (672) - Agendum No 272/1940 - Business Member, Air Board, dated 12th December 1940)

Mr W Sydney Jones, who had been a member of the Government's Board of Business Administration, was appointed as Business Member and held the appointment until January 1944.

NEW COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS

On 10th July 1941, the Minister for Air, Mr McEwen, advised the War Cabinet that:

As a result of the greatly increased numbers of training schools now operating and growth of training activities generally, as well as of the recently approved expansion of the Home Defence Force from nineteen to thirty-two squadron basis with ancillary units, I have now approved, upon the recommendation of the Chief of the Air Staff, of the following changes in the organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force on a functional basis:

¹ Williams, R. *These Are Facts*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, p 271.

| Previous Organisation | Recently Approved Organisation |
|--|--|
| Southern Area Headquarters, Melbourne | SE Area Operational Headquarters, Melbourne |
| | No 1 Training Group Headquarters, Melbourne |
| | South Australian Training Group Headquarters, Adelaide |
| Central Area Headquarters, Sydney | No 2 Training Group Headquarters, Sydney |
| Northern Area Headquarters, Brisbane | Northern Operational Group Headquarters, Townsville |
| Western Area Headquarters, Perth (Fremantle) | No change |



Air Board, mid-1941

(Left to Right): Mr R Lawson, Director General of Supply and Production; Air Marshal R Williams, Air Member for Organisation and Equipment; Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, RAF, Chief of the Air Staff; Air Commodore W H Anderson, Air Member for Personnel; Mr W S Jones (?), Business Member.

[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

These changes were brought into effect on 2nd August 1941, but with some modification to the advice given to the War Cabinet three weeks earlier. As described in a contemporary document 'the higher organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, which had hitherto been on a geographical basis, was reorganised, involving the division of stations and units into groups on a functional basis'.

The new system of command 'involved the constitution of seven groups – two operational groups (known as "Areas" to fit in with the operational nomenclature adopted by the Army and Navy), four training groups and a composite group'.

The new command organisation was as follows:

No 1 (Training) Group, Victoria – Training units in Victoria and Tasmania.

No 2 (Training) Group, New South Wales – Training units in Central New South Wales.

No 3 (Training) Group, Queensland – Training units in Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

No 4 (Training) Group, South Australia – Training units in South Australia.

Southern Area – Operational units in Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia.

Northern Area – Operational units in Queensland, Northern Territory and the Pacific Islands.

Western Area – This is a composite formation, embracing operational and training units in Western Australia.

However, in the event, Nos 3 and 4 (Training) Groups were not formed, and the units in these groups came under No 2 and No 1 (Training) Group, respectively.

The document also outlined the responsibilities of the Area and Group Headquarters:

5. Subject to such modifications as may be indicated from time to time, Area and Group Headquarters is responsible for the command, training, administration and general efficiency of units in its area or group, and for their operational employment in accordance with the higher direction of the Air Board.

6. In general, whilst the Training Group Headquarters retain full responsibility for training, Air Force Headquarters exercises a close supervision of those schools and units which are responsible for training of instructors and specialists for the Service as a whole, for example, the Central Flying School, the Armament School and the Signal School. Air Force Headquarters allots the output of such schools and units.

Comment

Although the organisational changes of August 1941 were claimed to be a change to a functional organisation, this was so only to a limited extent. The area basis of the organisation remained, with the only change being the introduction of functional formations at the command level, rather than at the level of the force as a whole. Delegation of powers from Air Force Headquarters remained a difficulty. A true functional organisation would have had functional headquarters to control the various functional areas and groups. Nor was any attention given to the maintenance function, the effective control of which remained with Air Force Headquarters.

CHANGE OF PRIME MINISTER

On 29th August 1941, Mr Arthur Fadden, Treasurer and leader of the Country Party, took over as Prime Minister from Mr Menzies who remained in the Government as Minister for Defence Coordination. Other Ministers retained their previous portfolios.

FORMATION OF OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS

In August 1941 the Government accepted a proposal from the Air Board, and agreed to by the Air Ministry, that a headquarters be set up in London 'to deal with the many problems affecting RAAF personnel and the Empire Air Training Scheme, and to safeguard the interests of Australian officers and airmen serving overseas'.

(See Documents: Australian Air War Effort, 2nd Edition, Chapters X and XVI, dated 15th September 1941)

The idea of establishing either a base or a headquarters in the United Kingdom, which had first been mooted in late 1939, and which was featured in Goble's January 1940 reorganisation proposals [See Chapter 3 and, in particular, Figure 3.1], was a long time coming (*and well overdue*). In November 1940, the Air Board agreed that a small staff, headed by Group Captain De La Rue, should be sent to UK. This proposal was, however, in effect vetoed by the Secretary of the Department of Air, Major Langslow, who pointed out that, under the EATS Agreement, the UK Government was responsible for the administration of RAAF personnel overseas. After failing to obtain any support for the proposal from the Air Ministry and the High Commissioner in London, Mr Bruce, the proposal was dropped. Instead a small staff of junior officers and airmen were sent to UK to work in the RAF Central Records Office.²

During the following year, Air Marshal Williams, as Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, continued to argue for the establishment of some form of RAAF administrative organisation overseas to look after the interests of the many thousands of Australian airmen serving with the RAF.³

² Gillison D, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939-1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p 113.

³ *Ibid*, p 114.

Then in May 1941 the War Cabinet, after some preliminary moves by the Air Board, agreed to reopen negotiations with the Air Ministry for the formation of an RAAF headquarters in London, to be headed by a suitable senior RAAF officer. Initially the proposal was for a headquarters to deal exclusively with EATS matters, while leaving the Air Liaison Officer in London to deal with other matters related to contact between the RAAF, and the RAF, Ministry of Aircraft Production and the like. This was opposed by the High Commissioner in London, who now favoured the setting up of an Overseas Headquarters with authority over all matters, EATS and otherwise.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (1070) - Control of RAAF Personnel Serving in Units Formed Overseas under the Empire Air Training Scheme, dated 9th May 1941)

On 30th August 1941, the Minister for Air, Mr McEwen, advised Air Marshal Williams that he had been appointed as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Overseas Headquarters. Subsequently, the Headquarters was formed in London on 1st December 1941, with Williams as AOC and Air Commodore McNamara, who had been Air Liaison Officer in London since January 1938, as Deputy AOC.



The Hon. John McEwen, Minister for Air; and, Air Marshal Richard Williams, Air Officer Commanding, Overseas Headquarters Elect, September 1941.

[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Comment

The establishment of a headquarters in London to look after the interests of the many thousands of Australian airmen serving with the RAF, then and in the future, was an important victory for those in the RAAF who, like Williams, had an interest in preserving their Australian identity, and in preventing their complete subservience to the interests of the RAF.

The appointment of Williams as AOC, in lieu of, for example, McNamara who shown himself overly ready to 'bend' to the wishes of the Air Ministry, made a great deal of sense. He was both a great zealot for the RAAF cause and the RAAF's most highly ranking officer. However, his appointment at this time also had implications related to the appointment of a new Chief of the Air Staff to replace Burnett, whose term in Australia was coming to an end. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 9 and 11.

CHANGE IN GOVERNMENT

On 7th October 1941, the Government in Australia changed hands, with the Labor leader Mr John Curtin taking over from Mr Arthur Fadden. Mr Arthur Drakeford took over as Minister for Air from Mr John McEwen. The change of Government, however, brought little immediate change to the higher direction of the war effort in general and the RAAF in particular. As with Mr Menzies previously, Mr Curtin became Minister for Defence Coordination as well as Prime Minister.

SENIOR OFFICER PROMOTIONS

One of the earlier administrative acts of the incoming Minister for Air was to approve the promotion of Williams, from Acting to Temporary Air Marshal, with effect back to 11th March 1940. Action on this matter had been initiated by the previous Minister for Air, Mr J McEwen, who wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Menzies, in August 1941 pointing out that the War Cabinet, in approving Williams' return to Australia in January 1940, had agreed that he be granted temporary rank. However, due to an oversight only acting rank had been approved and he, McEwen, intended to rectify the matter. Thus Mr Drakeford, in approving Williams' promotion was merely completing an action started by his predecessor.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 26th August 1941)

At the same time, and also presumably on the initiative of the previous Government, Temporary Air Commodore W D Bostock was promoted to the substantive rank of Air Vice-Marshal, with effect from 1st October 1941, and (substantive) Air Commodore W H Anderson, who had replaced Williams as Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, was promoted to the acting rank of Air Vice-Marshal, with effect from 10th September 1941. Anderson at the time was number three on the Air Force List, behind Williams and Goble, and Bostock was number seven. With this promotion, Bostock superseded both Anderson and Wrigley (who had been promoted to acting Air Vice-Marshal in April 1941 and who was Air Member for Personnel), as well as Air Commodores Cole and McNamara, to become number three in overall seniority order.

Comment

It is more than likely that the promotions of Williams, Bostock and Anderson, although formally approved by Drakeford on 6th November 1941, had been set in train by the previous Government. All were consistent with decisions by the previous Government on the higher direction of the RAAF.

The appointment of Williams as AOC Overseas Headquarters and the promotions of Bostock and Anderson are of significance in relation to the appointment of a Chief of the Air Staff to replace Burnett. Clearly, the Menzies/Fadden Government had decided against appointing Williams and rather had selected Bostock as the next CAS. Here there are several pointers. The first is the appointment of Williams as AOC Overseas Headquarters in London just five months before the agreed date for the termination of Burnett's appointment as CAS.

The second is Bostock's promotion to the *substantive* rank of Air Vice-Marshal at a time when other air officers, notably Anderson and Wrigley, were only given acting rank. On the outbreak of war, all substantive promotions, except to the ranks of Pilot Officer and Flying Officer, ceased. From then on, until the end of the war, temporary rank was used in lieu to determine seniority order. The only other exceptions were the substantive promotions to Air Vice-Marshal of Goble in 1940 and Jones, when he became CAS, in May 1942.

The third pointer to the proposition that Bostock had been preselected by the Menzies/Fadden Government to replace Burnett comes from reported comment by Menzies and McEwen in an Advisory War Council meeting held on 6th January 1942.

(See Documents Chapter 9: Advisory War Council Minute No (654) - Return of Air Marshal Williams, dated 6th January 1942)

SENIOR APPOINTMENTS DECEMBER 1941

On the eve of the Pacific War, in early December 1941, the senior appointments in the RAAF were:

| | |
|--------------|--|
| CAS | Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett |
| AMOE | Air Vice-Marshal W H Anderson |
| AMP | Air Vice-Marshal H N Wrigley |
| DCAS | Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock (on a visit to Middle East) |
| A/DCAS | Air Commodore J E Hewitt |
| DT | Air Commodore G Jones |
| AOC SA | Air Commodore F M Bladin |
| AOC NA | Air Commodore F W F Lukis |
| AOC WA | Air Commodore H F De La Rue |
| AOC No 1 TG | Air Commodore R J Brownell |
| AOC No 2 TG | Air Commodore D E L Wilson |
| AOC OHQ | Air Marshal R Williams |
| DAOC OHQ | Air Commodore F H McNamara |
| ALO Ottawa | Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble |
| RAF Exchange | Air Commodore A T Cole |

In addition, Air Commodore G H Boyce, had just arrived in Australia on exchange from the RAF.

Within six months this set of appointments was to undergo a marked change.

Section One

Conclusion

The Royal Australian Air Force during the period of the war up to the entry of Japan in December 1941 was dominated by Britain's Royal Air Force and the requirements of the war against Germany and Italy. Led by a senior RAF officer, the main focus of the Service was on the Empire Air Training Scheme and the subsequent provision of aircrew to fight, with the Royal Air Force, in Europe and the Middle East. This focus in turn resulted in a structure that was matched to the requirements of air and ground training, rather than operations.

The Area organisation introduced by Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett reinforced the innate tendency towards the centralisation that had been a feature of the small prewar Air Force. Such operational activities, as were undertaken around Australia in the protection of seaborne trade, were controlled, not from Area Headquarters, but from Air Force Headquarters in Melbourne through the Central War Room at Victoria Barracks. This, coupled with Burnett's resistance to allowing senior RAAF officers to gain operational command experience with the RAF, meant that when war came to the Pacific, the RAAF was, from the point of view of higher command (and much else besides), ill-prepared to meet the challenge, both in terms of its organisation and its senior leadership.

Section Two

The American Connection

Introduction

The five-month period from the outbreak of the Pacific War on 8th December 1941 to early May 1942 was one of great moment for the Australian Defence establishment, and especially for the Royal Australian Air Force. It was a period of change and adaptation to the circumstances arising from Japan's, and the United States', entry into the war. First there was the problem of how best to meet the new threat as Japan pressed inexorably southward to the very shores of Australia.

Then there was the problem of the change in the alliance relationship caused by Britain and the United States deciding to join together in unison to fight both Germany and Japan. This in turn led to the allocation of the Pacific Theatre as the prime responsibility of the United States, and the decision to use Australia as a prime base for the counter offensive against Japan. For the Royal Australian Air Force this meant having to learn to work in particular with the United States Army Air Forces, an organisation whose structure and philosophies were so different from those of the Royal Air Force.

The final problem for the RAAF was the selection of a new leader to take the place of Sir Charles Burnett who was due to return to the United Kingdom at the end of April 1942.

Chapter 5 deals with the higher direction of the war at Allied and National level. Then Chapters 6, 7 and 8 cover the preliminary negotiations for an alliance between the RAAF and the USAAF in Australia. Chapter 9 in turn deals with the preliminaries of the long and drawn out quest for a replacement for Sir Charles Burnett. To conclude this section, Chapter 10 deals with the final, fateful decision on the organisation, and Chapter 11 with the final, fateful decision on the leadership.

5

Higher Command of the War

At this point in the narrative it is necessary to make a diversion to discuss the Allied higher command arrangements both before and after the entry of Japan, and the United States, into the war in December 1941. These arrangements are of particular significance in that they formed the background against which the Australian Government grappled with issues related to the higher command of the RAAF during the Pacific War period.

BRITISH LEADERSHIP

Before December 1941 it was Britain, as leader of the British Commonwealth and Empire, that led the struggle against the Axis Powers, at least as far as Australia was concerned. The only significant exception to this was the Soviet Union's war with Germany on what was known as the Eastern Front.

In Britain the war was run essentially by the British War Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff, the First Sea Lord, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and the Chief of the Air Staff. Military operations in the field were commanded by single Service Commanders-in-Chief for the various theatres. There was no question of any one single person being in overall military command, either at the national or theatre level.

In the Middle East there were three Commanders-in-Chief, one for each Service, who generally worked in close harmony with each other. Thus inter-Service coordination was obtained by cooperation, not unitary command.

In the Far East much the same situation applied, except that in October 1940, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham was appointed as Commander-in-Chief, Far East, with operational control of British Army and Air Forces in the area from Burma, through Malaya to Hong Kong. Command of the Royal Navy forces in this same area was vested in the Commander-in-Chief, China [*Station*]. On 2nd December 1941 the Commander-in-Chief, China (Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton) was replaced by Admiral Sir Tom Phillips, as Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet. The C-in-Cs Far East and Eastern Fleet were given joint responsibility 'for the conduct of (British) strategy in the Far East and for the coordination of plans with our allies and potential allies in accordance with instructions issued to you from time to time'.¹

As a part of the British Commonwealth, Australia accepted British leadership of the war effort, but was concerned throughout the period leading up to December 1941 with her inability to have what she considered her rightful say as a sovereign nation in the higher councils of war.

At the political level Australia's prime link with the British Government was through her High Commissioner in London, Mr Stanley Bruce. Although as a High Commissioner, Bruce, himself a former Prime Minister of Australia, was most

¹ Kirby, S W, *The War Against Japan, Volume I, The Loss of Singapore*, HMSO, London, 1957, p 485.

effective, he nevertheless lacked the necessary authority to make important decisions on behalf of the Australian Government, without prior reference to Canberra.

Before the war there had been a broad understanding that, in the event of war, an Imperial War Cabinet would be formed to give effect to the Imperial war effort. The Dominion representatives on this Cabinet were to be the Dominion Prime Ministers, who alone would have the authority to make the necessary decisions on behalf of their respective Governments. In the event, the practicalities of such an arrangement worked against its adoption. However, when Prime Minister Menzies went to London in early 1941, he was readily admitted to the British War Cabinet. Following Menzies' visit, in September 1941 the Fadden Government sent former Country Party leader Sir Earle Page to London as Australia's Accredited Representative on the British War Cabinet. Subsequently, even though the Curtin Labor Government took office in October 1941, Page was retained in his post.

Australia's prime political concerns in the period of the war up to December 1941 were the employment of her troops in the Middle East and the defence of the Empire in the Far East. In committing troops to British command in the Middle East, Australia imposed certain restrictions related to the breakup of formations and gave to the Australian commander, General Blamey, authority to deal directly with the Australian Government, should he deem it necessary in the national interest.

For some years in the lead up to the Second World War, Britain's strategy for the defence of the Empire in the Far East had rested on the development of a naval base at Singapore. Successive Australian Governments had acquiesced in this strategy and had accordingly built the nation's defences around the concept of Australia providing for its own defence only against 'raids', while at the same time making a contribution to overall Empire defence. With this strategy went acceptance of British leadership in the conduct of Empire military activities. However, as the threat of war with Japan grew, especially during 1941, the Australia Government became increasingly concerned at the trend in events wherein Britain, because of pressing demands related to the war against Germany and Italy, fell well behind with plans to build up the defences of Singapore.

ANGLO-AMERICAN POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP

With the entry of Japan and the United States into the war in December 1941, the leadership of the war against the Axis Powers underwent a major change.

Late in December 1941, Prime Minister Churchill crossed the Atlantic in company with his military Chiefs of Staff to discuss the future conduct of the war with President Roosevelt and his military chiefs in Washington. This series of conferences and meetings, which were code-named 'Arcadia' set the course for the future Allied direction of the war. And, while not all aspects of this relationship were clearly decided during the course of Arcadia, key decisions taken during and in the months closely following it set up arrangements that lasted for the remainder of the war.

The first item decided at Arcadia was that Britain and the United States, in an equal partnership, would take prime responsibility for the conduct of the war against the Axis Powers. This partnership also became very much a personal partnership between Churchill and Roosevelt.

As to the involvement of the minor partners, such as Australia, Roosevelt insisted, and Churchill agreed, that Britain would act on behalf of the British Dominions and the various European Governments-in-Exile then resident in Britain. For the conduct of the war in the Pacific, this in turn led to the formation in London of

a Pacific War Council, which was chaired by Churchill and which had representatives from Australia, New Zealand and the Netherlands. This Council had its first meeting on 10th February 1942, with Sir Earle Page representing Australia.

The formation of the Pacific War Council in London did not fully meet the wishes of Australia and the other parties for a say in the conduct of a war which now involved a direct threat to Australia. Even at this stage it was clear that the United States would be taking the lead in the war against Japan in the Pacific and that the best place to try to exert an influence in the councils of war would be in Washington. Accordingly Australia pressed for, and succeeded in having set up, a second Pacific War Council, in Washington. This was chaired by the President himself, and had its first meeting on 1st April 1942. Australia was represented by its Minister to the United States, Sir Owen Dixon.

The high hopes that Australia had of being able to influence the conduct of the war in the Pacific through either, or both, of the Pacific War Councils was not realised. Neither developed into a policy making body. Indeed as a British war historian put it: 'the direction of the war was, on the British side, now substantially in the hands of Mr Churchill and the Chiefs of Staff, with occasional reference to the Defence Committee and Cabinet, and it was out of the question that they should share their responsibility and authority'. Much the same could be said for the Pacific War Council (Washington) which merely gave its participants an opportunity to put their Governments' views direct to President Roosevelt.

COMBINED CHIEFS OF STAFF

While the overall political direction of the war was very much in the hands of President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, the executive direction of military operations came from what developed as the Combined [*British and American*] Chiefs of Staff. This body, which held regular scheduled meetings in Washington:

... consisted of the United States Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff, or in their absence from Washington, their duly appointed representatives. For the British this meant dual representation. Their members of the CCS were Admiral Sir Dudley Pond, General Sir Alan Brooke, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, representing the three Services, and Field Marshal Sir John Dill representing Mr Churchill as Minister of Defense. Sir John Dill (remained) in Washington after the departure of his three colleagues, together with the British Joint Staff Mission – Admiral Sir Charles Little, General Sir Colville Wemyss and Air Marshal Arthur T Harris – who acted on behalf of the British Chiefs of Staff. The United States members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff were Admiral Harold R Stark, Chief of Naval Operations; Admiral Ernest J King, Commander in Chief, United States Fleet; General George C Marshall, Chief of Staff, US Army; and Lieutenant General H H Arnold, Chief AAF [*Army Air Force*] and Deputy Chief of Staff, US Army.²

² Craven, W F and Cate, J E, *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume I, Plans and Early Operations January 1939 to August 1942*, University of Chicago Press, 1948, p 253.

The Combined Chiefs of Staff were responsible, 'under the heads of the two governments, (for) the formulation and execution of policies and plans concerning: (1) the strategic conduct of the war; (2) a broad program of production conceived in terms of that strategy; (3) allocation of raw materials and weapons; and (4) assignment of shipping for personnel and materiel'.³

For dealing with matters that were the responsibility of the United States alone, the American members of the Combined Chiefs of Staff constituted the [US] Joint Chiefs of Staff.

THE ABDA COMMAND

The most important immediate development flowing from the Arcadia Conference was the setting up of a unified command to meet the then pressing needs of the war in the Far East.

The idea for this command came from General Marshall, who, notwithstanding the initial reluctance of Admiral King and the British Chiefs of Staff, convinced first President Roosevelt, then Prime Minister Churchill and the others, that unity of command was essential in the circumstances of the time.

President Roosevelt proposed, and Prime Minister Churchill accepted, that a South-West Pacific command be formed and that the then (British) Commander-in-Chief, India, General Sir Archibald Wavell, should be 'appointed Commander-in-Chief, or if preferred Supreme Commander, of all United States, British, British Empire and Dutch forces of the land, sea and air who may be assigned by the Governments concerned to that Theatre'.⁴ United States Major General George H Brett, who had recently arrived in Australia to take command of US Army Forces in Australia, was appointed Deputy Commander-in-Chief.

The Australian Government was advised of the proposal to form the South-West Pacific Command in a cablegram from Mr Churchill on 29th December 1941. Included in the text was a statement that General Wavell 'would receive his orders from an appropriate joint body who will be responsible to' Mr Churchill and the President. At a War Cabinet meeting the following day, the Australian Government agreed to the proposal to form the South-West Pacific Command, adding that it was expected that Australia would be included in the composition of the 'appropriate joint body'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (1631) – Coordination of Allied Operations and Strategy in the Pacific, dated 30th December 1941)

Wavell's directive as Supreme Commander ABDA Area, as the South-West Pacific Command became known, was issued on 3rd January 1942, on behalf of the American, British, Dutch and Australian Governments. As Supreme Commander, Wavell was 'directly responsible to the ABDA Governments through' the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. The CCS 'will constitute (the) agency for developing and submitting recommendations for decision by the President of the United States and the British Prime Minister and Minister of Defence'.

³ *Ibid*, p 254.

⁴ Gwyer, J M A, *Grand Strategy*, Volume III, Part I, June 1941 – August 1942, HMSO, London, 1964, p 370.

Of particular relevance to Australia in Wavell's directive was the following: 'Since London has machinery for consulting with Dominion Governments, and since (the) Dutch Government is in London, the British Government will be responsible for obtaining their views and agreement for inclusion in advice to Washington'.

(See Documents: Directive to the Supreme Commander, ABDA Area, dated 3rd January 1942)

Wavell's Command stretched from Burma, through Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies to the Philippines. Its southern boundary was the northern coast of Australia. In late January 1942 the southern boundary was extended to include a slice of the north of Australia from Onslow to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and including Darwin. The territories of Papua and Australian New Guinea lay outside the ABDA Area, even though the latter was under imminent threat of attack by Japanese forces based on the island of Truk.

Wavell was faced with an almost impossible task in having to defend a huge area with inadequate and hastily assembled forces against a powerful, well-prepared enemy. He set up his headquarters near Bandung in Java on 15th January 1942. By 25th February Malaya and Singapore had fallen, Burma had been invaded, the situation in the Philippines was hopeless and the Netherlands East Indies was about to fall. In the face of all this the ABDA Command was dissolved. Allied forces then in NEI were handed over to Dutch control and General Wavell returned to his command in India. On 8th March the Netherlands East Indies fell and shortly thereafter the rapidly advancing Japanese army entered Rangoon. In the Philippines, US General Wainwright held out until 6th May.

An outline of the ABDA area is shown on Map 5.1

US NAVAL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE PACIFIC

In parallel with the formation of the ABDA Command, the United States Fleet based in Hawaii assumed responsibility for the area of the Pacific east of the ABDA Area and north of the equator. This left Australia and New Zealand outside the established areas of Allied responsibility.⁵

AUSTRALIAN AREA

On 30th December, the Australian Minister in Washington advised the Australian Government of a proposal to establish an 'Australian Area' which would include Australia, Australian New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, the Solomons, the New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Fiji, and which would be outside the South-West Pacific theatre and the US Naval area of responsibility in the Pacific.

The Australian Chiefs of Staff examined the proposal and pointed out that its adoption 'would result in Australia and New Zealand being isolated and left to defend the Australian area without Allied assistance and with entirely inadequate Naval, Military and Air resources, thereby endangering the line of sea and air communication between the United States and Australia, upon which the defence of the South-Western Pacific mainly depends'. These views were relayed to Washington on 1st January 1942.⁶

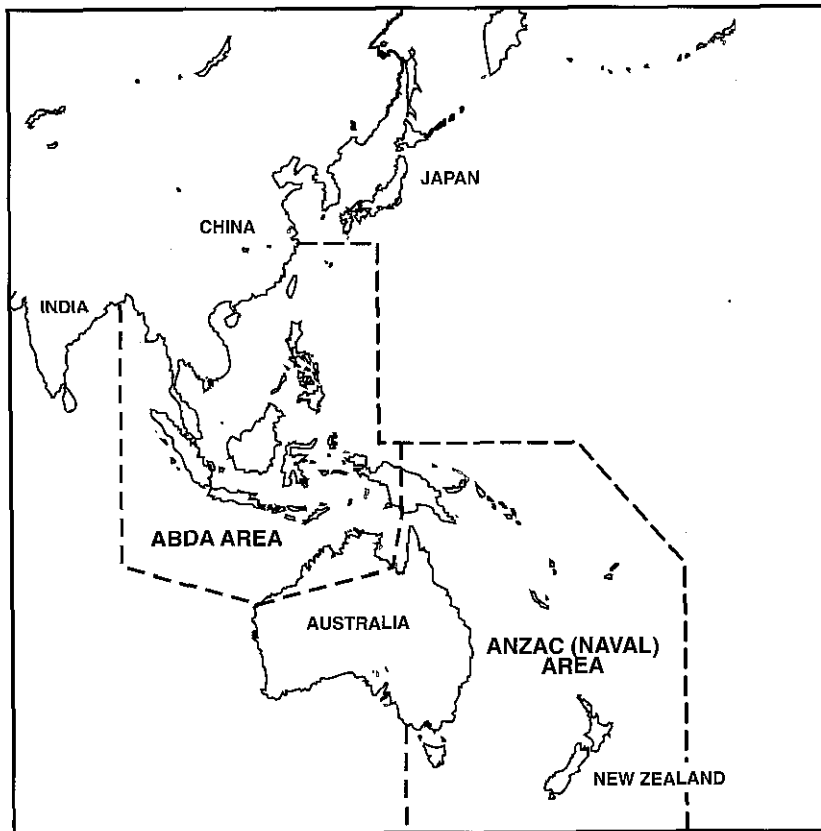
⁵ Gill, S Herman, *Royal Australian Navy, 1939 – 1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p 520.

⁶ National Archives of Australia, Series A5954/69, Item 578/1, Defence Department Paper: *History of Establishment of ABDA Area*, dated November 1942, pp 1–2.

ANZAC NAVAL AREA

The concern of the Australian and New Zealand Governments over their apparent exclusion from the Allied command system was pressed strongly with both London and Washington. Then, after some initial reluctance, Admiral King agreed to the establishment of an Anzac [Naval] Area in the north-eastern portion of the Australian Station, and of an 'Anzac Force', under the command of a US Navy admiral, to patrol the area. The Anzac Naval Area covered the east coast of Australia, east to New Zealand and Fiji, and north to the Equator, and including eastern New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides and New Caledonia. The proposed area was agreed by the Australian Government on 27th January 1942 and the Anzac Force, under the command of Vice Admiral H F Leary, US Navy, established with Headquarters in Melbourne. Rear Admiral Crace, the Rear Admiral Commanding the Australian Squadron was appointed to command the Anzac Squadron, a formation of Australian and United States warships, based initially at Suva.⁷

An outline of the Anzac (Naval) Area is shown on Map 5.1.



Map 5.1: The ABDA and Anzac Areas

⁷ Gill, *Royal Australian Navy, 1939 – 1942*.

PROPOSED ANZAC AREA

Shortly after the formation of the Anzac Naval Area, the New Zealand Government proposed the formation of a unified command in an extension of the Anzac Naval Area to cover the whole of Australia outside the ABDA Area. This was accepted by the British Chiefs of Staff and passed to Washington for consideration.⁸

This latest proposal was discussed by the Australian and New Zealand Governments at a joint meeting of the Advisory War Council, held on 28th February 1942. After expressing its dissatisfaction over arrangements for the ABDA Command, the meeting went on to propose the formation of a United States-United Kingdom-Anzac Council in Washington to oversee a new Allied command area in the South-West Pacific. The proposed Anzac Area was to be an enlargement of the Anzac Naval Area and was to cover all of Australia and its territories, New Zealand, the islands of Timor, Ambon and New Guinea and the sea area to the south and west of Australia. The President of the United States was to chair the Council, strategic direction was to be given through the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Australian and New Zealand officers were to be accredited to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and an American officer was to be appointed as Supreme Commander, with responsibilities similar to the ABDA Supreme Commander.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (801) - War Cabinet Agendum No 118/1942 - Supplements Nos 1 and 2 - Future Policy and Strategy for Conduct of the War in the Pacific, dated 28th February 1942)

PACIFIC THEATRE

In the event, the Australia/New Zealand proposal for an Anzac Area was not accepted. In lieu, President Roosevelt put forward his own proposal for control of the various theatres of war world wide. This proposal was accepted by Prime Minister Churchill and his Chiefs of Staff and put into effect, as from 4th April 1942.

The new arrangements provided for three theatres: India and Middle East, the Atlantic and the Pacific. The British assumed executive responsibility for the India and Middle East theatres, and the Americans assumed executive responsibility for the Pacific Theatre. The Atlantic theatre was to be a joint responsibility. Exclude from these arrangements was China and Soviet Union, each of which remained the responsibility of the respective governments.

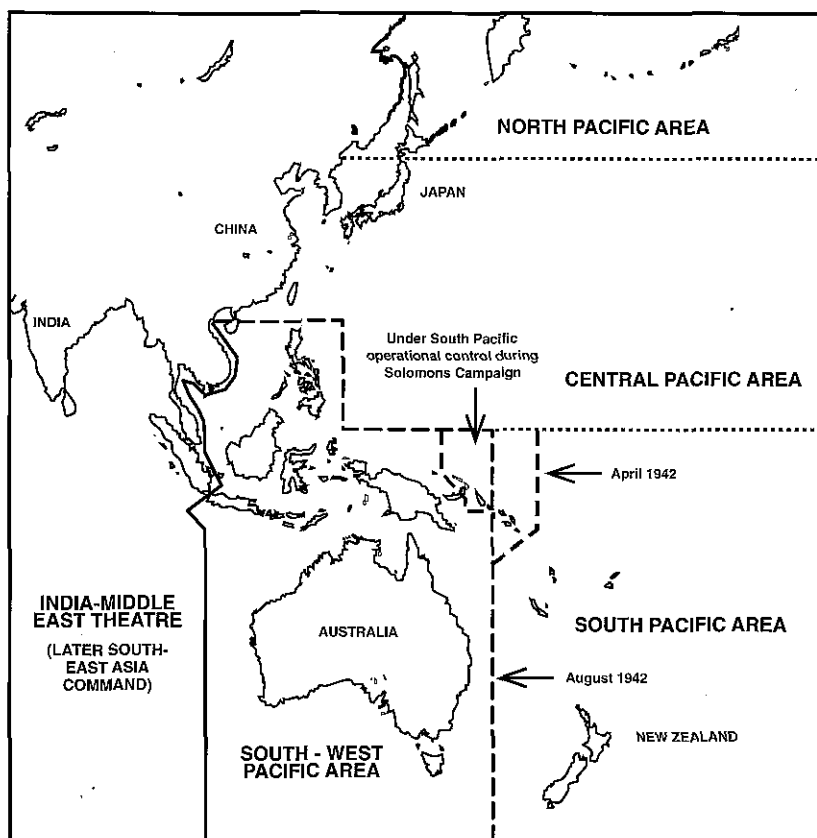
The United States in turn further divided the Pacific theatre into three areas: the South-West Pacific Area, the Pacific Ocean Area and the South-East Pacific Area. The Pacific Ocean Area was further divided into the North, Central and South Pacific Areas. On 4th April 1942, General Douglas MacArthur was appointed, initially as Supreme Commander, then Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area; and Admiral Chester Nimitz was appointed as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Area. Vice Admiral Robert L Ghormley was appointed Commander-in-Chief, South Pacific Area.

'The arrangement was that the Combined Chiefs of Staff would dictate grand strategy and the American Joint Chiefs of Staff operational strategy. The two commanders [*MacArthur and Nimitz*] would be responsible to the latter body, for whom General G C Marshall, Chief of Staff, United States Army, was executive agent

⁸ National Archives of Australia, Series A5954/69, Item 578/13, Defence Department Paper: *History of the Establishment of the SWPA*, dated 24th November 1942, p 1.

for the South-West Pacific, and Admiral E J King, Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet, for the Pacific Ocean Area.⁹

Under these arrangements, while Australia, New Guinea and the islands to Australia's north were part of the South-West Pacific Area, New Zealand, New Caledonia and the New Hebrides were part of the South Pacific Area. This division of command was of particular concern to both Australia and New Zealand who had previously worked in close cooperation in relation to the joint defence of the Tasman Sea and of the islands of the South-West Pacific. In the lead up negotiations for the formation of an American led Command both had hoped for the formation of an Anzac Area. Indeed, the initial title given to MacArthur in Australia was: 'Supreme Commander, Anzac Area.' However, Australian and New Zealand views held little sway in Washington where the prime determinate was the rivalry between the US Army and the US Navy. An outline of the Pacific Theatre is shown on Map 5.2.



Note: Area A was placed under the operational control of the South Pacific Area during the Solomons campaign.

Map 5.2: The Pacific Theatre

⁹ Kirby, *The War Against Japan*, p 222.

DIRECTIVE TO THE SUPREME COMMANDER, SWPA

General MacArthur's Directive was issued on behalf of the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States, and after defining the extent of the South-West Pacific Area went on:

2. You are designated as Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area, and of all Armed Forces which the Governments concerned, have assigned, or may assign to this Area. [*Title later changed to Commander-in-Chief*]
3. As Supreme Commander you are not eligible to command directly any national force. [*Underline added – see Comment on MacArthur's Directive below*]
4. In consonance with the basic strategic policy of the Governments concerned, your operations will be designed to accomplish the following:
 - a. Hold the key military regions of Australia as bases for future offensive action against Japan, and strive to check Japanese aggression in the South-West Pacific Area.
 - b. Check the enemy advance across Australia and its essential lines of communication by the destruction of enemy combatant, troop and supply ships, aircraft, and bases in Eastern Malaysia and the New Guinea – Bismarck – Solomon Islands region.
 - c. Exert economic pressure on the enemy by destroying vessels transporting raw materials from recently conquered territories to Japan.
 - d. Maintain our position in the Philippine Islands.
 - e. Protect land, sea and air communications within the South-West Pacific Area and its close approaches.
 - f. Route shipping in the South-West Pacific Area.
 - g. Support operations of friendly forces in the Pacific Ocean Area and in the Indian Theatre.
 - h. Prepare to take the offensive.
5. You will not be responsible for the internal administration of the respective forces under your command, but you are authorised to direct and coordinate the creation and development of administrative facilities and the broad allocation of war materials. [*Underline added – see Comment on MacArthur's Directive below*]
6. You are authorised to control the issue of all communiques concerning the forces under your command.
7. When task forces of your command operate outside the South-West Pacific Area, coordinate with forces assigned to areas in which operation will be effected by Joint Chiefs of Staff, or Combined Chiefs of Staff as appropriate.

8. Commanders of all armed forces within your area will be immediately informed by their respective Governments that, from a date to be notified, orders and instructions issued by you in conformity with this directive will be considered by such Commanders as emanating from their respective Governments.
9. Your staff will include officers assigned by respective Governments concerned, based upon requests made directly to national Commanders of the various forces in your area.
10. The Governments concerned will exercise the direction of operations in the South-West Pacific as follows:
 - a. The combined Chiefs of Staff will exercise general jurisdiction over grand strategic policy and over such related factors as are necessary for proper implementation, including the allocation of forces and war materials.
 - b. The joint United States Chiefs of Staff will exercise jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to operational strategy. Chief of Staff of the whole Army will act as executive agency for joint United States Chiefs of Staff. All instructions to you to be issued by or through him.

(See Documents: Directive to the Supreme Commander in the South-West Pacific Area, dated 30th March 1942)

Comment on MacArthur's Directive

Items 3 and 5 of MacArthur's Directive are of particular relevance to the controversy that subsequently developed within the RAAF. Presumably, these limits on MacArthur's authority applied equally to the authority of his subordinate Commanders, including the Commander, Allied Air Forces. As will be seen in Chapters 6 to 8, what was proposed for the RAAF under the Allied Air arrangements went well beyond the Directive in relation both to command of national forces and responsibility for internal administration.

Item 9 of the Directive was, as will be seen, largely ignored. No senior Australian of any Service served on MacArthur's General Headquarters. As to the Allied Air Headquarters, while it did contain a well-balanced staff of senior Australian and American officers in the early days, as from the formation of RAAF Command in September 1942, RAAF representation on the staff of Allied Air Headquarters was minimal.

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MISSION, WASHINGTON

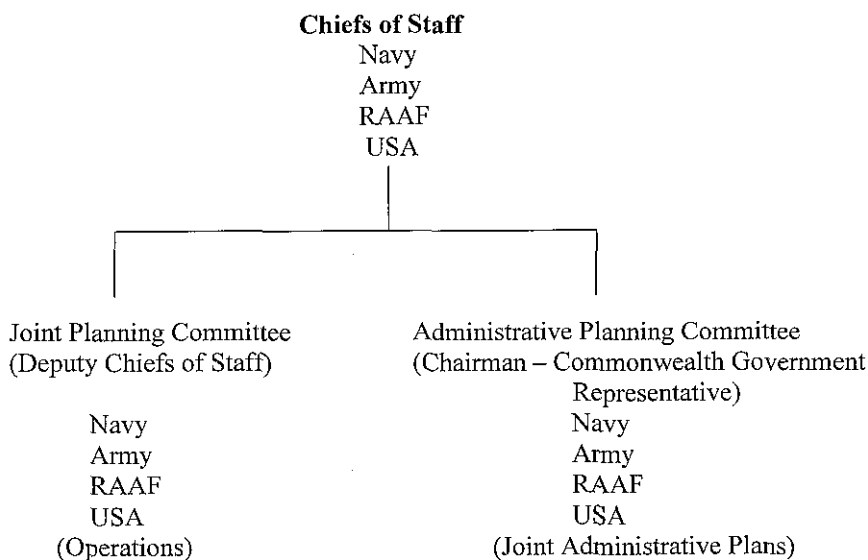
In order to support the role that the Australian Government hoped would evolve for the Pacific War Council (Washington) as a directing authority in relation to the war in the Pacific, and to provide direct contact with the Combined Chiefs of Staff, the Australian Government decided, in April 1942, to establish an Australian Military Mission in Washington. Lieutenant General K E Smart was appointed as

Head of Mission and Army Representative and Air Marshal R Williams was appointed as RAAF Representative. That the Mission did not take on a role commensurate with the level of representation provided is not a fault either of the Australian Government or the members themselves, but, rather, a further recognition of United States determination to run the war in the Pacific strictly in accordance with United States interests.

6

A Marriage Proposal

Early in January 1942 action was taken to set up arrangements to cover cooperation between the United States forces in Australia and the Australian Services. On 3rd January the Australian Chiefs of Staff met in conference with senior United States military officers. As a result of that Conference: 'the following joint machinery (was) recommended (and approved by the two Governments) ... to secure the maximum measure of cooperation between the defence forces of Australia and the United States':



At a subsequent War Cabinet Meeting 'the Prime Minister stated that the proposal to make available the Repatriation building in St Kilda Road for use by the American Army staffs in Melbourne, had been approved, after consultation with the Repatriation Commission, who had expressed their agreement'.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (642) - War Cabinet Agendum No 6/1942 - Australian-American Cooperation, dated 5th January 1942)

COOPERATION WITH UNITED STATES FORCES

The whole idea of cooperation with United States military forces in the Pacific was not new. Thus, for example, in October 1940 the War Cabinet endorsed a joint recommendation by the Chiefs of the Naval and Air Staff that: 'agreement be given in principle to the establishment of a unified Naval Strategic Command (under American Commander-in-Chief) in the Pacific Ocean and Far East, and that air units should come under the operational control of the Air Command in which they are operating'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (601) - Agendum No 239/1940 – Command of Naval and Air Forces in the Pacific Ocean and the Far East, dated 31st October 1940)

Then again in October 1941, when the United States was reinforcing its Air Force in the Philippines, War Cabinet agreed that, 'in connection with arrangements for strengthening the air defence of the Far Eastern area, certain air fields be made available to their forces with necessary supplies and equipment, such facilities insofar as Australia is concerned, being desired at Rabaul, Port Moresby, Port Darwin and Rockhampton'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (1399) Agendum No 334/1941 – Air Defence in Far East – United States Proposals, dated 15th October 1941)

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Subsequent to the initial approval of the machinery for cooperation between the United States forces in Australia and the Australian Services, further developments tended to follow two lines. First there were discussions concerning the set-up of an 'Anzac' theatre of operations and the appointment of an American Supreme Commander. Parallel discussions on the subject took place in Washington and in Australia. The final decision on the matter was taken in Washington, with little apparent regard for Australia's views. In the event, the Australian Government had little option but to agree. [*See Chapter 5*]

The second topic for discussion was for the set-up of a combined Australian/American Air Force in Australia. These discussions were held almost exclusively in Australia, with little apparent input from Washington, other than agreement to the principle by the President of the United States.

AMALGAMATION OF THE TWO AIR FORCES

The proposal to amalgamate the RAAF and the US Army Air Forces in Australia into a unified command appears to have had its genesis in a series of informal discussions between the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, and the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in Australia, Lieutenant General George H Brett, starting in late February 1942 after Brett's return to Australia from the Netherlands East Indies.

Brett was a United States Army Air Corps officer, who, in June 1941, was appointed Chief of the Air Corps on the formation of the Army Air Forces in the United States. The Army Air Corps was at that time responsible for material and training, with the Air Force Combat Command being responsible for operations. Lieutenant General H H Arnold was in overall command as the Chief of the Army Air Forces.

In December 1941, Brett was appointed to command all US Army forces in Australia. He arrived in Australia on 31st December after travelling from the United States by way of the Middle East, India, Burma and China. On the way he had consultations with General Sir Archibald Wavell, then the Commander-in-Chief, India.

Brett's initial stay in Australia was very short. On 4th January 1942 he was appointed as Deputy to General Wavell who had just been appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the ABDA Area, with headquarters at Bandung. 'On 9th January, in company with Air Chief Marshal Burnett, Brett and Brereton flew to Batavia to meet Wavell and review the whole command position.'¹

On the collapse of the ABDA Command, Lieutenant General Brett returned to Melbourne, on 23rd February, to again take up his position as Commanding General, United States Army Forces in Australia.

INITIAL PROPOSAL

On 27th February, just four days after Lieutenant General Brett's return to Australia, Air Chief Marshal Burnett put an initial amalgamation proposal to the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford. Burnett's minute, in part said:

2. The idea of building up side by side independent United States and Australian Army and Air Forces appears to be undesirable if it can be avoided, and will lead to overlapping and misunderstanding, especially during operations. It is inevitable that while operating in this country US forces must be very largely dependent on the Australian Army and RAAF for services, higher administration, provision of aerodromes, etc. Many of the US requirements may conflict with the present and future plans of the Australian Services and, in practice, it is possible that competition instead of cooperation will result.

3. I feel that a solution lies in the adoption of an organisation on the general lines of the following:

a. A Vice CAS should be appointed. The appointment of CAS may be held by either Australian or American officers, and the Vice CAS should be of opposite nationality to the CAS.

b. The existing organisation and administrative systems (amplified and amended if necessary) should be retained as the machinery through which both Australian and American forces are operated and administered. American and Australian staffs should be amalgamated to fit into this existing machinery and administrative system. There should be no difference between Americans and Australians allotted to staff appointments, either at Air Force Headquarters or on the staffs of major formations. For example, it may be desirable to appoint an American Director of Organisation or Director of Operations, and this should be determined solely by the suitability of the officer concerned, and have no relation to

¹ Gillison, Douglas, *Royal Australian Air Force 1939 - 1942*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p 300.

nationality. Similarly, it may be desirable to appoint an American Air Officer to command one or more of the existing Areas, eg, North-Western Area, Southern Area, etc.

c. American and Australian units in the field should continue to be commanded by their own nationals.

4. It may be argued that the American Air Force is part of the American Army and therefore such an arrangement as outlined would be impracticable. I am, however, informed that the Air Corps is practically autonomous and relies on the remainder of the US Army for certain services and administrative functions very much on the same lines and scale as the RAAF relies upon the Australian Army, eg, rationing, clothing, lines of supply for food and munitions, etc. It therefore seems logical and reasonable to expect that an amalgamated Australian and US Army could well carry out the same essential functions, with which they are now separately charged, for the amalgamated RAAF and USA Air Corps.

5. With regard to operational control, it is clear that if the scheme now suggested were adopted, Operations Staffs of both at RAAF Headquarters, as well as RAAF Areas, would be in a position to operate the combined Australian and US Forces as a whole, and quite impartially, to the best advantage.

6. It may be that Washington wishes that the Senior US General Officer Commanding in Australia should remain directly responsible to Washington, or at any rate have direct access to his Government. I submit that the foregoing proposals would not interfere with such a requirement. General Brett, or whoever is the Senior American Officer, would still have direct access to Washington, and where Washington instructions and directives were in conflict with the policies of the Chief of Staff in Australia, then the problem could be submitted quickly to the Chiefs of Staff Committee; if that Committee is unable to solve the difficulty, then it must be taken up with the Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee or on a Governmental plane between the Australian Government and Washington. Such machinery need cause very little delay, and in any case it is not reasonable to anticipate that many occasions will occur when instructions direct from Washington to General Brett will not be acceptable to the Chiefs of Staff Committee in Australia, which I suggest, if these proposals are accepted, should be expanded to include Vice Chiefs of Staff and the Admiral Commanding the Anzac Area (Admiral Leary).

(See Documents: Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 27th February 1942)

Comment

This initial proposal by Burnett for a close amalgamation of the RAAF and the USAAF in Australia was the first step in a round of discussions that were held between Burnett, Brett and their respective senior staffs over the following two months.

Little progress appears to have been made on Burnett's proposals until 9th March 1942 when he wrote to his fellow Australian Chiefs of Staff and to General Brett and Admiral Leary, suggesting, among other things:

the setting up immediate[ly] of a Combined Air Staff and Planning Staff to coordinate air operations. This need not affect the finalising of future plans under the Supreme Commander, but is for immediate and necessary coordination of air operations and cooperation with the other Services.

(See Documents: Minute from Chief of the Air Staff to the combined Australian/US Chiefs of Staff, dated 9th March 1942)

AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

While General Brett and Sir Charles Burnett were discussing closer cooperation between the RAAF and the USAAF in Australia, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, put to the Prime Minister an alternative proposal for the higher organisation of the RAAF, within the context of the appointment of a successor to Sir Charles Burnett as Chief of the Air Staff.

In brief, Mr Drakeford proposed 'the establishment of a special Operational Command to control operations of the RAAF in the field - leaving CAS to deal with Air Force policy and administration, organisation and his normal Service responsibilities'. He then went on to elaborate: 'It is my firm opinion that the functions of the Air Officer Commanding, Operational Command, might reasonably be aligned to those of the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Home Forces and should be somewhat on the following lines:

- a. Subject to the general responsibilities of the CAS for Air Force policy affecting security of the Commonwealth, the AOC Operational Command would exercise all operational command over the Air Force.
- b. Subject to the general policy which might be prescribed by the CAS, the AOC would be responsible for the operations of the Air Force under his control. The AOC would furnish advice to the CAS in respect of matters of inter-Service cooperation which affect plans and operations of the Forces in the field.
- c. The AOC would supervise the preparation of operational plans and the execution of all preparations necessary to implement those plans.
- d. Although training for EATS schools, etc should remain under the control of Air Force Head-Quarters, the AOC would be directly

concerned in Operational Training Units as well as operational training in squadrons under his command. The inspection of such units would be a function of the AOC who would report to the CAS on the general efficiency, modifications or variations of the training syllabus considered necessary or desirable.

e. The AOC, Operational Command, would also be required to report from time to time on the fighting efficiency of personnel, equipment, etc, of squadrons and establishments under his command.

f. The administrative machinery at present in force would continue to function in general, though possibly some modifications may be found necessary under the new organisation if approved. Administrative requirements of the AOC for operational purposes would, however, be complied with by Air Force Head-Quarters and Area Headquarters insofar as they did not conflict with the general policy.

In brief, what Mr Drakeford was proposing was the virtual division of the Service into two components, with the CAS responsible for administration and the AOC Operational Command for operations.

He then went on to recommend that Air Marshal Williams be appointed as CAS and that the Air Ministry be asked to provide Air Marshal Drummond an Australian serving with the RAF as Deputy C-in-C Middle East, as AOC Operational Command.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 5th March 1942)

Mr Drakeford's proposals were discussed briefly by the War Cabinet on 9th March, but no decision was taken on them.

(See Documents Chapter 9: War Cabinet Minute No (1985) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 9th March 1942)

Comment

This proposal by Drakeford for divided control of the RAAF, although it went no further, is of interest in that it clearly came directly from the Minister without advice from his chief military adviser, the Chief of the Air Staff. At this stage Air Marshal Williams had returned from London 'for consultation with the Minister'. Thus it is quite likely that this proposal was developed if not by, then with advice from, Williams. (The detail of Williams' recall from London is set out in Chapter 9)

As to the proposal itself, the idea of setting up an Operational Command to cover all RAAF operational activities was of itself sound. It was, perhaps ironically, precisely what had been proposed by Goble early in 1940 and had been rejected by Burnett, possibly with advice from Williams. [See Chapter 3]. Unfortunately, the timing of the proposal was bad given the parallel discussions both on unified control within the proposed Anzac Area and on close cooperation with the USAAF in Australia. By making no mention of either, Drakeford's proposal branded itself as being out of touch with current developments in the higher command of the war.

FURTHER PROPOSALS FOR UNIFIED CONTROL

On 11th March 1942 the Advisory War Council met to discuss, among other things, a proposal for 'the unified control of all air forces in Australia'. The three Chiefs of Staff were in attendance and Air Chief Marshal Burnett informed the members of the Council of his discussions with General Brett. He reported that Brett, although presumably sympathetic, was unwilling to act without instructions from Washington. As a consequence the Council recommended that the Prime Minister approach the President of the United States without delay seeking his approval for closer cooperation in air matters and asking that Brett be authorised to negotiate.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (821) – Unified Control of Air Forces in Australia, dated 11th March 1942)

OMISSION OF DRAKEFORD

One important point that needs to be kept in view in relation to discussions in the Advisory War Council is that the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford was not a member, whereas Sir Charles Burnett, along with the other Chiefs of Staff, was frequently in attendance. Thus advice on air force matters tended to come to the Council direct from the Chief of the Air Staff, without the Minister for Air necessarily being informed. Given the serious breakdown of relations between Drakeford and Burnett that had by this stage developed, and the importance of the Council in the determination of war policy at that stage of the war, the omission of Drakeford from Council's deliberations was of particular significance.

PRESIDENTIAL APPROVAL

As a result of the Advisory War Council recommendation, the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, cabled President Roosevelt on the 12th March with a set of proposals, which included the setting up of a Combined Air Staff and Planning Staff. Roosevelt replied immediately that what was proposed was 'common sense and should be done at once', and that General Brett was being given full authority to negotiate having regard to the situation on the spot in Australia.

ADVICE TO BRETT

The final step in this initial phase of amalgamating the Royal Australian Air Force and the United States Army Air Force in Australia came with a letter of authorisation from the Prime Minister to General Brett on 19th March. It read:

I recently proposed to the President of the United States that there should be set up in Australia machinery for the unified control of air operations and a joint United States [*Australian*] Air Staff and Planning Committee. The object of the proposal was to secure immediate and necessary coordination of air operations and coordination between the Air Forces of both countries, to ensure that the best possible use is made of all available aircraft in Australia, in view of the imminence of the Japanese threat.

- (2.) I intimated to the President that Australia was willing to place its Air Force under your control at once, for the purposes of achieving immediately these objectives. The President has

agreed to these proposals, and I have been informed by the Australian Minister, Washington, that you have been authorised to cooperate and coordinate with Australian authorities in respect of these matters.

- (3.) The Chief of the Air Staff was immediately authorised to confer with you, in order to submit an outline of the organisation to give you operational control of the combined Air Forces under the Supreme Commander, and to define the sphere and responsibility of both yourself and the Air Board to the Australian Government. [*Underline added*]
- (4.) We have expressed to the President our appreciation of his prompt acceptance of our proposals and I desire, on behalf of the Commonwealth Government, to inform you that we welcome your appointment, which we are confident will result in the most effective use being made of the available air resources in this theatre.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 5)

KEY SUB-PARAGRAPH

At this point it is important to note the wording of paragraph 3 above. What Mr Curtin authorised General Brett and Air Chief Marshal Burnett to do was to submit proposals for an organisation designed to give Brett operational control only of the combined air forces. As will be seen in subsequent chapters, what evolved was a proposal that went well beyond this.

Comment

The proposals put forward in early 1942 for the amalgamation of the higher direction of the RAAF and the United States Army Air Forces in Australia were very much a 'marriage of convenience' between two partners who, while they had similar aims for the defence of Australia against the Japanese advance, were driven by incompatible national aspirations. However, times were desperate and each had need of support from the other.

In March 1942, Brett had under command what was on paper an impressive force of eight groups (three fighter, two heavy bomber, two medium bomber and one light bomber) comprising some 30 squadrons equipped with some 400 aircraft. However, few squadrons were operational, most having just arrived in Australia. In addition, the squadrons were desperately short of maintenance and supply support and had to depend on the RAAF for communications and administrative facilities. Also, Brett was very short of staff officers.

For its part the RAAF was desperately short of front-line operational aircraft in all areas except maybe reconnaissance. In part, the drive to obtain aircraft from the then only available source, the United States, was one of the incentives to amalgamate with the USAAF. The other, no doubt, was a desire to have a say in the air war in the circumstances of having to operate with an already more powerful ally, who was likely to become much more so in the months and years ahead.

Furthermore, the RAAF had been used to playing 'second fiddle' to its much larger 'brother' the RAF. Hence the prospect of an 'equal' partnership with the USAAF may not have been all that bad, even though it might well have entailed a certain loss of national sovereignty.

At one stage early in the negotiations between Australia and the United States, before the arrival of General MacArthur in Australia, it appeared that Lieutenant General Brett may have been appointed as Supreme Commander of the 'Anzac' Theatre, or so it appeared to the Australian authorities. This no doubt gave rise to a certain deference to Brett and to his views. Then, after MacArthur's arrival on the scene, Brett remained as the logical choice as the Air Commander under MacArthur.

Also, in the early negotiations, notwithstanding his position as the senior US Army officer in Australia, Brett no doubt gave special attention to air matters, both because of his own background and the fact that air operations were the most pressing operational need at that stage of the war. Hence it is likely that during this time he would have had close contact with Burnett and his senior staff.

Brett's contact with the RAAF would no doubt have included close contact the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. Not only was Bostock Burnett's deputy, and responsible in particular for operational matters, he was also Burnett's 'heir apparent'. Burnett himself was due to return to the United Kingdom at the end of April 1942. Thus the organisational arrangements that he was setting up were not for himself to administer, but, as he and many others believed, for his successor as Chief of the (Australian) Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.

7

Drawing Up the Contract

INITIAL APPROVAL

In response to Prime Minister Curtin's letter of 19th March, in which approval was given to negotiate the details of a combined American-Australian air organisation, Lieutenant General Brett, on the following day, submitted an outline of the proposed organisation for the Prime Minister's approval. This outline was in the form of a joint memorandum signed by himself and Sir Charles Burnett and was presented by Brett to the Prime Minister at a meeting, which was also attended by the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford.

(See Documents: Letter from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister dated 20th March 1942)

Before the meeting with Brett and Burnett, the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, Mr Shedden, urged the Prime Minister to look carefully at the issue of the right of national appeal to the Government over the employment of Australian forces. He also warned that: 'as changes in the higher machinery, consequent on the appointment of the Supreme Commander and the local Commanders-in-Chief, will require careful examination in relation to the responsibilities of the Governments, the Service Ministers and the Service Boards, it is suggested that any statement submitted by General Brett be reserved for careful examination.'

(See Documents: Minute from the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination to the Prime Minister, dated 20th March 1942)

In his submission to the Prime Minister, General Brett made a number of points:

- a. the responsibilities of the Air Board would need to be modified;
- b. there would be one staff under an 'Air Officer, Commander-in-Chief';
- c. both American and Australian officers would serve on the staff;
- d. operational commands would be established that would be responsible to the AOC-in-C 'for the operation and administration of all air force units allocated to them';
- e. there would be two Assistant Chiefs of Staff, one who would 'control and direct' combined operations, and another who would coordinate administration and supply with 'existing US and Australian Air Forces'; and
- f. the (Australian) CAS and the Chief of the US Army Air Corps [*in Australia*] would remain directly responsible to their respective Governments for 'relevant administrative matters'.

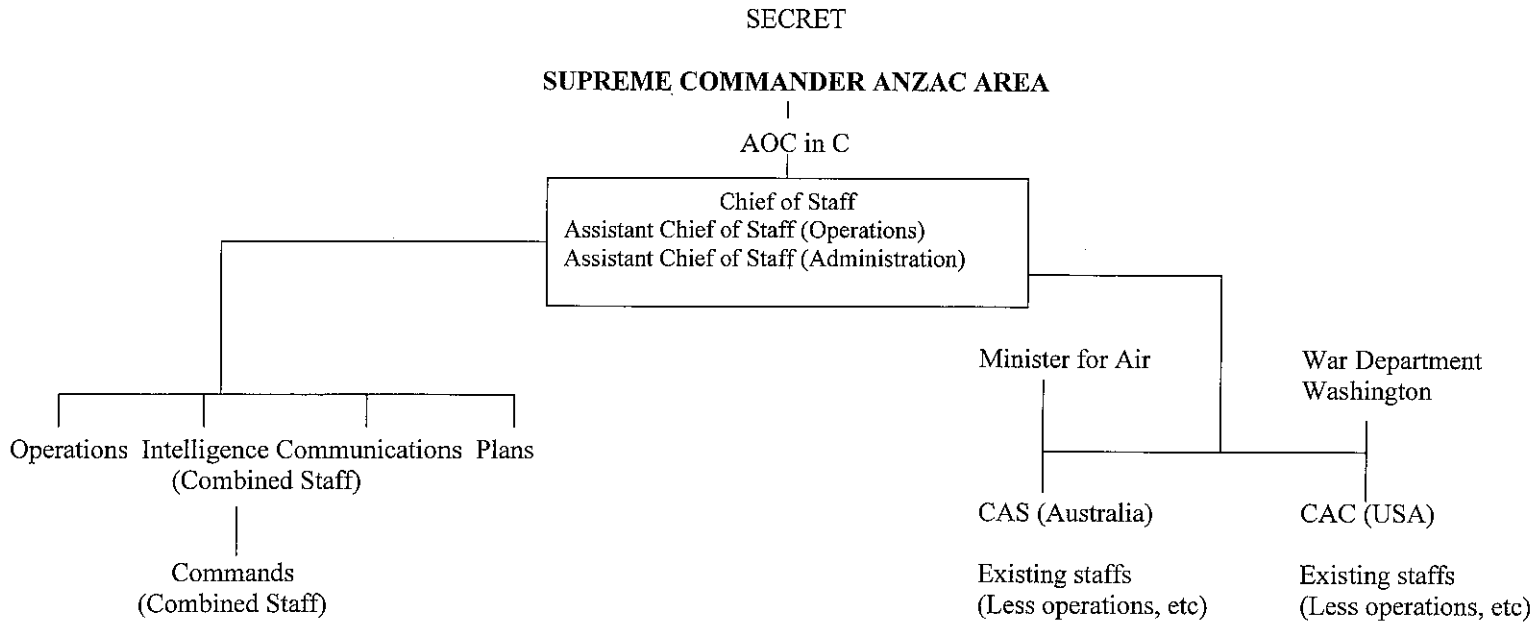
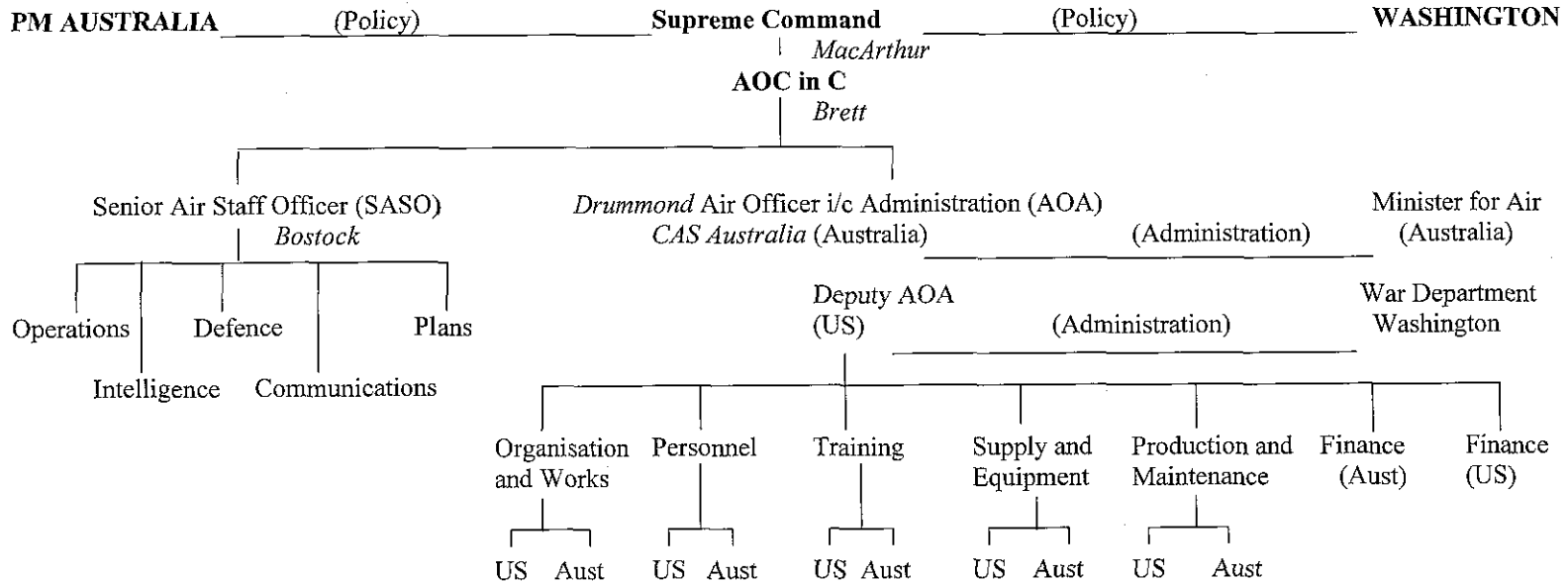


Figure 7.1: Attachment to Memorandum on Measures for the Coordination of Air Effort of American and Australian Air Forces in Australia, dated 20th March 1942

SECRET

ORGANISATION OF COMBINED AIR FORCES IN AUSTRALIA



[Handwritten annotations shown in italics]

Figure 7.2: Annex A to Memorandum of Measures, dated 31st March 1942

Drawing Up the Contract

The organisation diagram attached to Brett's Memorandum is included as Figure 7.1.

(See Documents: Letter from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister, dated 20th March 1942)

Subsequently, the Prime Minister approved the proposed organisational arrangements.

Comment

Brett's proposals of the 20th March, having been approved by the Prime Minister, provided the basis for further discussion on the details between himself and Burnett. Unfortunately, however, there were a number of vagaries and inconsistencies in the memorandum that allowed Brett and Burnett together to take the proposal well beyond the authority given to them by the Prime Minister on 19th March. Under the terms of that authority, Mr Curtin had only given Brett 'operational control of the combined Air Forces under the Supreme Commander'. [See Chapter 6]

Figure 7.1 clearly shows that all matters other than operational control were to remain with the (Australian) CAS, and that 'administration, supply, etc' would be a matter for coordination, not control. Yet, in the body of the memorandum, reference is made to a single commander being solely responsible to the supreme commander for 'all phases of air effort', and of the operational commands being responsible to the AOC-in-C for both operations and administration of all assigned units.

ADVICE FROM WILLIAMS

Included with Air Marshal Williams' Papers at the RAAF Museum is a paper dated 24th March 1942, dealing with the reorganisation of the RAAF. While this paper is unsigned and has no indication of distribution, it is reasonable to assume that it was written for the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, by Williams as commentary on the integration proposals approved by the Prime Minister on 20th March.

In his paper, Air Marshal Williams points out that, in due time, the operational activities would move forward from Australia. Hence, he argues, 'the organisation set up now must be such that, when the operational command moves from Melbourne (assuming that it will be established there in the first instance), any [re]organisation necessary will be the minimum. Once the operational units move out for overseas service, the position will revert to one very similar to that existing before the USA Forces arrived'.

He then goes on:

It is clear from the proposed table or [of] organisation that only the operational units of the RAAF are being placed under the command of the AOC-in-C USA Army-Air Corps, all others remaining under the Air Board.

Obviously, then, whilst the whole of the administration, etc, of the USA Army Air Corps in Australia comes under the control of the

AOC-in-C and, in its domestic aspect, from Washington, there is very little on the administrative side that need or should be removed from the control of the Minister and the Air Board so far as the RAAF is concerned.

Finally, while accepting that the Government, on the advice of the Air Staff, may well approve the principle of amalgamation of staff for operational control, the extension of this principle into the administrative field is a matter of vital concern to both the Service and the Department. Hence, 'for these reasons and because the discussions are now between USA and RAF officers, the Minister should have the advice of Senior RAAF officers and Secretary to the Department'.

(See Documents: Paper: Re-Organisation of the RAAF, dated 24th March 1942)

'FINAL' PROPOSAL

On 2nd April the Minister for Air forwarded, without comment, to the Prime Minister the final 'Memorandum on Measures for the Coordination of Air Effort of American and Australian Air Forces in Australia' which had been submitted to him late that evening by Lieutenant General Brett and Air Chief Marshal Burnett. Then on 4th April, the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, Mr Shedden, discussed the content of the memorandum with Brett and Burnett.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 2nd April 1942)

In brief, the proposed organisation was simple and straightforward. It provided for a single air commander (with the title: Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief) responsible to the Supreme Commander, Anzac Area. Under the AOC-in-C was a Chief of Staff with two principal staff officers, one of whom was to be 'responsible for the control and direction of operations' and the other for 'the coordination of administration, supply, etc.'. CAS (Australia) was to remain responsible to the Minister for Air for all matters other than operations.

There are on file two versions of the organisation diagram, one dated 1st April and the other 2nd April. The first version is of interest in that it contains annotations as to who might fill the senior posts, and is included as Figure 7.2. The second version differs from the first in that a Chief of Staff has been added to the chain of command between the AOC-in-C and his two principal staff officers, ie., the Senior Air Staff Officer, who was to be responsible for operations, and the Air Officer i/c Administration, who was to be responsible for administration and co-responsible to the Minister for Air.

The model for this 'final' proposal was clearly that of an RAF Command Headquarters. Such Commands, both at home (ie, in Britain) and overseas were commanded by an 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief' who had two principal staff officers, a 'Senior Air Staff Officer', who was responsible for operations, and an 'Air Officer-in-charge Administration', who was responsible for administrative or support matters. Invariably, the Air Officer i/c Administration was senior in rank to the Senior Air Staff Officer. Such Commands, however, did not have a position for a Chief of Staff.

Further elaboration of the proposal comes from a letter from Sir Charles Burnett to Mr Shedden on 4th April:

With regard to the proper functions of my successor, I have tried to impress on Brett that the Royal Australian Air Force whole organisation is functioning in this country under the Australian Government, and must therefore retain as far as possible under the amalgamation its own identity and sovereignty. The United States Army Air Corps is only part of their organisation translated to this country for operational purposes. Whether it remains in this country or moves forward is somewhat indefinite, but in any case, in order to get this combined organisation going quickly, we should utilise the RAAF organisation which already exists, and build on that.

2. The question of the AOC-in-C operational commander has already been decided by the Australian Government, although not yet confirmed by Washington.
3. The question of my successor then arises. He will be an officer selected by the Australian Government, and will be responsible that the Australian organisation is retained, and best use made of it, under the AOC-in-C. If there is such a thing as a Deputy AOC such as exists in the Middle East, then to my mind [*that*] would be his position. I agree it is only a name, and might be carried out by the Chief of Staff, if he was recognised as the next senior under the AOC-in-C.
4. In the Royal Air Force commands, except the Middle East, The Chief Administrative Officer is the next senior under the AOC-in-C, and he will have in Australia much the most difficult and detailed work in administering the combined Air Forces.
5. We have had to deal with a person who does not understand our organisation, being of a different nationality and a different service, and whose gradual education will take time. He has strong views with regard to selection of his own Chief of Staff; on the other hand, I fancy that the Government have just as strong views on their selection of their senior representative. For political reasons, it has been found advisable to nominate an American as AOC-in-C, and I think that is justified, but I think also that the Government will be justified in nominating their Senior Air Officer to the position from which they may think they would derive most benefit, taking all aspects and difficulties into consideration, I consider that my successor should be the senior officer under Brett, either as Deputy AOC or Chief of Staff, whichever is acceptable; not as Chief Administrative Officer, as this will divorce him from War Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff Committee matters.
6. This is not shown in my first chart, where the Chief Administrative Officer was shown with no Chief of Staff.

Comment

This 'final' proposal differed quite markedly to that approved by the Prime Minister on 20th March. Most importantly it provided for the abolition of the Air Board (as against modifying the responsibilities of the members) and placed the whole of the responsibility for the RAAF firmly under the AOC-in-C, to which position Brett was to be appointed. Specifically, it changed the role of the Australian CAS to that of Air Officer i/c Administration, who was to become responsible to the Chief of Staff for all aspects of both Forces other than operations, and, at the same time, to the Minister for Air and to the War Department in Washington for 'administration'.

The dual responsibility of the Air Officer i/c Administration (AOA) to the Minister for Air and the War Department was itself a development from an earlier concept that saw the AOA (alias CAS Australia) responsible to the Minister for Air for RAAF administration and his Deputy (an American) to the War Department for USAAF administration.

Notwithstanding the apparent simplicity of the proposed organisation, one of the statements in the memorandum carried a hint of control going beyond that needed for the 'operational control' only of the combined air forces:

During a war period the efficient employment of forces can be achieved only if there is one responsible Commander of all forces. Consequently the responsibilities of members of the Australian Air Board, with individual Board members responsible for different phases of Air Force activities, will be modified and this single Commander will be solely responsible to the Supreme Command for all phases of air effort. [Emphasis added]

FURTHER REVISION

On 6th April, Lieutenant General Brett submitted a 'slightly revised chart' direct to the Prime Minister, together with the names of the officers who he had selected to fill key positions. Key items were a change in title for the Chief of Staff to 'Chief of Air Staff' and the deletion of the concept that the Chief of the Air Staff (Australia) would occupy the position of Air Officer i/c Administration and have direct responsibilities to the Minister for Air on matters related to RAAF administration. Rather, the newly designated Chief of Air Staff would have these responsibilities.

Brett's 'slightly revised chart' with its annotations, is included as Figure 7.3

(See Documents: Letter from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister, dated 6th April 1942)

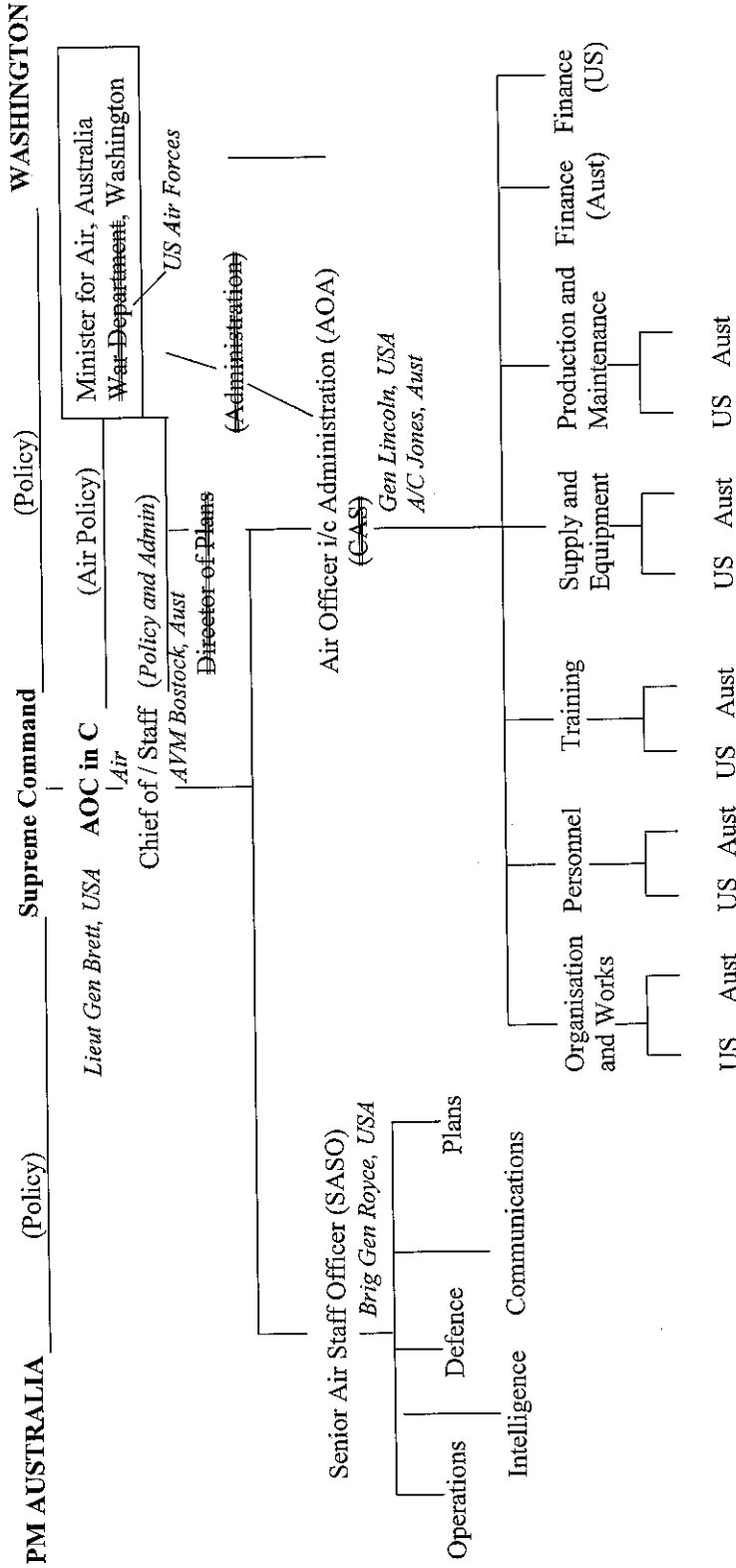
Comment

Brett's letter of 6th April contained some significant changes to the proposed organisation. The first was the change in the title and responsibilities of the Chief of Staff. This was retitled 'Chief of Air Staff' and made responsible to the AOC-in-C, and to the Minister for Air and the US Air Forces in Washington for 'policy and administration'. This removed the responsibility of the Air Officer i/c Administration to the Minister for Air and the War Department for 'administration'.

The second item of significance was the change in appointments to key posts. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was 'elevated' from being Senior Air Staff Officer (responsible for operations) to being Chief of Air Staff. His place as SASO was taken by Brigadier General Royce. The post of Air Officer i/c Administration, which had been previously assigned to Air Marshal Drummond, RAF, who it had been expected would replace Burnett as CAS, was now assigned to Lieutenant General Lincoln. Air Commodore Jones was nominated as Lincoln's deputy.

SECRET

ORGANISATION OF COMBINED AIR FORCES IN AUSTRALIA



[Handwritten annotations shown in italics]

Figure 7.3: Attachment to Letter from the Commanding General USAFIA to the Prime Minister, dated 6th April 1942

8

The Minister Objects

AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

On 8th April 1942, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, wrote to the Prime Minister concerning the proposed organisation of the Allied Air Forces. Noting:

That Lieutenant General Brett's proposed organisation provided for both operational and administrative control of the RAAF (to be) placed under his (Lieutenant General Brett's) control. This went beyond agreed principles and, furthermore, the proposals provided for the abolition of the Air Board without first considering the Defence Committee's views which had been called for. The Minister expressed the view that the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief should concentrate on operations and be freed from responsibilities for other matters.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 10)

Also, as an alternative, Mr Drakeford submitted a revised organisation plan that had the Air Officer i/c Administration responsible only to the Minister for Air and the War Department in Washington, thus leaving the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (General Brett) responsible only for operations. A diagram of this revised plan is included as Figure 8.1.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 8th April 1942)

| |
|--|
| <p>Comment</p> <p>Drakeford's objections centred on the key issue of who should exercise administrative control of the RAAF. Bound up with this were his own responsibilities as Minister for Air for the political control of the RAAF. As part of his argument he, quite rightly, pointed to the issue of the control of the vast training organisation that had been set up as part of the Empire Air Training Scheme.</p> |
|--|

ABOLITION OF THE AIR BOARD

On 13th April the Defence Committee met to consider the future of the three Service boards in the circumstances of the assignment of Australian combat forces to the Supreme Commander. As a consequence the Committee recommended 'that the Military Board and the Air Board should cease to function, but that the Naval Board should continue to function as at present'.

It then went on to elaborate on its views:

MOST SECRET

Organisation of Combined Air Forces in Australia

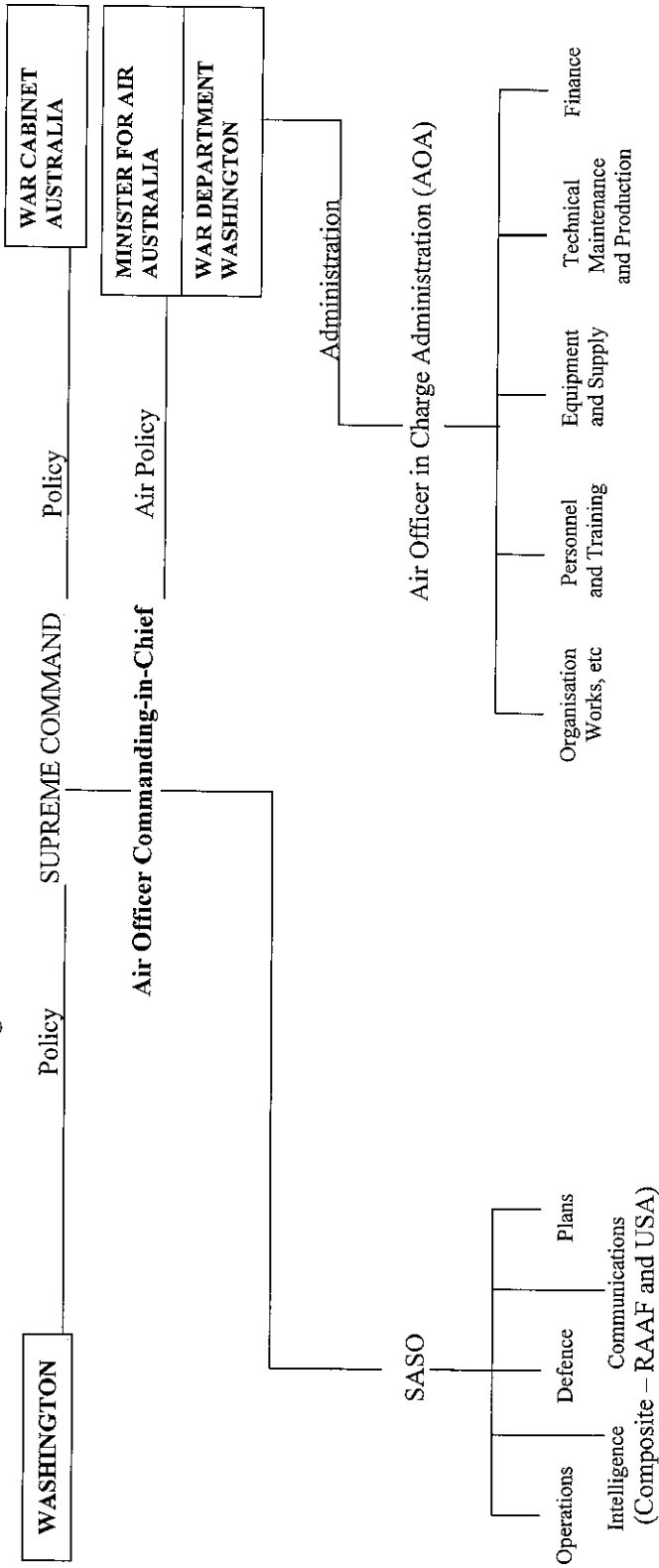


Figure 8.1: Appendix A to Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 8th April 1942

The Committee were of the opinion that the continuance of the Military Board was not consistent with a command organisation such as is proposed under General Blamey, and that the proposed amalgamation of the United States Air Corps in Australia and the RAAF and the formation of an Allied Air Force on a command basis makes it impossible for the Air Board to continue to function, especially as United States officers will occupy administrative as well as operational positions.

It was considered that it was not necessary to interfere with the Naval Board, which remains wholly Australian and which, since the establishment of the Anzac Naval Area and the arrival of Admiral Leary, has continued to function satisfactorily.

There is in the Australian Military Regulations provision for the powers of the Military Board to be exercised by the officer appointed to command the Military Forces in time of war, if the Military Board is not in existence (Regulation 13). There is no corresponding provision in the Air Force Regulations and it is proposed that, to effect the necessary change in organisation, the Air Board should delegate its functions to an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, whose appointment in time of war is contemplated by the Air Force Regulations. The Board should mend [*then?*] adjourn sine die. The result would be that the Board would cease to function and that, subject to the Commander of the Allied Air Forces, there would be an Australian Chief of the Air Staff who would also be appointed as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, who would possess the present powers of the Air Board. At a later date, any necessary alteration in the Air Force Regulations can be made.

(See Documents: Defence Committee Minute No 55/1942, dated 13th April 1942)

Comment

The key recommendation of the Defence Committee that an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, be appointed to command the RAAF in place of the Air Board was one that was to dominate Government thinking right through to the end of the war. Here the major problem was to find someone to fill the post who would be acceptable to all parties, in particular Prime Minister Curtin, Minister for Air Drakeford, General MacArthur and the two successive Allied Air Commanders, Generals Brett and Kenney.

In looking at the minutes of the Defence Committee it is clear that the proposal to abolish the Air Board was closely aligned with that to abolish the Military Board, and with Burnett's earlier advice on how the new combined air headquarters should operate.

The Service Boards had long been a thorn in the side of successive Service Chiefs of Staff from all three Services. While the Chiefs of Staff may have considered themselves to be the head of their respective Services, in reality they had to share power with a Board whose members from time to time took an independent view on matters that they considered to be their particular responsibility. The Board system also required the Service members to share power with public servants, who, by their control of finances, wielded considerable power.

The recommendation by the Defence Committee that an 'Air Officer Commanding, RAAF' replace the Air Board was a direct parallel with the situation in the Australian Army where General Blamey had been appointed as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, thus replacing the Military Board.

The organisation proposed by General Brett for the control of the combined air forces of Australia and the United States in Australia, with which Burnett was in full accord, clearly envisaged the abolition of the Air Board and, incidentally, a diminution in the power and authority of the Minister and Department of Air.

Thus, in the circumstances of the times, it was hardly surprising that the Defence Committee should recommend the abolition of the Military Board and the Air Board.

MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

On 14th April 1942 Mr Curtin's title was changed from Minister for Defence Coordination to Minister for Defence, with the Department under Mr Shedden reverting to the title of Department of Defence.

APPOINTMENTS TO THE PROPOSED ALLIED AIR HEADQUARTERS

Also on 14th April, Lieutenant General Brett submitted, direct to the Prime Minister, for his consideration, a memorandum setting out the names of the officers that he had selected 'to fill the higher echelons of the Allied Air Forces.' They were:

| | |
|--|---|
| Chief of Air Staff: | Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock |
| Air Officer i/c Administration: | Major General Rush B Lincoln, USA |
| Principal Assistant: | Air Commodore G Jones |
| Senior Air Staff Officer (Opns): | Brigadier General Ralph Royce, USA |
| Senior Operations Officer: | Brigadier General Hal H George, M, USA |
| Senior Plans Officer: | Brigadier General Martin H Scanlon, USA |
| Asst. Chief of Air Staff (Admin): | Air Commodore J E Hewitt |
| Asst. Chief of Air Staff (Tech): | Colonel Edwin S Perrin, AC (USA) |

SECRETARY 'STILL INDEFINITE'

An indication of the somewhat confused nature of the proposals to this point is contained in the following message from the Secretary, Department of Defence, Mr Shedden, to the Prime Minister:

General Brett spoke to me this morning regarding the urgency of dealing with the organisation for the higher direction of the Allied Air Forces, as in view of his departure for the north he wished to submit to General MacArthur his proposals, in order that further steps could be taken as quickly as possible.

2. General Brett said that as late as yesterday he had not reached agreement with the Minister for Air regarding the post of Chief of the Air Staff, which is combined with that of Chief of Staff to himself. He said that he would be speaking to you on the telephone and he would forward me for submission to you a memorandum containing his recommendations. In this he recommends Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as the Chief of the Air Staff.

3. In view of this discussion I am still indefinite as to what is to be said to the High Commissioner regarding Air Marshal Drummond, though I was under the impression, following your discussion with Mr Drakeford on Friday, that a cablegram on the following lines was to be despatched. [*Cablegram not included*]

4. The above cablegram is submitted for your consideration in accordance with your directions on Saturday morning. It is presumed that you will discuss the matter with Mr Drakeford if there are any aspects outstanding in regard to his point of view. It will be recalled that the original decision relating to General Brett's appointment was to place him in operational control of the combined Air Forces with a joint staff. It will also be recalled from his diagrams that his proposals proceed further and that he will be in command of the combined Air Forces with the Chief of the Air Staff responsible to the Minister for RAAF Policy and Administration. It will be necessary to get War Cabinet endorsement of this organisation if it is to be adopted.

(See Documents: Message from the Secretary, Department of Defence, to the Prime Minister, 14th April 1942)

Comment

The cablegram referred to by Mr Shedden was probably the long overdue answer to a cablegram from Mr Bruce on 1st April requesting clarification on the status of Air Marshal Drummond in the new organisation [See Chapter 9]. In all likelihood, the draft cablegram accompanying Mr Shedden's message was not sent. A reply to Mr Bruce's 1st April cablegram was finally dispatched on 24th April [See Chapter 9].

It is also of interest to note Mr Shedden's comment that Brett's latest proposals for the organisation of the combined Air Force went beyond the original (20th March) agreement that had been sanctioned by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Air.

FORMATION OF SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC AREA COMMAND

On 18th April the South-West Pacific Area Command was formed with General Douglas MacArthur as its Commander-in-Chief. All Australian combat forces were simultaneously assigned to MacArthur's command, including, for the RAAF, 'all Service squadrons, but not including training units'. Also on that day MacArthur issued General Order No 1 appointing, among others, Lieutenant General G H Brett as Commander, Allied Air Forces.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (2109) – Assignment of Forces to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 17th April 1942; and, General Order No 1, GHQ, SWPA, dated 18th April 1942)

Comment

At this point it is important to note that negotiations for the appointment of a Supreme Commander for the control of all Allied combat operations in the Australian region and the appointment of a single air commander were conducted in parallel. The former were conducted by the Prime Minister with the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr Churchill, and the President of the United States, Mr Roosevelt. On the other hand, once approval had been obtained from the President, negotiations for a combined RAAF/USAAF air command in the Australian theatre were conducted, in Australia, by the Australian Government and Lieutenant General Brett, who was the Commanding General of the US Army Forces in Australia and prospective Air Commander under the Supreme Commander. Detailed negotiations were carried out by Brett and Air Chief Marshal Burnett, and their staffs, with approvals along the way being given by Mr Curtin as Minister for Defence.

At no time does General MacArthur, who arrived in Australia on 17th March, appear to have been actively involved in the negotiations concerning the air organisation, although there is evidence that he was kept advised of developments by Brett. Indeed, for the period from his arrival in Australia until his appointment as Commander-in-Chief he appears to have had no formal role to play. Brett appears to have retained the appointment of Commanding General of United States Army Forces in Australia (USAFIA) until his appointment as Commander, Allied Air Forces, and the appointment of Major General J F Barnes as CG USAFIA by MacArthur on 18th April.

BRETT'S RELATIONS WITH MACARTHUR

When Lieutenant General Brett moved to Melbourne in late February 1942 he was offered the use of newspaper proprietor Sir Keith Murdoch's Melbourne home, *Heathfield* in fashionable Koorak, rent free. He accepted, but in doing so, perhaps unwittingly, antagonised MacArthur who regarded Murdoch with great suspicion, even branding him as 'an Australian quisling' for having dared to publish articles critical of MacArthur's conduct of operations. Reportedly, MacArthur told Australian officials that Brett and his men were 'Murdoch's spies'.¹

¹ Monks, John, *Elisabeth Murdoch: Two Lives*, Macmillan, Sydney, 1995, p 151.

Comment

MacArthur's dislike of Brett is well documented. When MacArthur arrived in Melbourne from the Philippines, he refused to speak with Brett, notwithstanding that Brett was at the time in charge of US Army Forces in Australia. Also, the fact that Brett was a prominent Army Air Corps officer would not have helped, the Air Corps having previously attempted to attain its 'independence' during the period when MacArthur was Chief of Staff of the US Army.

THE MINISTER OBJECTS

On 20th April the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, again wrote to the Prime Minister further, and more strongly, objecting to the proposed air organisation. The following is what he had to say:

Following on our talk today and in confirmation of the views I then expressed, I wish to have recorded that I am opposed to the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock as Chief of the Air Staff which office is an appointment within the RAAF and is, I understand, not a designation used for an officer serving under an Air Officer Commanding in Chief.

2. If, however, General Brett's view that he has the right to appoint his own Chief of Staff is accepted, then I think it must be made clear that that officer is Chief of Staff to the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief and as such cannot be given the authority over administration of the whole of the RAAF which functions are, in my opinion, the responsibility of the Minister through an Air Officer in charge of Administration.

3. I note that in the Directive you gave to General MacArthur you indicated that the Commonwealth Government assigned to his command all Combat Sections of the Australian Defence Forces, they, so far as the RAAF is concerned, being restricted to all Service squadrons but not including training units.

4. In keeping with that Directive I feel that the control by General Brett should be similarly limited.

5. This would free General Brett and the Chief of Staff from a considerable amount of more or less administrative detail and permit them [to] devote their whole energies to the vitally important operational side.

6. It will be noted, however, that in the attachment 'Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia', Appendix I provides for General Brett to have full control over the

whole of the RAAF including training and all other administrative functions and activities.

7. Further, it does not appear to me sound that an officer of the forces of another Nation who has had little or no contact whatever with the RAAF can administer this Service with that degree of efficiency required. The Appendix referred to nominates Major General R B Lincoln of the United States Army Air Corps as the Air Officer in Charge of the Australian Administration with Air Commodore Jones, RAAF.

8. Other points in Appendix I to which I would wish to draw attention are:

a. Approximately 75% of the RAAF is devoted to the Empire Air Training Scheme which will have no connection with the USA. Training, however, is shown on the Air Staff chart as coming under [the] AOC in C.

b. The line of demarcation of responsibility as between the United States and RAAF officers in dual positions is not clear.

c. Finance (including control and regularity of expenditure) internal audits and checks generally, should come under my control through the Permanent Head. Further the Aeronautical Inspection Directorate should be responsible direct to the Air Officer in Charge of Administration.

d. It will be noted that a senior recruiting officer for USA is provided for. I assume there will be no recruiting for the US Forces in Australia.

e. The three officers mentioned for the control of training are members of the RAF.

f. It will also be noted that the Personnel Directorate will be of a common combined character notwithstanding that discipline and other conditions of service in the RAAF differ from those of the US Forces.

g. The organisation chart also provides for an American officer to be in charge of organisation and works. It will, I think, be agreed that an officer newly arrived in this country, who is not conversant with local conditions in these matters, would find it exceedingly difficult to carry out efficiently those important responsibilities.

9. These are a few of the points that, in my opinion, require reconsideration before adoption.

10. Personally I feel that, if it be decided to make any change in the appointment of the officer responsible for administration, that officer should be concerned in the planning of the organisation and the appointment of officers to hold the various higher posts.

11. I attach hereto an epitomised organisation chart which I suggest might be considered and which conforms to my opinions as above. (Appendices A and B).

12. In the event of my original recommendation concerning Air Marshal Williams not being adopted and if his services are not made use of in Australia, I recommend that he be nominated as Service representative on the Pacific War Council at Washington, and that he should retain the London appointment for the present. (Air Vice-Marshal McNamara to continue to act in his absence.)

13. As suggested when I saw you today, and in view of my departure to Western Australia tomorrow, I think it would be advisable for you to send for and discuss these matters with Air Marshal Williams.

(See Documents: First Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 20th April 1942)

Comment

The use of Air Marshal Williams as unofficial adviser to the Minister for Air is clearly illustrated in paragraph 13 of the Minister's letter.

Also of relevance is a further paper, presumably written by Williams for Drakeford about this time, and from which some of the points made by Drakeford, in his letter of 20th April to Curtin, appear to have come. Some of the points in common between Williams' paper and Drakeford's letter are:

- a. that 75% of the RAAF is devoted to the Empire Air Training Scheme (Williams gives actual figures);
- b. the problems for an officer recently arrived in the country in being conversant with local conditions; and
- c. that the authority and responsibility for the administration of the RAAF must remain with the Minister for Air.

In his paper, Williams repeatedly stresses the point that the RAAF must be administered by an officer thoroughly conversant with that Service, and that that officer must be responsible to, and provide advice to, the Minister for Air. An officer of another (foreign) Service could not possibly do the job, either legally or practically. Further, as the war moved forward, as Williams claimed it was bound to do, so that officer would have to move northward from Melbourne and the centre of RAAF administration.

(See Documents: Paper: Notes on the Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, circa April 1942)

MINISTER'S APPROVAL SOUGHT

Following on the formation of the South-West Pacific Area, and the assignment of Australian combat forces thereto, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Burnett, became anxious to finalise arrangements for the appointment of various RAAF officers to the new headquarters. Also on 20th April he wrote to the Minister for Air seeking his urgent approval.

(See Documents: Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 20th April 1942)

Included with Burnett's minute was a *Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia* which set out the final organisational plan in considerable detail. On this copy were annotated the names of the officers, both RAAF and USAAF, selected to fill each appointment. Included as Figure 8.2 is an outline of the headquarters organisation as proposed, together with the key appointees, and at Figure 8.3 is an outline of the major subordinate formations.

(See Documents: Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia, 14th April 1942)

Mr Drakeford, however, with his reservations about the proposed organisation, and impending absence from Melbourne, withheld his approval and passed the whole matter to the Prime Minister.

(See Documents: Second Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister; and Minute from the Minister for Air to the Chief of the Air Staff, both dated 20th April 1942)

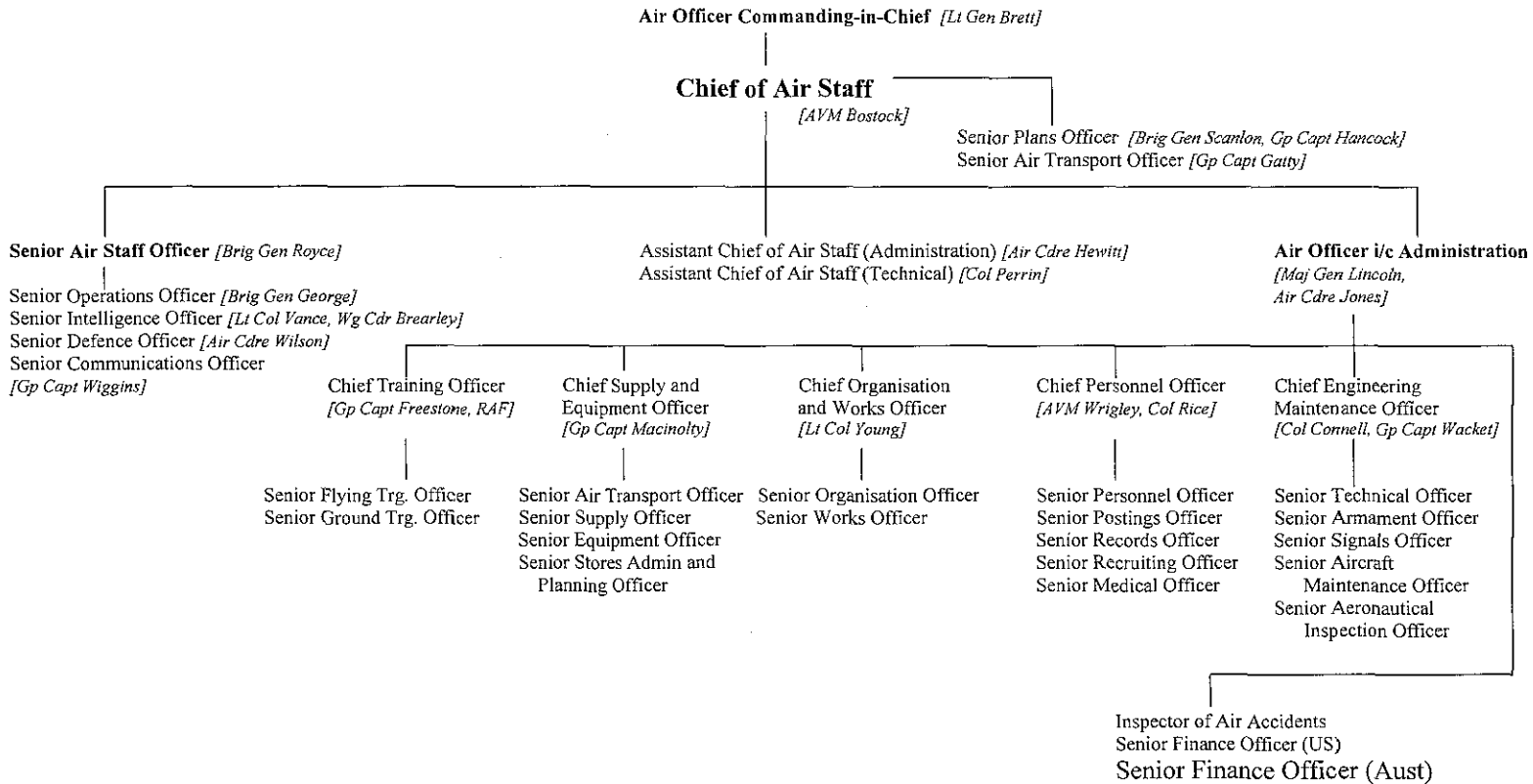
Comment

Figure 8.2 illustrates clearly the degree of integration of the two air forces that was being proposed by General Brett and Air Chief Marshal Burnett, and to which Mr Drakeford objected so strongly. What they proposed was a fully integrated headquarters across all functional areas, not merely a headquarters for the exercise of unified operational control.

The influences at work on Drakeford at this time are not clear. Certainly he objected strongly to Bostock being appointed as Chief of Air Staff, while at the same time accepting that Brett had every right to select his own Chief of Staff. It is also clear that Air Marshal Williams provided a source of alternative, unofficial, military advice to the Minister, no doubt urging him on in his objections to the integration proposal. Another possible source of advice to the Minister could, and certainly should, have been the Secretary, Department of Air, Major Langslow. What was being proposed cut across accepted Ministerial responsibilities, of which Langslow, as a good public servant, should have been a guardian.

This in turn leads to speculation as to the views, and the role, of the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Mr Shedden, himself the archetypal public servant. In his earlier minute of 20th March [See Chapter 7] to the Prime Minister, Shedden had warned that Brett's initial proposals should be 'reserved for careful examination'. This does not appear to have been done. Rather, the proposal was approved in principle by the Prime Minister on 20th March and subsequently worked up by Brett, Burnett and their Service advisers, without reference to the public servants in either the Department of Air or Department of Defence. Thus the proposal was permitted to get to the final stage of development before any serious objections were raised. It is also clear that a lack of meaningful dialogue between Drakeford and Burnett added to the conflicting views being put to the Prime Minister.

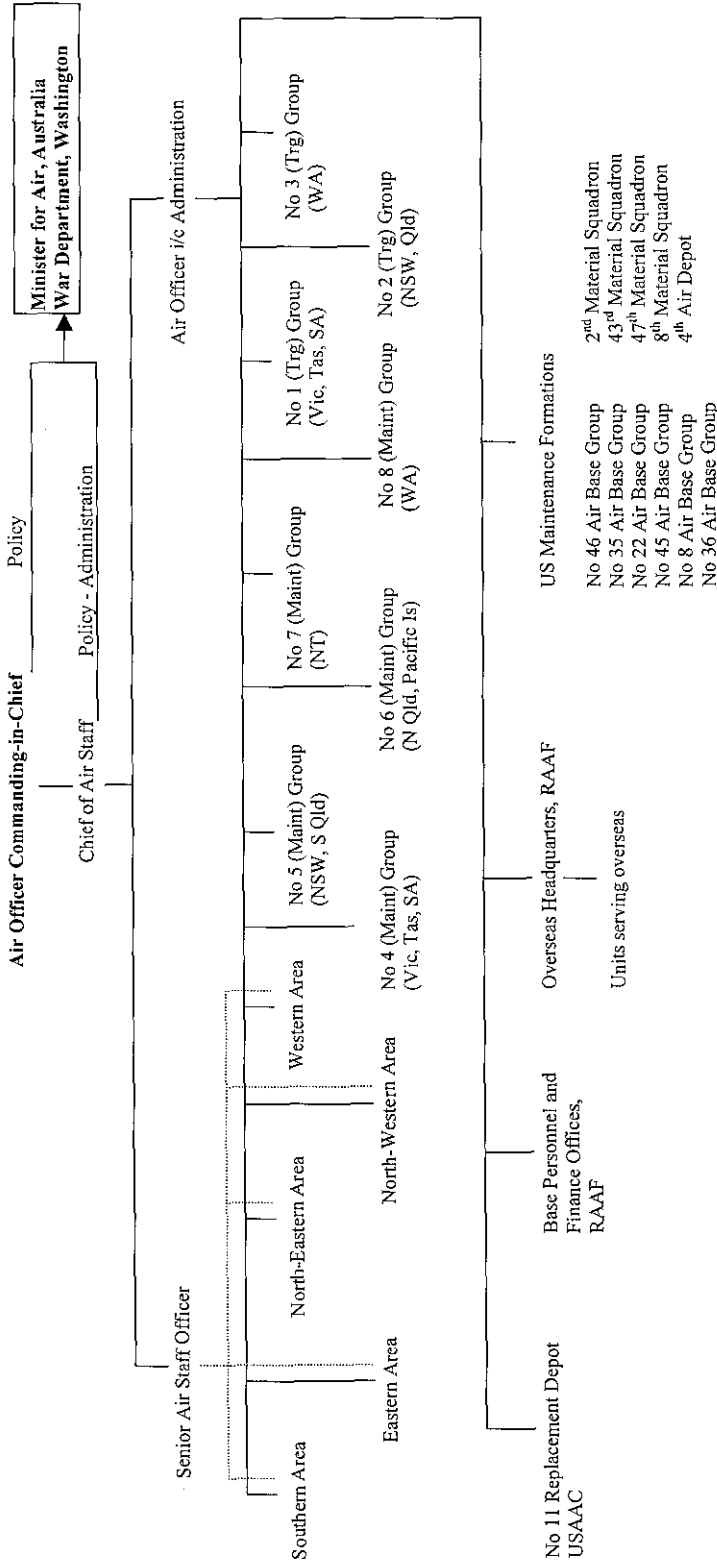
PROPOSED ORGANISATION OF ALLIED AIR HEADQUARTERS



The Minister Objects

Figure 8.2: Annex A to Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia dated 14th April 1942

ORGANISATION OF COMBINED AIR FORCES IN AUSTRALIA



Legend: Operational Control

Figure 8.3: Appendix B to Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia dated 14th April 1942

9

Search For a New Leader

EVENTS PRIOR TO DECEMBER 1941

As explained in Chapter 4, when Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett was appointed as Chief of the Air Staff in January 1940 his appointment was, initially, for twelve months. At the time it was, reportedly, the intention of the then Minister for Air, Mr J Fairbairn, to have Air Marshal R Williams then take over. However, in July 1940 War Cabinet, on the recommendation of Mr Fairbairn, extend Sir Charles Burnett's appointment 'for a further twelve months', thus extending his term of office to January 1942. Then in August 1941 the Government sought, and obtained, a further extension, to 30th April 1942.

Shortly thereafter, in September 1941, Air Marshal Williams was sent to the United Kingdom to open an Overseas Headquarters. Then, in October 1941, immediately following, but unrelated to the change of Government, Williams was promoted to Temporary Air Marshal and Air Commodore Bostock to substantive Air Vice-Marshal, while remaining in the post of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff. At the same time, Air Commodore Anderson was promoted to the rank of Acting Air Vice-Marshal on taking over as Air Member for Organisation and Equipment from Air Marshal Williams. [*See Chapter 4*]

RECALL OF AIR MARSHAL WILLIAMS

In late December 1941, after the outbreak of war in the Pacific, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, sought permission from the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, to have Air Marshal Williams recalled from London. Significantly, Mr Curtin called the Secretary, Department of Defence, Mr Shedden, into the meeting, and he in turn recorded its broad course. From the record it would appear that Mr Drakeford was dissatisfied with the advice that he was getting from Sir Charles Burnett, and wanted Williams recalled as an alternative adviser. Some discussion also took place on the need to select a successor as CAS for Burnett, with Shedden recording that Burnett was in favour of appointing Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. Shedden in turn explained to Curtin and Drakeford the course of the previous Government's dealings with Williams, but without mention of the details in his Note.

(See Documents: Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence – Return of Air Marshal Williams to Australia, dated 30th December 1941)

As a result the meeting, a cablegram was sent to the High Commissioner recalling Williams from London 'for consultative purposes'.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 30th December 1941)

Williams left London on 24th January 1942 and arrived in Melbourne late in February, after an eventful trip that included being in Darwin during the first Japanese air raid on 19th February 1942.¹

At a meeting of the Advisory War Council, of which Mr Drakeford was not a member, held in Canberra on 6th January 1942, Mr Menzies asked the Prime Minister why Air Marshal Williams was being recalled. He in turn advised that the Minister for Air 'wished to familiarise himself with the capacity and qualifications of Air Marshal Williams'. At the same meeting Mr McEwen reminded the Government that the previous Government had extended Air Chief Marshal Burnett's term to 30th April 1942, and 'he presumed that this would be adhered to'. He also referred to 'the importance of selecting an officer with experience of air warfare in the present war for the post of Chief of the Air Staff'.

The handwritten notes of the Council meeting also reveal some interesting attitudes. Both Menzies and McEwen pointed to Williams' lack of loyalty to Burnett and the clash between them, alluding also to the Williams/Goble disputes of earlier years. The Chiefs of Staff were not in attendance at this particular meeting of the Advisory War Council.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (654) – Return of Air Marshal Williams, dated 6th January 1942)

On his way to Melbourne Air Marshal Williams called on the Minister for Air in Canberra where, according to Williams: 'Mr Drakeford informed me that the Government intended terminating Burnett's appointment as Chief of the Air Staff and that he had sent for me as he wished me to take over that appointment. He told me, however, that Burnett was actively pressing the nomination of Bostock.'²

Comment

The recall of Williams from London so soon after the establishment of Overseas Headquarters is no doubt related to the general falling out between the new Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, and Sir Charles Burnett. It may also have been related to Drakeford's early rejection of Burnett's proposal that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock replace him as CAS. Yet another explanation may be that it was a knee-jerk reaction to the trauma of Japan's entry into the war. However, whatever the reason for the recall, it is clear that Drakeford had determined that Williams should replace Burnett as CAS.

AIR MARSHAL DRUMMOND

In discussion in the Advisory War Council on 6th January, the former Minister for Air, Mr McEwen, raised the issue of now requiring a CAS with operational experience in the current war. He pointed out that Williams' experience, except for his earlier time with Coastal Command, was mainly administrative and that Bostock had had some exposure to operations on a visit to the Middle East. He then went on to

¹ Williams, R. *These Are Facts*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, pp 282-292.

² *Ibid*, p 292

suggest for consideration Air Marshal Drummond, an Australian serving with the RAF, and currently employed as (deputy) air commander in the Middle East.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (654) - Return of Air Marshal Williams, dated 6th January 1942)

Air Marshal Drummond was born in Perth, joined the Australian Army in 1914 and transferred to the Royal Flying Corps in 1916. He served for a time with No 1 Squadron, AFC, in Palestine and was involved in the incident in which then Lieutenant McNamara won the Victoria Cross. He remained with the RAF after the war, and as a squadron leader came to Australia on exchange in 1927/28, serving as Director of Operations and Intelligence at Air Force Headquarters. In 1941/42 he was Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Middle East.

On 5th March, Sir Charles Burnett wrote to the Prime Minister, through the Minister for Air, about his successor. He stressed the need for a person with 'wide war experience in all its aspects' and suggested that Drummond, whom he described as being both highly capable and well thought of by the Air Ministry, should be considered. He added that private enquiries with the Air Ministry had revealed that 'if Australia asks for him we shall do our best to make him available when required'. Burnett also stressed the need to act with some haste 'as it may take a little time to arrange Drummond's release'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Prime Minister, dated 5th March 1942)

DRAKEFORD'S RECOMMENDATION

On 5th March the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, submitted to the Prime Minister his recommendations on a replacement for Sir Charles Burnett. In brief, he suggested: 'the establishment of a special Operational Command to control operations of the RAAF in the field - leaving CAS to deal with Air Force policy and administration, organisation and his normal Service responsibilities.' He then went on to recommend:

- a. that the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett as Chief of the Air Staff be terminated as on and from the 16th March from which date he be granted leave in accordance with RAAF Regulations;
- b. that Air Marshal R Williams, CB, CBE, DSO, idc, be appointed to the position of Chief of the Air Staff of the RAAF;
- c. that the Air Ministry be asked to make available the services of Acting Air Marshal R M Drummond, CB, DSO, OBE, MC, idc (RAF) to permit of his assuming the post of Air Officer Commanding, Operational Command of the RAAF.
- d. That Air Marshal Williams be directed to examine and report immediately upon the steps necessary for the setting up of the proposed Operational Command for the RAAF as well as the respective responsibilities and functions of the CAS and the AOC Operational Command.

Drakeford concluded his letter with a brief summary of 'the personal records of Air Marshals Williams and Drummond and Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff'.

(See Documents Chapter 6: Letter the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 5th March 1942)

Mr Drakeford's proposals were discussed at a meeting of the War Cabinet in Canberra on 9th March but failed to draw any support from the other members. The discussion, however, did show a strong preference for Drummond over Williams, due to the former's recent experience in the conduct of air operations in the Middle East. Although the Meeting made no decision about a successor, it did decide not to reappoint Burnett.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (1985) – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 9th March 1942)

CURTIN'S INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAMS

Also at the meeting of the War Cabinet on 9th March, the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, agreed to a request by the Minister for Air that he interview Air Marshal Williams. A meeting was set up for 16th March, and in preparation for it the Secretary, Department of Defence, Mr Shedden, on 12th March, provided the Prime Minister with a note dealing with the actions taken by the previous Government in relation to Williams. Shedden said, in part, that:

- a. the Lyons Government had decided, on the recommendation of the 1938 Ellington Report, that Williams should 'vacate the post of CAS';
- b. the Menzies Government had decided that 'a RAF officer senior to both Air Vice-M Marshals Williams and Goble should be obtained as Chief of the Air Staff', and, further that 'it was not considered that either of these officers was competent to fill the post of Chief of the Air Staff'; and
- c. the former Minister for Air, Mr McEwen had tentatively concluded 'that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was the most likely Australian officer for appointment as Chief of the Air Staff'.

(See Documents: Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 12th March 1942)

Mr Curtin's interview with Air Marshal Williams took place in Canberra on 16th March. Williams gives the following account:³

I had not met the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, and on 16 March I went to Canberra with the Minister for that purpose. The Prime Minister's first remark to me was, 'I understand that you couldn't agree with Goble'. This was a complete surprise to me; I thought this matter was long dead. Here was the leader of a political party, notorious for disagreement among its members, including its leader, implying, if not actually saying so, that there was something wrong if the senior of an armed Service did not agree with his junior. But what prompted the comment? The words he used clearly implied that it

³ *Ibid*, pp 294-295.

was not from his personal knowledge and that he had been informed of this friction of twenty years earlier, before he himself had entered Federal politics. Curtin had the same permanent head of the Department of Defence as did Menzies when Fairbairn was seeking my return from London in 1939 – Shedden.

I told Mr Curtin that I disagreed strongly with any attempt by Goble to give seniority or preference over former AIF officers to those who during the 1914-18 war had held commissions in the United Kingdom Services, particularly the Royal Naval Air Service, as he was inclined to do. However, I was able to say that over the years neither of us had found it necessary to submit a minority report to the Minister on any matter considered by the Board.

There was no discussion on what I imagined a Prime Minister would wish to know of the experience or qualifications of an officer being proposed by the Minister for appointment as Chief of the Air Staff. I came away from the Prime Minister's office feeling that he was anything but enthusiastic about my filling that post again – but the Minister did not feel that way.

Comment

On this occasion the hand of Mr Shedden, the Secretary of the Department of Defence Coordination, can be clearly seen. While his briefing note to the Prime Minister was factually correct, it was certainly slanted against Williams and may well have had the effect of turning Curtin against him, as Williams himself suspected.

DECISION TO SEEK THE SERVICES OF AIR MARSHAL DRUMMOND

At a meeting of the War Cabinet in Canberra on 16th March, Mr Drakeford changed tack. He recommended the appointment of Air Marshal Drummond as Chief of the Air Staff and of Air Marshal Williams as Inspector General of the RAAF with equal rank and status to Drummond, with responsibilities direct to the Minister. After some discussion the War Cabinet decided:

- a. that representations should be made to the United Kingdom Government, with a view to obtaining the services of Acting Air Marshal R M Drummond, Deputy Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAF Middle East, on the same terms and conditions as those applying to the appointment of Sir Charles Burnett, and
- b. to defer further consideration of the proposal (to appoint Air Marshal Williams as Inspector General of the RAAF) until a reply is received regarding Acting Air Marshal Drummond.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (2003) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 16th March 1942)

Comment

There is little doubt that the suggestion for the creation of the position of Inspector General of the RAAF either came directly from Williams, or that he was closely involved in its development. In his papers are two short items dealing with the position of Inspector General in the Australian Army Regulations and with the recent history of the position in the British Services.

(See Documents: Extract from the Defence Act 1903 – 1939 and Regulations and Orders for the Australian Military Forces and Senior Cadets (1927); and, Paper – Notes on the History of the Appointment of Inspector-General in the British Armed Forces, circa March 1942)

The War Cabinet Meeting was followed by an exchange of cables between the Prime Minister and the High Commissioner, London. On 20th March the High Commissioner was asked to pass to the Air Ministry a request for Drummond's services as (Australian) Chief of the Air Staff.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 20th March 1942)

On 26th March Mr Bruce replied advising that the Secretary of State for Air was willing to release Drummond for service in Australia.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 26th March 1942)

Then, on 1st April, Mr Bruce further advised that Drummond was willing to accept the post in Australia, subject to clarification on the following matters:

- (a.) Will he be principal adviser to the Commonwealth.
- (b.) Will he function normally as member of Local Defence Council.
- (c.) In what relation will he stand to General MacArthur.
- (d.) What is his position vis a vis General Brett.

Mr Bruce then went on to explain:

For your personal information the reason for these questions is that while General MacArthur is regarded as quite outstanding some doubts are felt in regard to General Brett, the point of view being that his experience is on the 'Q' side and he has little knowledge on operational side. (a) and (d) are designed to elicit the fact that Drummond would be in a position which would enable him to express his views to and tender his advice to the Australian Government on operational questions notwithstanding the position occupied by Brett.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 1st April 1942.)

BURNETT'S VIEWS

In a follow up to Air Marshal Drummond's request for clarification as to his position as Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Charles Burnett supplied the following advice direct to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination:

2. If Drummond is Deputy AOC-in-C and Chief of Staff, the answer to a. would be:
 - a. Brett as AOC-in-C will be principal adviser on operational matters, although Drummond as Deputy AOC and Chief of Staff will normally deal with War Cabinet and Minister.
 - b. Drummond will normally be a member of Chiefs of Staff Committee.
 - c. He will not deal with General MacArthur, except as Deputy, as General MacArthur would normally deal with General Blamey, Admiral Leary, General Brett, representing the senior officers of the three services.
 - d. Deputy and Chief of Staff.

3. The difficulty will be to get Brett to accept Drummond as Deputy AOC and Chief of Staff, and I do not think any other solution will be acceptable to Drummond, as he has been offered the appointment as Chief of the Royal Australian Air Staff, but if the Government think the Chief Administration Officer satisfactory, Drummond should be so informed by cable at once. In that case:
 - a. Drummond would be adviser to the Commonwealth on administration matters only, and General Brett or his Chief of Staff would deal with other matters.
 - b. Although a member of the Defence Committee, would not be on the Chiefs of Staff Committee, and would not deal with operational matters.
 - c. He will have no relations with General MacArthur.
 - d. He will be General Brett's Senior Administrative Officer.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, dated 4th April 1942)

INTERVENTION BY TEDDER

While this request for clarification of Drummond's position was being considered by the Australian Government, Mr Bruce further advised, on 9th April, that Air Chief Marshal Tedder, the C-in-C Middle East, had appealed to the Air Council against Drummond's release to Australia, stressing his own need for Drummond's services. Bruce added his own view 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'.

(See Documents: Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 9th April 1942)

AIR OFFICER COMMANDING, RAAF

At its meeting on 13th April 1942, the Defence Committee, among other things, recommended the abolition of the Air Board and its replacement by an 'Air Officer Commanding, RAAF', who would in effect replace the Chief of the Air Staff. This proposal was in line with what had recently been put into effect for the Army with the appointment of General Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Force.

(See Documents Chapter 8: Defence Committee Minute No 55/1942, dated 13th April 1942)

ENTER ALLIED AIR FORCES

When the War Cabinet next met to discuss the appointment of a new Chief of the Air Staff, on 17th April, the whole air command situation had undergone a major change. By then the decision had been made to appoint General MacArthur as Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area, with operational control of all of Australia's combat forces then located within Australia and its Territories. As his Commander, Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific Area, MacArthur had in turn appointed Lieutenant General Brett. Negotiations were also well in hand for the establishment of the Allied Air Forces as a closely integrated RAAF/USAAF organisation. These negotiations are described in detail in Chapters 6 to 8.

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| <p>Comment</p> <p>The establishment of the Allied Air Forces brought new players into the selection of a new Chief of the Air Staff, namely Generals MacArthur and Brett, both of whom now needed to be consulted.</p> |
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WAR CABINET MEETING OF 17TH APRIL

At the War Cabinet meeting on 17th April the appointment of a new Chief of the Air Staff was discussed in some detail, but without any clear outcome, except that the Prime Minister should discuss the matter with General MacArthur. The following is a list of points arising from the discussion:

- a. The previous decision to appoint Drummond as CAS had been based on the need for operational experience.
- b. Drummond did not want to be subordinate to Brett, and Brett did not want Drummond or Williams as they were both senior to him in rank.
- c. When the operational side of the war turns to the offensive there would be need for Brett and his staff to go forward and for an officer to remain in Australia to do the work of CAS.
- d. Brett had chosen Bostock as his Chief of Staff, and the Prime Minister was in agreement.
- e. Drakeford reiterated his preference for Williams as CAS, or even as Inspector General, but was opposed to Bostock as CAS. He also opposed the handover of administrative control of the RAAF to Brett. [*See Chapter 8*]

f. There was need of a strong Australian presence in Washington with the Prime Minister favouring Williams as the best man to go as adviser to the Minister, he being the 'greatest fighter for the RAAF'.

g. Brett and Blamey both recommended that Williams be sent to Washington.

h. In the event of being unable to get Drummond as CAS, the Prime Minister reiterated his opposition to Williams and expressed the view that the choice was between Bostock and Hewitt, 'with little difference between them'.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (2099) - Chief of the Air Staff, dated 17th April 1942)

BURNETT'S REQUEST

Also on 17th April, Sir Charles Burnett wrote to the Prime Minister advising that he had written to the Minister for Air suggesting that he be allowed to 'hand over completely to General Brett and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock forthwith'. He then added that 'in AVM Bostock you have a man who can and will safeguard Australia's interests under General Brett. Bostock, as well as being Chief of the Air Staff, must also be the Officer Commanding the Royal Australian Air Force to allow the discipline and organisation of the Force to function under the Act, in the same way as the USA Air Corps functions in law under their Commander.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Prime Minister, dated 17th April 1942)

BURNETT SUGGESTS WILLIAMS FOR WASHINGTON

Again also on 17th April, Sir Charles Burnett wrote to Mr Shedden, suggesting that Air Marshal Williams be sent to Washington as 'Senior Air Staff Officer'. He explained that 'owing to his seniority, he cannot be placed in this country, and to remain as he has been since his arrival back from UK on the 22nd February 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.' He then added that 'my Minister has given me direct orders that Williams is not to work under me at present'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 17th April 1942)

DISCUSSIONS WITH GENERAL MACARTHUR

On 20th April the Prime Minister had discussions with General MacArthur on a variety of topics, including the appointment of a new Chief of the Air Staff. The following is an extract from the minutes of the meeting:

(7) Chief of the Air Staff

The Prime Minister outlined to the Commander-in-Chief the difficulties with which the War Cabinet had been confronted in the appointment of a Chief of the Air Staff to succeed Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett. The Prime Minister referred to the organisation proposed by General Brett, in which he had suggested as his Chief of Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and proposed that he should also be the Chief of the Air Staff.

2. During the discussion the Commander-in-Chief stated that when the Air Force Operational Headquarters moved north, it would be necessary to separate the posts of Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, from that of Chief of the Air Staff of the RAAF. It was agreed, however, that for the most effective direction of the combined Air Forces, General Brett's command should not be limited to operational control.

3. Various alternatives were discussed, but the main difficulties encountered were the inacceptability [sic] to the Minister for Air of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as Chief of the Air Staff, and the presumed inacceptability [sic] to Air Marshal Drummond, of the RAF whose services had been sought as Chief of the Air Staff, of a purely administrative position divorced from operational activities.

4. It was decided that the Commander-in-Chief would have a discussion with General Brett on his return from the north, and that the Prime Minister should also see him.

(See Documents: Prime Minister's War Conference Minute -- Melbourne 20th April 1942)

THE DISCUSSION CONTINUES

As at 20th April Mr Drakeford was still pushing for Air Marshal Williams to be appointed as Chief of the Air Staff. In a letter to the Prime Minister of that date he said:

In the event of my *original* recommendation concerning Air Marshal Williams not being adopted and if his services are not made use of in Australia, I recommend that he be nominated as Service representative on the Pacific War Council at Washington, and that he should retain the London appointment for the present. (Air Vice-Marshal McNamara to continue to act in his absence.) [*Emphasis added*]

(See Documents Chapter 8: First letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 20th April 1942)

REPLY TO DRUMMOND'S QUERIES

On 24th April the Prime Minister sent two cablegrams to the High Commissioner in London related to the request for Air Marshal Drummond. In the first he answered the queries as to his status vis a vis Brett made by Drummond in the High Commissioner's cablegram of 1st April:

- (a.) Drummond will be the principal adviser to the Commonwealth Government insofar as Australian air policy is concerned.
- (b.) He will be a member of the Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee and attend meetings of the War Cabinet and Advisory War Council in the same manner as Royle and Sturdee.
- (c.) He will have no relation to General MacArthur, who is responsible for operations and under whom Brett is the

Operational Air Commander. General MacArthur states that if Brett were to become a casualty, Drummond would no doubt succeed to the Command of the Allied Air Forces. Should Allied Headquarters move out of Australia when offensive operations commence, Drummond would be the Regional Commander in Australia of the air forces remaining there.

- (d.) General MacArthur describes Drummond's relation to Brett as being in a position of support rather than subordinate. The situation would be parallel to that of Royle in relation to Leary, who has operational control of the RAN Squadron.

In his second cablegram he regretted the delay in answering, quoting as the reason 'difficulties in regard to individuals and organisation'. He hoped that Drummond had not been lost due to the delay, stressing Australia's strong desire and need for Drummond's services, which were over and above those of Tedder. He also asked that Drummond be advised that MacArthur 'appears keen that that we should get him'.

(See Documents: First and Second Cablegrams from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 24th April 1942)

Concluding Comment

There was in Australia at this time strong support for Drummond to be Chief of the Air Staff of the RAAF. What was less clear was the future role of the Chief of the Air Staff in the upcoming Allied air organisation. In particular, there was some doubt that Drummond, whose prime attraction was his air operational experience, would have any role in the conduct of operations.

10

A Divided Organisation

INTRODUCTION

The eleven day period from Saturday, 25th April, to Tuesday, 5th May, was one of great significance for the Royal Australian Air Force, for in that time two fateful decisions were taken on the future of the Allied air organisation and on the leadership of the RAAF. These were not simple decisions, and they were not arrived at without a great deal of discussion, manoeuvre and opposition. This Chapter will discuss the decision reached on the Allied air organisation. The leadership issue will be discussed in Chapter 11.

It would also appear from various records that the key political players in this drama (Curtin and Drakeford) travelled from Melbourne to Canberra on Sunday, 26th April, and remained there until sometime after at least Wednesday, 6th May. In Canberra they were supported by the Secretary of the Department of Defence (Shedden) and for part of the time only, notably on Tuesday, 28th April, (for the Advisory War Council and War Cabinet Meetings) by the Chief of the Air Staff, Sir Charles Burnett.

PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION

On Saturday, 25th April, the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, informed Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, by letter of the decisions he had reached in regard to Air Force organisation after discussing the matter with General MacArthur. He said (in part):

After considering his (General MacArthur's) views and other factors involved, I have reached the following conclusions, which I am assured are satisfactory insofar as they have a bearing on his responsibilities and those of the Commander, Allied Air Forces:

- (i.) The responsibility of Lieutenant General Brett, Commander, Allied Air Forces, shall be, insofar as the RAAF is concerned, the operational control of the RAAF squadrons assigned to the Commander-in-Chief.
- (ii.) The Chief of the Air Staff will be the Adviser to the Commonwealth Government on Australian Air Policy and will attend War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council as required.

I have deferred a decision regarding the abolition of the Air Board as this is a matter for further consideration in the light of other matters such as the appointment of the Chief of the Air Staff and the organisation ultimately decided upon.

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 cooperation is to be afforded the Commander of the Allied Air Forces, and this instruction is to be promulgated to all concerned.

(See Documents: First Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942)

On the same day, 25th April, the Prime Minister wrote to General Brett forwarding a copy of his letter to the Minister for Air. After pledging 'fullest cooperation', he concluded: 'It is hoped you will now be able to precede with the organisation of your staff, and I would extend to you my best wishes for every success in your operations as Commander of the Allied Air Forces'.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 14 to 16)

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

In what might be regarded as 'a final word on the matter' the Prime Minister, also on 25th April, wrote a personal and confidential letter to the Minister for Air. He said:

I wish to make it clear that originally the consensus of opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, and the Chief of the Naval Staff was that, for the most effective direction of the RAAF, General Brett's command should not be limited to operational control. This proposal was first made in the joint memorandum of Lieutenant General Brett and Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, which was submitted to you and me in Canberra on 20th March by Lieutenant General Brett, and approved. [See Chapter 7] Subsequently the Defence Committee recommended that the proposed amalgamation of the United States Air Corps in Australia and the RAAF, and the formation of an Allied Air Force on a command basis, would make it impossible for the Air Board to continue to function. The appointment of an Air Officer Commanding the RAAF was accordingly recommended by the Defence Committee. The integrity of Government and Ministerial control of Australian Policy was fully safeguarded under these proposals. [See Chapter 8]

Under the unified organisation, the Officer Commanding the RAAF would be the next senior to the Commander of the Allied Air Forces, and in effect also Chief of Staff to the latter. As you are opposed to the appointment as OC, RAAF, of the officer nominated by Lieutenant General Brett as his Chief of Staff, my impression, in view of the opinion originally expressed in paragraph 1 by the Commander-in-Chief, is that, for smooth working, it is better to maintain the separate organisations for each Air Force and rely on cooperation rather than unified direction for the essential results.

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.

(See Documents: Second Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942)

DELAY IN HANDOVER

Although all Australian combat forces were assigned to General MacArthur, as Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, on 18th April, it was not until 30th April that the formal handover of operational control of the Royal Australian Air Force to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific, Lieutenant General Brett, eventually took place.

In reply to the Prime Minister's 25th April letter to him, General Brett wrote back the same day asking that 'formal action be taken to place all Service units of the RAAF together with the necessary operational Headquarters under (his) operational command as from 2359 hours on the 25th April 1942'.

General Brett also asked for urgent decisions on staff and accommodation. He stated, in part:

It is my intention to employ combined American and Australian officers on the staff of Allied Air Headquarters, and I therefore request that RAAF officers as shown in the attached list be made available for Senior appointments. I suggest that Staff Officers to fill more subordinate positions can then be allocated by direct arrangements between myself, the Chief of Air Staff, RAAF, and the Chief of Air Corps, USAFIA.

I propose to retain the general organisation at present established by the RAAF for the operational control of units, and therefore, as both RAAF and American units will be involved, it will be necessary to include American officers on the operational staffs of Area Headquarters, Air Combined Headquarters and Fighter Sector Headquarters. The selection and posting of these officers can also be determined by direct arrangement between the American and Australian Air Services in consultation with me.

He also requested accommodation for his Headquarters in Victoria Barracks, Melbourne and listed the names of the senior RAAF officers required for its staff. This 'list' was:

Chief of Staff

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, CB, OBE

Assistant Chief of Staff

Air Commodore G Jones, CB, DFC

Intelligence

Air Commodore J E Hewitt, OBE

Defence

Air Commodore D E L Wilson

Operations

Group Captain W L Hely, AFC

Plans

Group Captain V E Hancock, OBE

Communications

Group Captain C G Wiggins

(See Documents: Letter from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Prime Minister, dated 25th April 1942)

Comment

One interesting point made in General Brett's letter is that, although he was an Army Air Corps officer, he did not have direct command of the Air Corps forces in Australia. The Chief of the Army Air Corps in Australia was Brigadier General Royce.

On Sunday, 26th April, the Secretary, Department of Defence, Mr Shedden, wrote to General Brett advising that his letter would be placed before the Prime Minister as soon as possible and that in the meantime his requests for staff officers and accommodation had been passed to the Minister for Air for urgent attention. Mr Shedden also added that the request for immediate handover of forces was not understood as the forces concerned had already been assigned to the Supreme Commander as from midnight on 18th April. Thus he interpreted the request as one for a list of units concerned, and this, too, had been passed to the Minister for Air.

(See Documents: Letter from the Secretary, Department of Defence, to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 26th April 1942)

On Monday 27th April General Brett wrote again to the Prime Minister advising that he was about to go north to Townsville, and possibly on to Darwin, and asking for urgent attention to his request.

(See Documents: Letter from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Prime Minister, dated 27th April 1942)

A MATTER OF INTERPRETATION

In the first three days of the week following the Prime Minister's decision of 25th April on the future organisation of the RAAF, a series of exchanges between the principal players showed some residual confusion, and last minute manoeuvring, as to the detail.

On Monday 27th April Mr Shedden passed to the Minister for Air a request from General Brett that the necessary operational headquarters be included with the assignment of the RAAF's Service (ie., operational) squadrons. He also advised him that the Chief of the Air Staff had advised him that the handover to General Brett

should include all units under the control of the CAS other than training units. He further advised that in a later telephone conversation, CAS had said that 'he would have no objection to the inclusion of training units'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Secretary, Department of Defence to the Minister for Air, dated 27th April 1942)

At a meeting of the Advisory War Council in Canberra the following day, which was attended by both Mr Drakeford and Sir Charles Burnett, it was agreed that:

With the Service Squadrons there is also assigned RAAF Area Headquarters, Air [Area] Combined Headquarters, all Fighter Sector Headquarters and such Station Headquarters as have been established for the operational control of RAAF Service Squadrons.

Operational control of the RAAF Service Squadron and necessary Operation Headquarters as indicated above, is vested in the Commander of the Allied Air Forces.

The Australian Chief of the Air Staff will be responsible for all matters associated with RAAF personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and building, and trained. These functions are not assigned to the Commander-in-Chief.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minutes Nos (916) - Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command, and (917) - Appointment of Chief of Air Staff and Air Force Organisation, dated 28th April 1942)

This decision was confirmed by the War Cabinet later the same day.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (2127) - Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command, dated 28th April 1942)

On Wednesday, 29th April, Mr Drakeford wrote three letters to the Prime Minister. In the first, which was in answer to Mr Shedden's letter of 27th April, he set down the broad lines of the demarcation of responsibilities between General Brett and the Chief of the Air Staff. Brett would take over operational control of the service squadrons and the various RAAF operational headquarters. The Chief of the Air Staff 'would assume responsibility for all matters associated with RAAF personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings, and training - by far the major portion of which is associated directly with the Empire Air Training Scheme'.

Also, he did 'not concur in the suggestion that training units should come under the control of General Brett' as had been suggested to Mr Shedden by Sir Charles Burnett.

(See Documents: First Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942)

In his second letter, which was in answer to Mr Curtin's first letter of 25th April, Mr Drakeford advised the Prime Minister that he had 'instructed the Chief of the Air Staff to arrange for the immediate transfer of responsibility to Lieutenant

General Brett, Commander Allied Air Forces, for the operational control of RAAF service squadrons' and the promulgation of the necessary orders to ensure the fullest of cooperation with General Brett.

(See Documents: Second Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942)

Mr Drakeford's third letter was in answer to Mr Curtin's 'personal and confidential' letter of 25th April. He said, in part:

I fully appreciate the factors leading up to your decision in the matter, but I wish to say that I see no reason why the new organisation set-up should not function satisfactorily with that reciprocal cooperation which should reasonably be expected of all concerned. By this I desire to make it clear that, provided those who have put forward other propositions are now willing to give the new set-up, which you have accepted, their full support, I have no doubt that it will work most efficiently.

(See Documents: Third Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942)

DISAGREEMENT WITH THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

Even after all of the correspondence that had taken place, all of which would not have been known to all of the players, Sir Charles Burnett still maintained a different interpretation on the decision of the Government on the assignment of air forces to that espoused by Mr Drakeford. On Wednesday, 29th April, he sent a message to the Minister for Air in which he said:

It was agreed at War Cabinet on 28th April 1942 that the interpretation of 'the assignment of Australian Air Forces' means that all operational units, administration, maintenance and supply organisation to keep the operational units to their maximum efficiency, should come under the control of the Commander, Allied Air Forces (General Brett). The training organisation, embracing EATS Scheme and the administration of all RAAF personnel and recruiting, will remain the direct responsibility of the Chief of the Australian Air Force.

Burnett then asked the Minister to 'confirm the above with the Prime Minister to enable the new organisation to be established without delay'.

In order to save time, he advised, he had sent a copy of his minute direct to the Prime Minister.

(See Documents: Message from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 29th April 1942)

On Thursday, 30th April, Mr Drakeford wrote to both the Prime Minister and the Chief of the Air Staff expressing his displeasure at Sir Charles Burnett's action in sending a copy of his message of 29th April direct to the Prime Minister, and at the same time expressing his own understanding of 'the collective views expressed at Tuesday's War Council [*War Cabinet or Advisory War Council?*] meeting'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 30th April 1942)

HANDOVER OF AIR FORCES

The final word in the handover came on Thursday, 30th April in a letter from the Prime Minister to General Brett. He said, in part:

2. **Assignment of Air Forces.** The Australian Air Forces assigned to the Commander-in-Chief on 18th April comprise all Service [*ie, operational*] squadrons, but do not include training units. In amplification of this I would inform you that, with the Service squadrons there is also assigned RAAF Area Headquarters, Air [*Area*] Combined Headquarters, all Fighter Sector Headquarters and such Station Headquarters as have been established for the operational control of RAAF Service squadrons.

Operational control of the RAAF Service squadrons and necessary operational headquarters as indicated above, is vested in you as Commander of the Allied Air Forces.

The Australian Chief of the Air Staff will be responsible for all matters associated with RAAF personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings and training. These functions have not been assigned to the Commander-in-Chief.

3. **Staff.** In regard to the allotment of RAAF staff to Allied Air Headquarters, after consultation with the Minister for Air I am agreeable to the officers named in your list being made available for appointment to Allied Air Headquarters, with the exception of Air Commodore Jones. ...

I shall be glad, therefore, if you will reconsider Air Commodore Jones' selection and propose an alternative.

The Minister for Air and I fully agree that the selection of officers for the subordinate posts on Allied Air Headquarters, as well as those necessary for Area Combined Headquarters and Fighter Sector Headquarters, should be made in consultation with RAAF Administration.

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 30th April 1942)

Comment

Quite clearly, this delay in the formal handover was due to the wrangling over the final form of the organisation. This tug-of-war took place, in the main, between Drakeford, who was clearly being supported by Williams, and Brett, who was being supported (or was it led?) by Burnett, with Bostock not far behind.

The particular differences between Drakeford and Burnett over the War Cabinet decision of Tuesday 28th April are a little difficult to resolve from the records available. Both men attended both the Advisory War Council and War Cabinet meetings that day. The notes on the Advisory War Council meeting, however, do not indicate a decision along the lines set out in AWC Minute No (916). As to the War Cabinet meeting, which followed the Advisory War Council meeting, there are no notes in the records. From this it is possible to postulate that, as probably occurred on many occasions, the formal minutes of the two meetings, AWC (616) and WC (2127), were put together by Shedden to reflect what he believed was required in the light of the Prime Minister's various discussions with the Minister for Air, together with Brett's 25th April letter to the Prime Minister. This latter document contains, in part, wording similar to that used in the Advisory War Council and War Cabinet Minutes, including the incorrect title of 'Air Combined Headquarters' (should be Area Combined Headquarters).

It is also of interest to contemplate the reaction on the American side had Brett and Burnett succeeded in setting up a fully integrated Air Force headquarters, which they would have done but for Drakeford's intervention. As will be seen in Chapter 13, even the limited degree of integration actually achieved went well beyond what many senior American officers, including the Chief of the Army Air Forces in Washington, General Arnold, believed to be acceptable.

ALLIED AIR HEADQUARTERS SENIOR STAFF

On 7th May, Lieutenant General Brett announced to the press the composition of the senior staff at Allied Air Headquarters:

| | |
|--|--|
| Chief of Staff: | Air Vice-Marshal William D Bostock, RAAF |
| Deputy Chief of Staff: | Colonel Edwin S Perrin, USAAF |
| Senior Air Staff Officer: | Brigadier General Ralph Royce, USAAF |
| Director of Plans: | Colonel Eugene L Eubank, USAAF |
| Director of Operations: | Colonel Ross G Hoyt, USAAF |
| Director of Intelligence: | Air Commodore Joseph E Hewitt, RAAF |
| Director of Defence: | Group Captain R W Scherger, RAAF |
| Director of Communications: | Group Captain Carn S Wiggins, RAAF |
| Assistant Director of Plans: | Wing Commander Valston E Hancock, RAAF |
| Assistant Director of Operations: | Wing Commander Allan L Walters, RAAF |
| Assistant Director of Intelligence: | Lieutenant Colonel Reginald F C Vance, USAAF |
| Assistant Director of Communications: | First Lieutenant Warner Croxton, USAAF |

(See Documents: Article in *The Argus*, dated 7th May 1942, 'Allied Air Force Staff: RAAF and US Air Corps Linked')

RAAF AIR ORDER OF BATTLE

The order of battle of the combat elements of the RAAF on 30th April 1942 is set out at Appendix B.

POSTSCRIPT – COMMENT BY GENERAL BRETT

General Brett's time as Commander of the Allied Air Forces was short. In early August 1942 he handed over to Major General G C Kenney. As part of his handover he reflected to General Kenney on the establishment of the Allied Air Forces:

The original intent in the organisation of the Allied Air Forces was to have one Allied Air Force commander who would be completely in command of all Air Force tactical as well as maintenance and supply units. The plan was laid this way in view of the terrific importance of maintenance and supply to the operating elements and also to secure very close coordination between the American and the Australian forces. Without going into detail, this fell down largely because of an argument over personalities. When it began to break up, GHQ took the attitude that there should be an air force operating up north under the Air Force commander and the question of supply and maintenance should be left to someone else. Anyone with Air Force experience knows that the Air Force commander must have a very strong hold on his maintenance and supply establishments; otherwise he does not get results. This breakdown resulted in considerable upset in the RAAF ...

(See Documents Chapter 12: Comments by General Brett, dated July 1942)

MACARTHUR'S ROLE

One unfortunate aspect of the negotiations over the best form of air organisation to meet the circumstances of the time was the lack of active involvement by General MacArthur. What does come out quite clearly is that there was a marked difference of view on the subject between Brett and Burnett on the one hand and MacArthur on the other.

Brett and Burnett saw the organisation in terms of the static defence of Australia being controlled from the established military headquarters complex in Melbourne. To them, combining the operational control of the fighting forces with the control of the administrative support activities, which was already well established in Melbourne, was eminently logical. No doubt, they also saw Melbourne as the centre of political and government action, in much the same way as Canberra is regarded today.

MacArthur, on the other hand, saw the organisation in terms of the offensive that he intended to carry out against the Japanese. He saw his own and the three force component headquarters moving forward as the advance progressed. Such an approach called for small mobile headquarters rather than the large static organisations that tend to grow up to meet the requirements of controlling a large support organisation. It also called for a separation of the operational control of the fighting forces (with its requirements for mobility) from the control of the administrative support activities (which was essentially fixed in Melbourne).

In the event, MacArthur made no attempt to intervene in the negotiations over the form of the Allied air organisation.

MOTIVATION OF KEY PLAYERS

One of the many issues in the proposal for a fully integrated Allied Air Force Headquarters that remains hidden is the motivation of the major players. Why would General Brett, as a high ranking officer have urged not so much that he be given, in effect, full command of the RAAF, but that he also hand over subordinate command of a large element of his nation's air force to officers of another nation? Did he not at least contemplate the likely, adverse, reaction of his superiors in Washington had they but seen what he was proposing? Maybe he saw it as a way of prising control of the Air Corps from the Army.

As to Burnett, who was about to leave the post of Chief of the Air Staff, and the country, his motivation is equally unclear. Maybe he was influenced by his deputy, and expected successor, Bostock, who stood to gain a great deal of power and influence had the proposed arrangements been put into place. Here, however, it needs be pointed out that, Burnett is most unlikely to have pushed such a radical proposal had he not believed in it. Certainly, getting rid of the Air Board, reducing the role of the Minister for Air, promoting Bostock as his successor, and moving heaven and earth to get the Americans to come to Australia's assistance would all have been factors in his consideration of the case.

Irrespective of the motivation of the key players, it is clear that in pressing for too wide a control over the administration of the RAAF, Brett ended up with too little in the way of control over the more immediate administrative support needed by the RAAF operational squadrons under his command. The implications of this will be seen in subsequent chapters.

11

Dual Leadership

PRIME MINISTER'S DECISION

On Saturday, 25th April, when the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, wrote to the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, as well as advising his decision in relation to the organisation of the RAAF [*See Chapter 10*], he advised the Minister that General MacArthur had also agreed with the following:

- iii. Air Marshal Drummond to be appointed Chief of the Air Staff, if his services are still available for this post. A further cablegram has been dispatched to the High Commissioner.
- iv. The services of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to be made available to Lieutenant General Brett as Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, if the latter so desires.
- v. Air Marshal Williams to be the Air Member of the Service Mission in Washington, of which Lieutenant General Smart has been designated the Head.

(See Documents Chapter 10: First Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942)

ADVISORY WAR COUNCIL, 28TH APRIL

At the Advisory War Council meeting on Tuesday 28th April, which was attended by both Mr Drakeford and Sir Charles Burnett, the Prime Minister read his letter to the Minister for Air of 25th April. From the ensuing discussion the following points emerged in relation to the appointment of a new CAS:

- a. Brett was in favour of Bostock to be CAS, and did not want Drummond.
- b. MacArthur was keen to have Drummond as CAS.

(See Documents Chapter 10: Advisory War Council Minutes Nos (916) - Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command, and (917) - Appointment of Chief of Air Staff and Air Force Organisation, dated 28th April 1942)

MACARTHUR'S SUPPORT FOR DRUMMOND

One interesting sidelight that comes from the discussion in the Advisory War Council on 28th April is MacArthur's support for Drummond. MacArthur's dissatisfaction with Brett is well known, and it may be that he saw Drummond as an alternative. Brett in turn may have had similar fears, and may have seen Drummond as a rival for his post as Commander, Allied Air Forces. On the basis of their respective experience, Drummond had far better credentials for the post of Allied Air Commander than Brett.

BOSTOCK AS CHIEF OF STAFF

Following General Brett's letter to the Prime Minister on 25th April, in which he repeated his request for the services of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as his Chief of Staff [*See Chapter 10*], the Prime Minister replied on 30th April agreeing to make Bostock available for that post. As a consequence, Bostock formally became Chief of Staff, Allied Air Headquarters, as from 2nd May 1942.

(See Documents Chapter 10: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 30th April 1942)

JONES NOT AVAILABLE

Also in his letter to General Brett on 30th April, the Prime Minister advised him that Air Commodore Jones would not be available as Assistant Chief of Staff, and asked that an alternative be nominated for the post. In explanation the Prime Minister repeated the reasons given him by the Minister for Air:

Due to the considerable growth of the Royal Australian Air Force since the outbreak of war, and the projected expansion to a 73 squadron basis, as already approved in principle by War Cabinet, it was some time ago found necessary to transfer Air Commodore Jones to the Organisation and Equipment Branch to act in the capacity of Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment.

The importance of the responsibilities and the volume of work of that Branch are rapidly increasing and I regard it as 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.

(See Documents Chapter 10: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 30th April 1942)

Comment

This is the first indication that Drakeford may have been thinking of Jones as a likely contender for the post of Chief of the Air Staff.

ANOTHER DISAGREEMENT WITH THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

On or around the evening of Wednesday, 29th April, the Minister for Air in Canberra received the following teleprinter message from Sir Charles Burnett:

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 (AVM Bostock) pending final decision with regard to my successor. I propose, therefore, with your permission handing over on the 4th May 1942.

This message elicited a sharp response from Mr Drakeford, who wrote next morning to the Prime Minister, threatening to resign if Bostock was permitted to take over as CAS, even on a temporary basis. What Drakeford had to say clearly had an important bearing on the subsequent selection of Air Commodore G Jones as Chief of the Air Staff.

Mr Drakeford opened his letter quoting the text of the message from Sir Charles Burnett, then went on:

2. As I have not been so informed by yourself, I am not accepting the CAS's memorandum as being a correct statement of the position.
3. If it is correct, 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.
4. At the subsequent discussions, nothing has been said, nor has it been written, by me to indicate any withdrawal of my opposition to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as Chief of the Air Staff, and it stands as far as him acting in that position is concerned.
5. This latest proposition outlined by the Chief of the Air Staff cannot be looked upon in any other light than as a last minute attempt to achieve over my head what he knows I am opposed to as Minister and it is in line with attempts which, up to the conclusion of the War Council [*War Cabinet or Advisory War Council?*] meeting, had not met with success.
6. I have not had cooperation either from him or Sir Charles Burnett and my task as Minister has been made not only difficult but almost intolerable as a consequence.
7. In my view, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock will be fully occupied in doing justice to the position assigned to him as Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces (Lieutenant General Brett) and, if it is agreed that Sir Charles Burnett should hand over his post on May, 4th, then I return to my original recommendation that Air Marshal R Williams occupy that position.
8. If you feel that that officer should be reserved for the contemplated position as Air Representative for Australia in Washington, then I recommend that Air Commodore Jones be appointed as Acting Chief of the Air Staff.
9. I realise that, if Sir Charles Burnett is retained as CAS beyond 4th May, my Department and myself will be faced with further difficulties and I desire to be freed of both as early as possible.

10. 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 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.

11. Whatever may be your decision on that matter, I would ask you to accept my thanks for your personal courteous and considerate treatment of myself as a fellow Minister, my assurance of continued loyalty to yourself as Prime Minister, and my deepest and high regard for you and your great work for Australia in the Commonwealth's greatest crisis.

12. Might I add that, if you feel that silence on my reasons for resignation might cause any embarrassment to yourself or to the Party, I would be glad if you would feel at liberty to utilise or publish the whole or part of the correspondence from myself on the matter in any way you think advisable or necessary.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, circa 30th April 1942)

Comment

Unfortunately, Drakeford's letter to Curtin was not dated, but it would appear to have been written, in Canberra, on 30th April. As it makes no reference to Drummond, it could be argued that it was written after receipt of Bruce's cablegram of 1st May (which was received on 2nd May) advising that it was unlikely that Drummond could be made available to be CAS. Then, on the other hand, as Sir Charles Burnett was due to hand over in four days time, then clearly Drummond would not in any case be available immediately. Hence the recommendation that Jones be appointed as acting Chief of the Air Staff. Also, if the date of 30th April is correct, Drakeford's letter may have influenced the Prime Minister's decision to withdraw Jones from inclusion in Brett's staff.

REQUEST FOR DRUMMOND REJECTED

On Saturday, 2nd May, the Prime Minister received advice from the High Commissioner in London that the Air Ministry were most unlikely to accede to Australia's request for the services of Air Marshal Drummond as Chief of the Air Staff. Mr Bruce reported that: 'the Air Ministry do not feel that Air Marshal Drummond's exceptional operational experience would be adequately used in the functions now allotted to the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia. They have also intimated that it would be impossible to release him from the Middle East, as serious operations are likely to develop in the near future.'

(See Documents: Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 1st May 1942)

APPOINTMENT OF AIR COMMODORE JONES

On 5th May the War Cabinet was advised of the Air Ministry's rejection of the request for the services of Air Marshal Drummond, and that the Prime Minister, on the recommendation of the Minister for Air had, effective from that date, appointed Air Commodore George Jones to be Chief of the Air Staff. War Cabinet confirmed the Prime Minister's action and left it to the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and the Minister for Air to determine Jones' rank and rate of pay.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 222/1942 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 5th May 1942; War Cabinet Minute No (2130) - Agendum No 222 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 5th May 1942; and, Advisory War Council Minute No (926) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 6th May 1942)

Of note is the fact that the War Cabinet approval was for Air Commodore Jones to be appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, not Acting Chief of the Air Staff, as recommended in the Minister for Air's letter and in War Cabinet Agendum No 222/1942.

In the Commonwealth Gazette of 4th June 1942 it was promulgated that: 'Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, KCB, CBE, DSO, RAF, relinquishes the appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, 4th May 1942'. The Gazette also promulgated the promotion to Air Vice-Marshal with effect 5th May 1942 of Temporary Group Captain (Acting Air Commodore) G Jones, CBE, DFC, and of his appointment as Chief of the Air Staff, with effect the same date.

WILLIAMS' ACCOUNT OF JONES' APPOINTMENT

Air Marshal Williams' account of the appointment of Air Commodore Jones as Chief of the Air Staff is of particular interest and bears repeating in full:¹

In due course Mr Drakeford received notice of a Cabinet meeting at Canberra, one item being the appointment of Chief of Air Staff. He subsequently told me what happened at that meeting.

On arrival at the Cabinet room, Drakeford said, the Prime Minister informed him that he wanted to finalise the appointment that day and went on to say that there was one officer whose appointment he would not consider and that officer was Bostock. The Prime Minister said that he had had representations made to him from several directions in favour of Bostock and to these he had paid little attention, but that morning before coming to the Cabinet meeting the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie, had spoken to him in Bostock's favour.

The Prime Minister expressed the view that although the Governor-General was nominally Commander in Chief of the armed forces it was for the Government to advise him on the appointment of a Chief of Staff and not vice versa – he therefore decided that under no circumstances would he agree to Bostock's appointment.

¹ Williams, R. *These Are Facts*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, pp 295-296.

Mr Drakeford informed the Prime Minister that he had had no intention of recommending Bostock and when the matter came up for consideration he submitted my name. He then found that the Prime Minister objected to me just as strongly although he had not previously indicated this. A heated discussion developed which resulted in Drakeford walking out and threatening resignation, but he was followed by Curtin who persuaded him to return. In my view it would have been unfortunate if he had not done so.

Being in Canberra without an adviser but pressed to submit another name, the Minister said he chose 'the next senior officer selected by the Americans – Air Commodore G Jones'. I asked him what he meant by 'selected by the Americans' and he referred to the amalgamation proposal submitted to him by Burnett in which Jones's name was shown against one of the staff appointments. Of the names on that document Jones was the next senior after Bostock. There was, of course, no 'selection' by the Americans. Brett had only just arrived in Australia and was in no position, even if he had met them which he had not, to classify and select officers of the RAAF. Jones's name on the table referred to by Drakeford had been put there by Bostock, who never for one moment, I will guarantee, expected it to have this result.

Jones, then a group captain, acting air commodore, was appointed Chief of the Air Staff in place of Burnett and promoted to the substantive rank of air vice-marshal, thus superseding those officers senior to him who had been his commanding officers and who, indeed, as station and unit commanders, had been responsible not only for shaping the personnel of the Service during its development before the war but also for the practical functioning of the schools established under the Empire Air Training Scheme during the preceding two years.

Apart from taking up his appointment in the difficult atmosphere always created by supersessions, Jones's task was not made easier by his being given the rank of air vice-marshal – two ranks below that held by Burnett, and lower than that of the Chiefs of Staff of both the Navy and the Army. And this at a time when not only had the Empire Air Training Scheme to continue but a Japanese attack on Australian territory was under way. However no politician or public servant having to do with defence administration appeared to consider this odd.

JONES' APPOINTMENT

Clearly, the decision to appoint Air Commodore Jones as Chief of the Air Staff took place sometime between the receipt of the cablegram from Mr Bruce on 2nd May and the 4th May. It is also clear that events did not unfold quite as recounted by Air Marshal Williams.

Firstly, there was no War Cabinet meeting at which the final selection was made. Rather, it is most likely that the decision was taken at a meeting between Curtin and Drakeford, probably in Canberra over the weekend 2nd – 3rd May.

Secondly, Curtin's opposition to Bostock was not in evidence in any of the discussions leading up to the final selection. It is possible that the Governor General did speak to Curtin on behalf of Bostock, and that Curtin objected to this, but it is most unlikely that this had any bearing on the issue. The main opposition to Bostock clearly came from Drakeford both directly and through his opposition to Brett being given other than operational control over the RAAF.

Thirdly, Curtin's opposition to Williams would have been well known to Drakeford. It should certainly not have come as any surprise!

Fourthly, the threat of resignation would appear to have been real, not over the failure of Curtin to select Williams, but rather over the possibility that he might select Bostock.

Fifthly, the issue of Jones being selected because he was 'the next senior officer selected by the Americans' requires clarification. Almost certainly, the proposal submitted by Burnett to which Drakeford referred would be that of 20th April referred to in Chapter 8. Figure 8.2 clearly shows Jones' name as the Principal Assistant (in effect deputy) to the Air Officer i/c Administration, and, incidentally, Hewitt's name as Assistant Chief of Staff (Administration). Take then the Ministers explanation that 'of the names on that document Jones was the next senior after Bostock.' This is incorrect in that Acting Air Vice-Marshal Wrigley's name also appears on the document, and he, while junior in rank to Bostock, was senior to Jones. However, Wrigley's name was not on the first page of the original document and hence may have been overlooked by Drakeford, either deliberately or inadvertently.



Air Commodore George Jones, April 1942
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Finally, Williams is of the opinion that it was Bostock, not 'the Americans' who inserted the names on the organisation chart (Figure 8.2). Another possibility is that it was Burnett who made the selections, with or without the help of Bostock. It should also be kept in mind that Jones was also very much part of the negotiating process for the integrated RAAF/USAAF organisation.

Looking back to the period shortly after the outbreak of the Pacific War, there are several indications that Burnett had considered the question of succession after his departure. Clearly he had selected Bostock as Chief of the Air Staff. It would also appear that he planned to move Air Vice-Marshal Anderson out of the post of Air Member for Organisation and Equipment back to being an Area AOC. His employment of Hewitt in such positions as acting DCAS, from October to December 1941, on the ABDA Headquarters staff, February and March 1942, and as Assistant CAS, from after his return from ABDA, all indicate that he planned to recommend that Hewitt become DCAS following Bostock. Burnett also moved Jones, early in 1942, to be Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, indicating that he planned to recommend him to be AMOE following Anderson. Thus it could be argued that Burnett's selection for the senior headquarters staff jobs were: Bostock, Hewitt (operations) and Jones (administration).

The appointment of Jones as Chief of the Air Staff in May 1942 needs to be seen against the circumstances of the time. It would seem reasonable that Curtin, and maybe Drakeford, would have taken the view that:

- a. the position of CAS was of less significance than in the past, having lost responsibility for operations; and,
- b. Jones' appointment was a temporary expedient until such time as a suitable RAF officer could be found to take up the appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, who in turn would be responsible for both operations (to the Allied Air Commander) and administration (to the Minister for Air).

Here it is of interest to note that Drakeford's recommendation to Curtin and the War Cabinet Agendum dealing with Jones' appointment both proposed that he be appointed as Acting Chief of the Air Staff. In the event, the word 'acting' was dropped in the subsequent War Cabinet Minute.

The first indication that Drakeford may have been considering Jones as an alternative to Drummond as Chief of the Air Staff comes from his request to Curtin that Jones not be made available to Brett, for the reasons conveyed to the latter by the Prime Minister on Thursday 30th April. Certainly, the likelihood of getting Drummond at that stage must have been getting rather remote; hence the need to give serious thought to an alternative, especially in the light of Curtin's continuing opposition to Williams.

The best guess as to the final selection of a new Chief of the Air Staff is that Jones was the sole contender, Williams having been rejected by Curtin, and Bostock by Drakeford. It is also possible that Drakeford only intended that Jones take up the post on a temporary basis, pending the still hoped for arrival of Drummond. The only other possibility may have been Hewitt, who had been mentioned by Curtin as a possible contender at the War Cabinet meeting on 17th April. [See Chapter 9]. There is, however, no indication that Drakeford held similar views. Of the two, Jones was the more obvious choice for what had become, with the handover of operational control of the RAAF to General Brett, an administrative post. Jones was also senior to Hewitt and had been closely involved in the administration of the Empire Air Training Scheme, which was to be a major residual responsibility of the CAS.

A final question that needs to be answered is: what about those other RAAF officers who were senior to Jones, and who, incidentally, had also been senior to Bostock, in September 1939? They were, in seniority order, acting Air Vice-Marshal Anderson, Air Commodore Cole, acting Air Vice-Marshal Wrigley and McNamara, Air Commodore De La Rue and acting Air Commodore Lukis. At the time, Anderson and Wrigley were members of the Air Board (AMOE and AMP respectively), McNamara was in London (where he had been since before the War), Cole was also in England on exchange with the RAF, De La Rue was AOC Western Area in Perth and Lukis was AOC North-Eastern Area in Townsville, where he was heavily engaged in operational duties.

At no time in the discussions leading up to the final selection of a new CAS were the names of either Anderson or Wrigley even mentioned in the War Cabinet or Advisory War Council discussions. Neither appear to have been held in high standing, either by Burnett or the political leadership. All of the others were located well away from Melbourne and had had no recent experience in Air Force Headquarters.

It is also of interest at this stage to recall that two of the three prime contenders for the post of Chief of the Air Staff, Bostock and Jones, had both occupied key staff positions within Air Force Headquarters, despite their relatively junior status. Thus Bostock, although the most junior Group Captain on the outbreak of war, was given the key post of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff by Goble and, in effect, reconfirmed in the post by Burnett. Indeed, such were Bostock's abilities, that, under Burnett, he rose to third place on the Air Force List.

Jones too was marked out, first by Goble as Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, and then by Burnett as Director of Training in a force heavily biased towards the Empire Air Training Scheme. Further, Bostock and Jones were the two officers selected by Goble to accompany, respectively, the supply and air training missions to London and Ottawa. While promotion by seniority may have been the norm for promotion and appointment to the various Area Command positions, and to the Air Board itself, the appointment of key staff officers would appear to have been more related to merit.

Further evidence of the appointment of key staff officers by merit, rather than seniority, is the employment, from before the outbreak of war, of then Wing Commanders Wackett and Mackinolty in the key technical services, and supply and equipment posts. They were numbers two and three respectively on the Air Force List in relation to others qualified in their respective specialist areas.

Another officer who appears to have been selected for key staff posts on the basis of merit rather than seniority is Hewitt, who, in July 1940, was brought into Air Force Headquarters, by Burnett, as Director of Personal Services (in effect the deputy to AMP) to give some impetus to the personnel arrangements in a time of rapid expansion.

Here it is of interest to note that the Service members of the Air Board at the end of the war were: Jones, Hewitt, Wackett and Mackinolty, with Bostock in the key job of AOC, RAAF Command. Thus, it could be argued, that, aside maybe from Williams and Goble who had been excluded from any meaningful role in the higher command of the RAAF during the Second World War for having fallen out with their political masters, these five officers were the best the RAAF had available in its senior ranks.

For his part, Jones had been picked out by both Goble and Burnett for advancement ahead of many of his 'seniors' before being 'in the right place at the right time' for selection as Chief of the Air Staff. Certainly, his appointment was not due to a mistake by the Government; rather he was, arguably, the best person available at the time. However, whether or not his appointment was, in hindsight, a mistake, given the subsequent bitter dispute with Bostock, is somewhat more difficult an assessment to make, and is one that must await further examination of that dispute as it unfolds throughout the remaining Chapters.

Finally, what of Jones' own views as to why he was so unexpectedly promoted into the job of CAS? In his autobiography he explains that, initially, he was stunned. He then went on to say: 'I believe, now, that I was appointed because I had shown the ability to organise', referring to his [*very commendable*] work in setting up and running the Empire Air Training Scheme over the previous two years.² Without doubt, Jones' period as Director of Training was his finest hour.

² Jones, G, *From Private to Air Marshal*, Greenhouse Publications, Melbourne, 1988, p 83.

Section Two

Conclusion

The five-month period from early December 1941 to early May 1942 was, without doubt, the most significant in the whole history of the RAAF. After much discussion, manoeuvre and negotiation the Service emerged with a form of organisation that no one liked or wanted. It was then saddled with the essential elements of this organisation until the end of the war, as, notwithstanding its manifest shortcomings, no one appeared to have the wit or the will to change it. At the same time, again after much discussion and negotiation, a new Chief of the Air Staff was appointed in what might be regarded as a spur of the moment decision.

In essence, the new organisation was a Hydra, in this case a two headed monster, with Air Vice-Marsals Bostock and Jones as its heads, both trying to direct the activities of the same body.

In the battles over the organisation and the leadership of the RAAF, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, could be said to have won on both counts. He prevented the adoption of a unified RAAF/USAAF Force as proposed by the outgoing Chief of the Air Staff, and kept Burnett's choice as his successor out of that office. In retrospect, however, it was somewhat of a Pyrrhic victory. The organisation that evolved was not well thought out and was certainly unsuited to the circumstances of the time. Nor was the person selected as Chief of the Air Staff the one best suited to turn this unsatisfactory organisation into a workable arrangement.

The prime cause of this most unsatisfactory result was the falling out between the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, and the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett. Neither trusted nor took note of the views of the other. Hence, Sir Charles Burnett, in conjunction with General Brett, was able to develop his views on the form of organisation required to ensure effective cooperation between the RAAF and the USAAF in Australia without due regard to political reality. Quite clearly, Burnett and Brett exceeded their brief when they proposed a virtual handover of the running of the RAAF to General Brett.

In turn, in his approach to the question of organisation, Drakeford appears to have been driven more by his opposition to Burnett, and his protege, Bostock, than to the idea of handing over full authority over the RAAF to General Brett. It is also clear that the various changes to the organisation that developed along the way were in themselves often driven by considerations of personality rather than sound organisational practice. In turn, the organisational arrangements as they evolved had an influence on the leadership selection process, most notably in relation to Air Marshal Drummond.

Fortunately, not all of the thought and effort put into the unified organisation was wasted. Part was, as will be seen in Chapter 12, incorporated into the reorganisation of the Air Board that of necessity followed the removal of responsibility for RAAF operations from the Chief of the Air Staff.

Section Three

Some Adjustments

Introduction

This short Section covers the period from May to September 1942 during which the new organisation and leadership of the Royal Australian Air Force first consolidated itself, before being further disrupted, essentially, by a change in leadership on the American side as General Kenney took over as the Allied Air Commander in the South-West Pacific from General Brett.

Chapter 12 deals with the adaptation of the Royal Australian Air Force to the advent of the Allied Air Forces organisation, while Chapter 13 deals with the changes to the Allied Air Forces organisation made by General Kenney.

12

Air Board Lives On

Following the establishment of the Allied Air Force Headquarters on 30th April 1942, the transfer thereto of the operations, planning and intelligence staffs from RAAF Headquarters, and the transfer of operational control of the RAAF's operational squadrons and associated Area and other Headquarters, there was need to review the higher organisation of the residual RAAF areas of responsibility.

This need for a review of the higher organisation coincided with the appointment of a new Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Jones, and the transfer of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock from the post of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff to be Chief of Staff at Allied Air Force Headquarters.

AIR BOARD

The most pressing need was to confirm that the Air Board was going to continue, and if so how it was to be organised.

With the transfer of the responsibility for operational control from the Air Board to Allied Air Force Headquarters, the residual responsibilities of the Chief of the Air Staff were minimal. On the other hand, with the steady expansion of the size of the RAAF, the responsibilities of the Air Member for Organisation and Equipment (AMOE) had expanded quite considerably.

Thus the first step in reorganising the Air Board was to return the responsibility for organisation and works to the Chief of the Air Staff. The second step was to delete the position of AMOE and to divide up his residual responsibilities into the major disciplines of engineering and supply by establishing two new positions, an Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance (AMEM) and an Air Member for Supply and Equipment (AMSE). The final step was to review the need for a Director-General of Supply and Production (DGSP), given the earlier establishment of a Department of Aircraft Production. As a result of this review the post of DGSP was also deleted and his responsibilities divided, in the main, between AMEM and AMSE.

The detail of the structure of the Air Board before and after the proposed changes is set out in Figures 12.1 and 12.2. On the latter, the source of the various new and changed directorates is shown in italics. These particular organisation diagrams are drawn from the Third Edition of *Australia's Air War Effort*, which was issued on 8th May 1942, before the final approval for the new organisation had been given.

On 14th May, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, in his dual role as Minister for Defence, advising him of the proposed changes to the structure of the Air Board, and of the consequent changes in various senior appointments. The proposed appointments were:

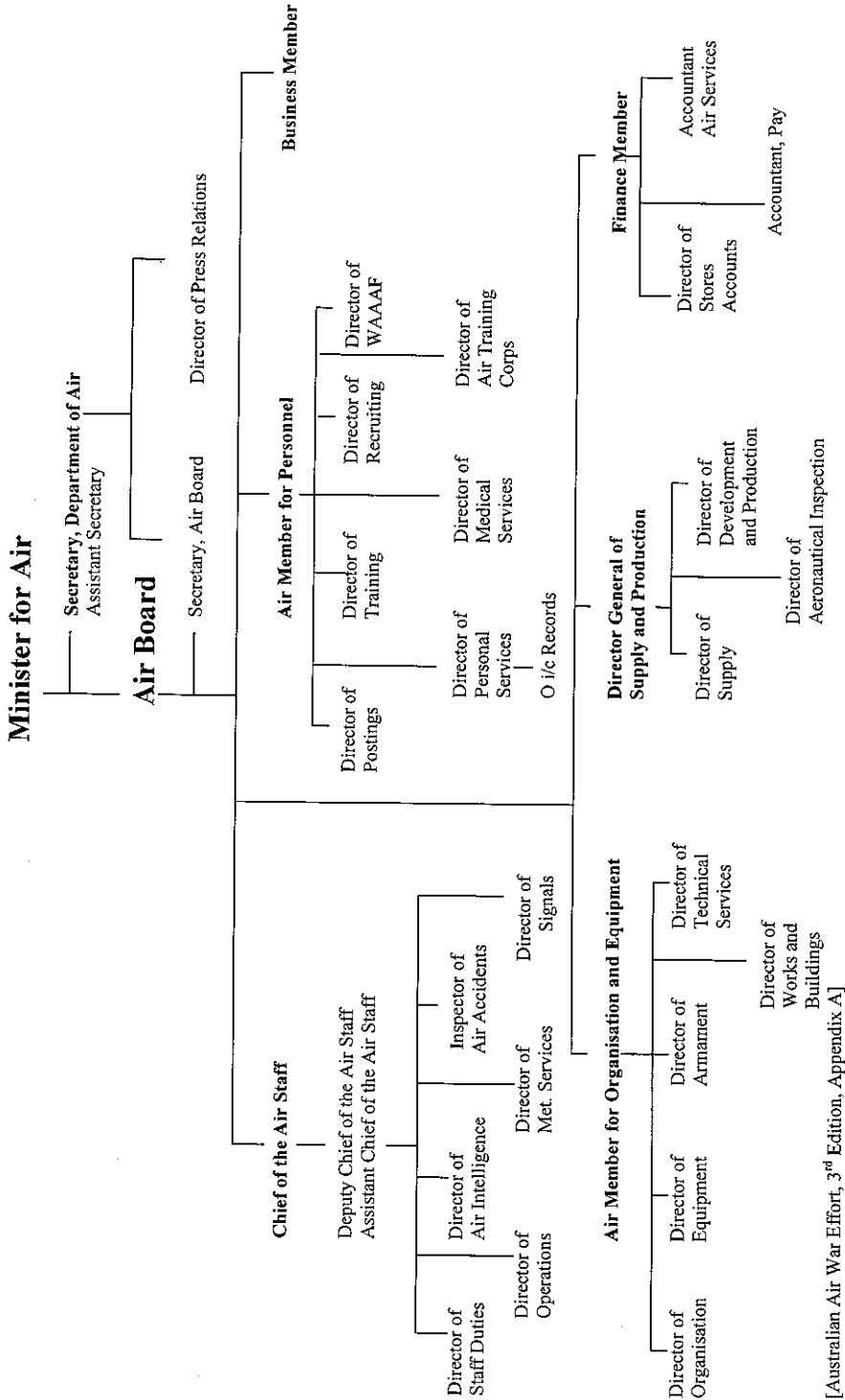


Figure 12.1: Royal Australian Air Force Organisation Prior to Formation of Allied Air Headquarters

[Australian Air War Effort, 3rd Edition, Appendix A]

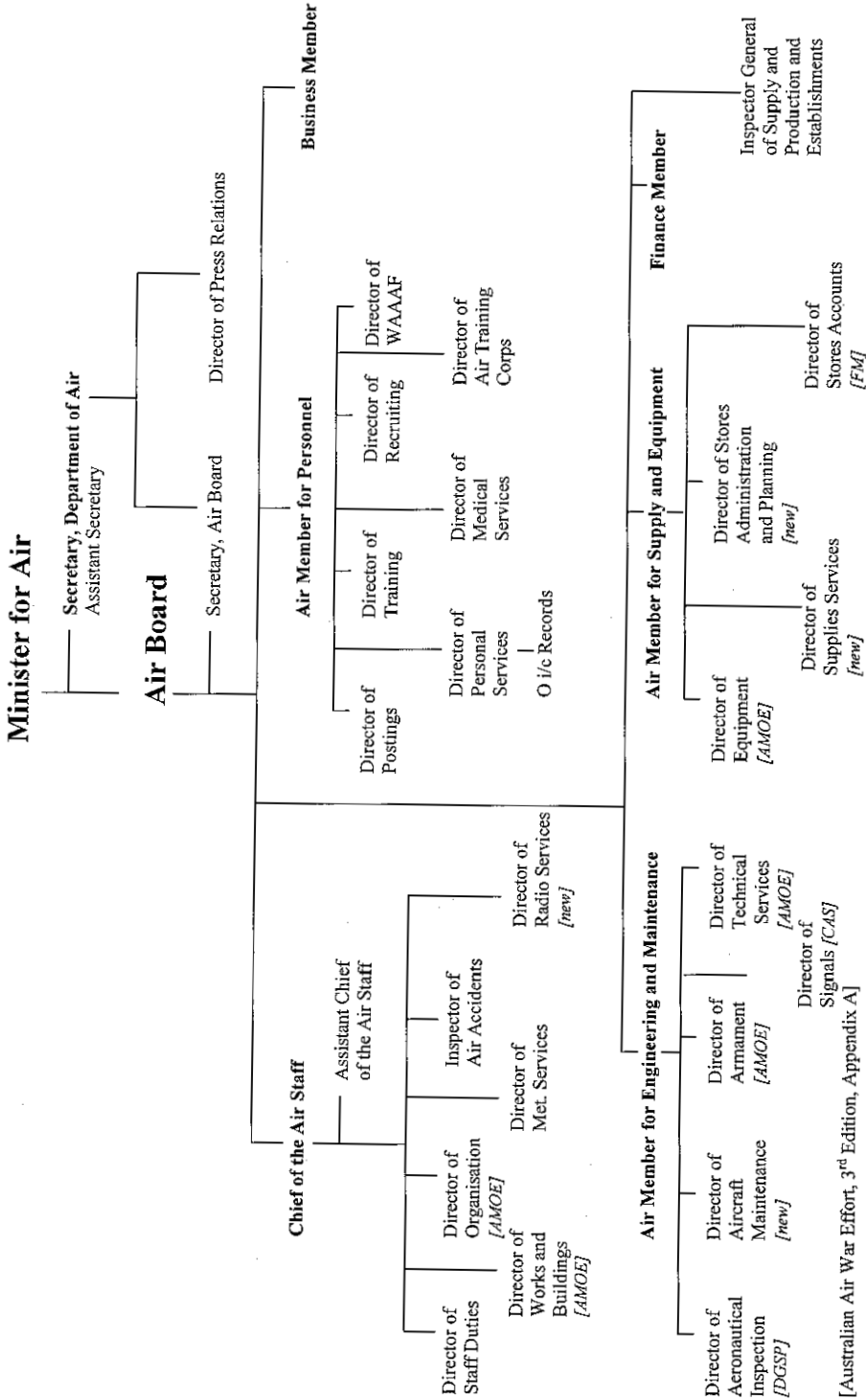


Figure 12.2: Royal Australian Air Force Proposed Organisation after Formation of Allied Air Headquarters

Air Vice-Marshal W H Anderson – formally Air Member for Organisation and Equipment – to be Air Officer Commanding Eastern Area.

Mr R Lawson – formally Director-General of Supply and Production – office abolished, he is to now undertake special duties in connection with production and supply in close collaboration and liaison with the Departments of Aircraft Production, Munitions, and Supply and Development.

Group Captain E C Wackett – at present Director of Technical Services – to be Air Member for Equipment [*Engineering*] and Maintenance.

Group Captain G J W Mackinoly – at present Director of Equipment – to be Air Member for Equipment and Supply [*Supply and Equipment*].

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 14th May 1942)

On 23rd May the Prime Minister replied with the following:

1. With reference to your letter of 14th May, I would like to make it clear that the reorganisation of the Air Board, the reallotment of duties of certain members, and changes in personnel should appropriately be submitted to me as proposals, in view of questions relating to the organisation of the Forces and appointments to higher posts being reserved to me as Minister for Defence.

2. It will also be recalled that my letter of 25th April stated that I had deferred a decision regarding the abolition of the Air Board, as this was a matter for further consideration in the light of other matters such as the appointment of the Chief of the Air Staff and the organisation ultimately decided upon.

3. As the latter aspects have not followed the course which the Defence Committee had in mind when it recommended the abolition of the Air Board in Minute No 55 of 13th April [*See Chapter 8*], I approve of the retention of the Air Board and the changes in organisation, duties and personnel proposed. As stated in my personal and confidential letter of 25th April [*See Chapter 10*], if the organisation adopted for the higher direction of the Air Force does not work satisfactorily, it may be necessary to revert to the original proposals or make such other changes as may be necessary. If such should be the case, it may entail a review of the place of the Air Board in the higher machinery.

(See Documents: First Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 23rd May 1942)

As a consequence of the Prime Minister's approval, Air Vice-Marshal Anderson was posted to be Air Officer Commanding the newly formed Eastern Area on 15th May, while the restructuring of the Air Board took place on 4th June. In the interim, between 15th May and 3rd June, Air Vice-Marshal Jones assumed the duties of AMOE, as well as CAS.

On 28th May Mr Drakeford again wrote to the Prime Minister expressing his regret for any 'misconstruction that may have been placed' on his letter of 14th May. He also said, in part:

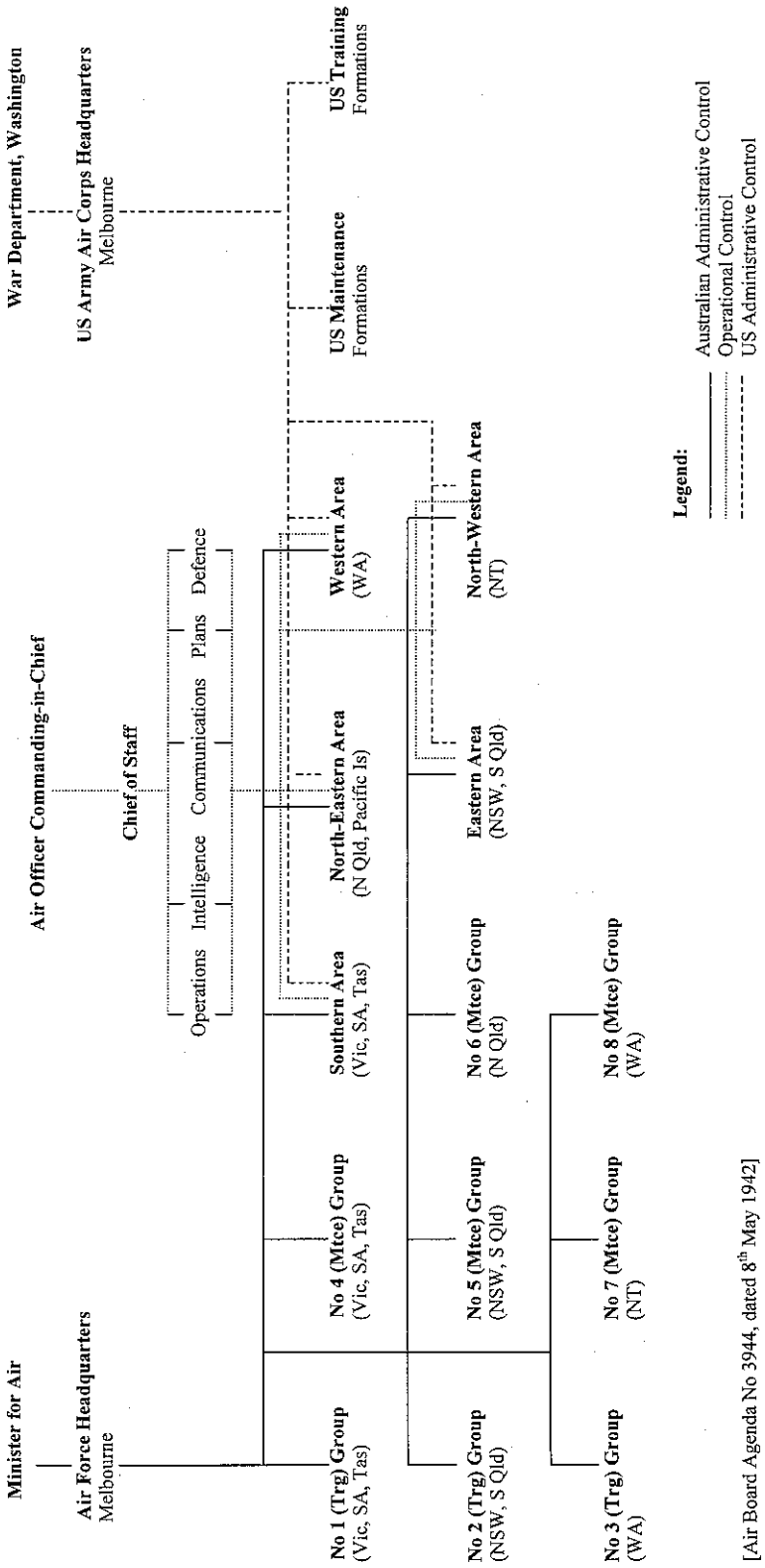


Figure 12.3: Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force on a Functional Basis, with Higher Command Superimposed

Whatever be the decision concerning the Air Board, I regard it as most important that the appointment of the officers I have nominated to carry out the duties associated with 'Engineering and Maintenance' and 'Supply and Equipment' should stand, as those officers are regarded as the most experienced and best qualified to fill those important posts. Those positions must be filled, irrespective of whether the Air Board continues to function or not.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 28th May 1942)

NEW SYSTEM OF COMMAND

On 8th May, just three days after taking over as Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Jones, presented the Air Board with a set of proposals for the reorganisation of the system of command within the RAAF. The proposals as submitted presupposed the establishment of a new (operational) Area Command, Eastern Area, to take over responsibility for operational activities in New South Wales and Southern Queensland, in part each from North Eastern Area and Southern Area. Thus there were to be five Area Commands, Northern Area having been split into North-Eastern and North-Western Areas on 15th January 1942.

The main thrust of the proposed system was to set up five Maintenance Groups in areas corresponding to the five operational areas. These Groups were to take over responsibility for maintenance and supply units that had previously been the responsibility of the Area Commanders. They were also to assume certain responsibilities that had previously been undertaken by Air Force Headquarters, including coordination of aircraft maintenance work carried out by the Department of Aircraft Production.

A second part of the proposal was for the establishment of a number of Area Finance Offices and Base Personnel Offices that were designed to effect the decentralisation of certain personnel and financial matters.

Figure 12.3 is a copy of the organisation chart that accompanied the Air Board proposal. It is of interest to compare this diagram with that shown in Figure 8.3. While the organisation at the top is somewhat different, the breakdown into the various operational areas, and maintenance and training groups is the same.

The proposal as submitted by the Chief of the Air Staff was accepted first by the Air Board, then by the Minister for Air who, on 15th May, sought the concurrence of the Prime Minister. He summarised the proposals as follows:

- a. To establish Eastern Area Headquarters in Sydney to control operational squadrons in NSW and South Queensland (thus limiting responsibility of Southern Area Headquarters to the control of operational units in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania).
- b. To remove from the control of Western Area Headquarters, Perth, all training units in Western Australia and to form No 3 Training Group at Perth for such purposes.
- c. The establishment of Nos 3 (Brisbane) and 4 (Adelaide) Training Groups as formally proposed [*See Chapter 4*] – to control training units in Queensland-Northern NSW and South Australia respectively – will not now be proceeded with.
- d. To establish five Maintenance Groups ... as follows:

No 4 – Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

No 5 – NSW and Southern Queensland.

No 6 – Northern Queensland.

No 7 – Northern Territory.

No 8 – Western Australia.

The Minister for Air also proposed that Eastern Area Headquarters and No 5 Maintenance Group, both in Sydney, be set up immediately and that the other Maintenance Groups be established 'when the expansion warrants their formation'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 15th May 1942)

On 23rd May the Prime Minister gave his approval to the proposed changes under the following terms:

With reference to your letter of 15th May, I desire to inform you that I am in agreement with the creation of the Eastern Area Headquarters. As this will be an operational headquarters, it is assumed that the Commander, Allied Air Forces, concurs in the change.

I also concur in the formation of a Training Group at Perth, and the establishment of five Maintenance Groups, provided in the latter case there is the fullest coordination and no duplication between the activities of the RAAF and those to be undertaken by the Department of Aircraft Production under War Cabinet Minutes Nos 2056 and 2101.

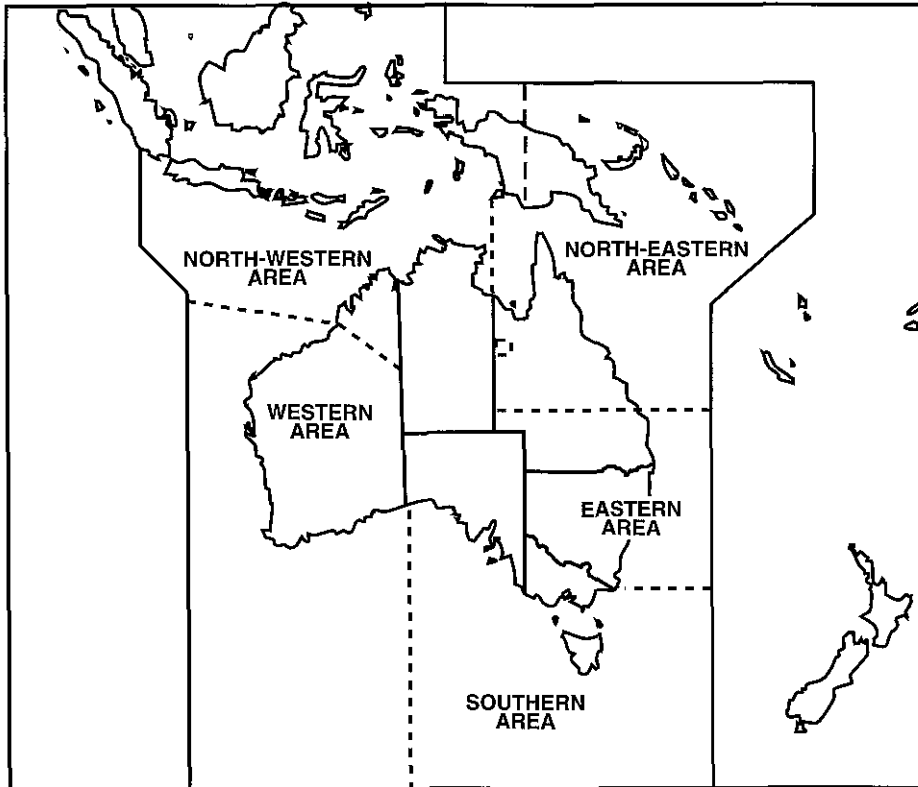
(See Documents: Second Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 23rd May 1942)

On 27th May the Minister for Air replied to the Prime Minister's letter giving him the necessary assurances.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 27th May 1942)

Subsequently, Eastern Area was formed on 15th May, under the command of Air Vice-Marshal W H Anderson, with headquarters in Sydney. No 5 (Maintenance) Group was formed on 1st June, under the command of Group Captain D E L Wilson, with headquarters in Sydney; while No 4 (Maintenance) Group was formed on 14th September, under the command of Air Commodore A W Murphy, with headquarters in Melbourne. No 3 (Training) Group in Western Australia and the other three Maintenance Groups were not formed.

An outline of the Area Command boundaries is shown in Map 12.1



Map 12.1: RAAF Area Command Boundaries, June 1943

HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED AIR FORCES

With the formation of the Allied Air Forces, Lieutenant General Brett established his headquarters at Victoria Barracks in Melbourne, close to RAAF Headquarters, from which all of its RAAF staff had come. Then, on 20th July 1942, the Headquarters moved to Brisbane to be alongside General MacArthur's General Headquarters, which, along with the Allied Land and Naval Forces Headquarters, had also moved out of Melbourne into the AMP Building in Brisbane. A small rear headquarters of AAFHQ, dealing with personnel and supply, remained for a time in Melbourne.

The Director of Intelligence at AAFHQ, Air Commodore J E Hewitt, later commented: 'Bostock was opposed to this move. He thought it preferable to remain in Melbourne where our communication channels were already established. On the other hand, Brett preferred Townsville, to which he sent [*Brigadier General*] Ralph Royce as a preparatory step to his moving there.'¹

¹ Hewitt, J E, *Adversity in Success*, Langate Publishing, South Yarra, 1980, p 31.

Comment

The changes to the composition of the Air Board and the RAAF system of commands which were made soon after Jones became Chief of the Air Staff bear a strong resemblance to the organisational arrangements proposed for the integrated RAAF/USAAF organisation as proposed by General Brett and Air Chief Marshal Burnett. That this should be is not at all unusual. Jones had been very much involved in drawing up the Brett/Burnett proposal, on which he worked, with Bostock, as a senior staff officer. It is more than likely that the operational side of the organisation was designed by Bostock and the administrative side by Jones.

What is also of interest is that the reorganisation of the Air Board broke from the tradition of following the RAF example. The establishment of discrete Board Members to be responsible, respectively, for engineering and maintenance, and supply and equipment appears to be a uniquely Australian solution.

Yet another item of interest is the strong commendation of Group Captains Wackett and Mackinolty given in Drakeford's letter to Curtin of 28th May. This in turn leaves the, albeit mild, suspicion that the organisation as it evolved may even have been tailored to fit these two very capable staff officers. Certainly, the practice of bending the organisation to fit the personalities involved was not unknown at that time.

ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT ON OPERATIONAL MATTERS

Shortly after the transfer of operational control of RAAF Service squadrons and associated Area Headquarters from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, the first of the difficulties associated with this arrangement arose. While the Chief of the Air Staff no longer had responsibility for operational matters, he remained as the Government's adviser on air matters, and as such was required to comment, and to answer questions, in both the War Cabinet and the Advisory War Council on air operations.

On 14th May 1942 Lieutenant General Brett wrote direct to the Prime Minister pointing out that:

At the Advisory War Council meeting of Wednesday, 13th May, I am informed by Air Vice-Marshal Jones that discussion was held concerning operations which have been conducted over the past ten days or two weeks. It is desired to point out that under the present organisation of the Allied Air Forces, Royal Australian Air Force and the United States Army Air Services, Air Vice-Marshal Jones has no responsibilities pertaining to operations, and [it] is believed questions directed at him pertaining thereto placed Air Vice-Marshal Jones in a very unfavourable position.

It is therefore suggested that, if in these meetings that question of proper methods on 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 might have the opportunity of answering questions which may arise out of discussions concerning the handling of these forces.

(See Documents: Memorandum from the Commander, Allied Air Forces to Prime Minister Curtin, dated 14th May 1942)

The Prime Minister did not reply immediately to General Brett, but rather wrote, on 23rd May, to General MacArthur seeking his advice on the status of Air Vice-Marshal Jones to both receive information on operational matters and to advise the Australian Government on such matters. MacArthur in turn replied to the Prime Minister on 25th May, rejecting General Brett's advice and pointing out that:

... Insofar as Air Vice-Marshal Jones is concerned, he is of course entirely available to you in any manner and for any purpose that you may see fit. I reiterate my previously expressed belief that he should be on an equal basis with the other Australian Chiefs of Staff in their functions in the constituted defence set-up of the Australian Government.

The subject of operational discussion of current combat is one only indirectly within the scope of the meeting to which you refer. It is, of course, essential that the Australian Chiefs of Staff be completely coordinated with the general plans and operations of the various forces and the intimate knowledge thereof that they possess should be more than sufficient to fulfil the purposes that you have in mind. Anything further than this should properly be a matter of conference between you and myself. As you well understand, the only one who is entirely conversant with every phase of the operations and has the intimate knowledge of the whole strategic position is myself. I propose, as I have previously stated, to keep you fully informed. This will enable you within your discretion to fulfil the demands made upon you by the various agencies of your Government concerning defence. If at times you need additional information or clarification of points that may arise in a discussion in any of your Councils, I am always immediately at your service. I believe it would be inadvisable to vitiate in anyway the admirable policy that we have established that the contacts will be between you and myself without attempting to intermesh either of us with a lower echelon of the other. If the latter plan should be attempted, it cannot fail to result in confusion and discord. It would unquestionably tend to divide authority with all the friction and misunderstanding that results therefrom. In major policy matters of the nature of those under discussion no one can represent me, but the obligations upon my time and strength are so incessant and complete that it is impossible for me to undertake as a matter of routine to do more than keep you personally acquainted with what is transpiring. I believe the present arrangement will be an entirely satisfactory one, and I suggest it be given a fair trial before any basic modification is considered.

Nothing that I have said, of course, should be construed as meaning that I would not be delighted and honoured as occasion permits, to present a complete picture to the Advisory War Council or to any other high government agency that would, with your approval, extend me the privilege. As a matter of fact, it is a source of constant pleasure to me to recall the delightful contacts of this nature which *have been extended to me through your personal courtesy during the last two months.*

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 23rd May 1942; and Letter from the Commander-in-Chief to the Prime Minister, SWPA, dated 25th May 1942)

On 28th May the Prime Minister wrote once again to General MacArthur, thanking him for his advice, and expressing satisfaction with the present arrangements. He also enclosed copies of his instructions to the Chiefs of Staff and his reply to General Brett.

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 28th May 1942)

Comment

This particular incident related to the responsibility of the Australian Chiefs of Staff as advisers to the Australian Government is of interest for a number of reasons.

Firstly, it indicates that General Brett continued to exercise the practice of writing direct to the Prime Minister on Air Force matters even after General MacArthur's appointment as Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the South-West Pacific Area and his own appointment, by MacArthur, as Commander, Allied Air Forces. Brett's action in doing so no doubt rankled with the C-in-C.

Secondly, there is the suggestion that Brett's memorandum to the Prime Minister may have been instigated by Bostock in an early attempt to manoeuvre Jones completely out of operational matters and to, in effect, establish himself as the Government's adviser on air operational matters. As it turned out, both MacArthur and Curtin rejected this approach. However, it is a theme to which Bostock returned again and again over the next three years.

Thirdly, there is a clear indication of the imperious MacArthur's sensitivity to having his conduct of the war scrutinised by anybody, including the Australian War Cabinet, and especially the Advisory War Council. Nor was he willing to allow any of his subordinates to speak on his behalf. As to allowing the Australian Chiefs of Staff to make comment on operations in the War Cabinet or in other councils of state, this caused him no difficulty as these could easily be denied as not having been authorised by him.

Finally, there is the point that MacArthur's views on the importance of keeping the Australian Chiefs of Staff fully informed on operational matters were eminently sensible. For their part, the three Chiefs of Staff had a vital role to play in providing support to the operational forces, a role in which they could not be effective without a sound knowledge of operational plans and the performance of the operational forces.

13

Two New Formations

The mission of the combat units [*of the Fifth Air Force*] is to fly, shoot and bomb, with emphasis placed on operations.

Major General George C Kenney
Commanding General US Fifth Air Force, September 1942

CHANGE OF COMMAND

On 4th August 1942, Major General George C Kenney took over as Commander, Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific from Lieutenant General Brett. This change was the result of General MacArthur's dissatisfaction with Brett, and of dissatisfaction in Washington with the integrated Allied Air Forces set-up. When in Washington before coming to Australia 'Kenney had been briefed ... on plans for the reorganisation of American units into a distinct air force that would be largely free of obligations for the immediate defence of Australia in order to concentrate on the support of a rapidly moving offensive to the north.'¹

The change of command was reported in *Time* magazine for September 1942:

New Leaders in Australia

General Douglas MacArthur got an entirely new top air command last week. His second in command, speechmaking Lieutenant General George Howard Brett – an oldtimer of the Air Forces – was replaced by bristley-haired, tiny (5ft 6) Major General George C. Kenney.

Fact is that MacArthur's air force in Australia had had many obstacles to contend with – including deficiencies in the quality and number of planes available. But it also has by and large no outstanding record for getting results. Its most obvious failure was in not interfering with the Jap landing at Buna, the landing that resulted in last week's threat to Port Moresby.

In recent months many junior air commanders in Australia have been replaced so that their age level has fallen rapidly. General Brett and his three senior officers, all replaced, are aged 56, 52, 52, 58. General Kenney is 53 and his three new senior officers, Brigadier Generals

¹ Craven, W F and Cate, J L, *The Army Air Forces in World War II, Volume IV The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944*, Office of Air Force History, Washington DC, reprint 1983, p 98.

Ennis Whitehead, Kenneth Walker and Emmett O'Donnell, are aged 47, 44, 35.

The official explanation that the experience of officers who had been through the tough school of real warfare in the east were needed at home (two of them have already been assigned to training commands in the south) is legitimate. But obviously General MacArthur will be better off trying an entirely new combination in place of a combination that did not get outstanding results.

The changes, although announced last week, were made a fortnight or more ago. Recent reports from Australia indicate that MacArthur's fighters and bombers have been hitting the Jap harder and oftener – and on the face of it, at least with better results.

General Kenney is relatively unknown – he is a former commander of the Air Corps Experimental Depot and Engineering School at Wright Field, Ohio, flew in World War I – has yet to prove that he can do what others did not. 'Nobody's kidding me about this show,' he declared last week.

FORMATION OF THE FIFTH AIR FORCE

General Kenney moved quickly to reorganise the American segment of Allied Air Forces. Through General MacArthur he sent his recommendations on the formation of an American Air Force to the War Department in Washington on 7th August. MacArthur suggested that it be designated Fifth Air Force 'in honor of his fighter and bomber commands in the Philippines'.² General Marshall's agreement came back on 9th August with the comment: 'Heartily concur in your recommendations.'

(See Documents: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated August – November 1942)

General Kenney also decided to take the offensive in the air war against the Japanese in the South-West Pacific Area and to use his American units as the spearhead. To this end, while he kept his own headquarters in Brisbane so as to be close to General MacArthur's General Headquarters, he appointed recently arrived Brigadier General E C Whitehead as his deputy and sent him to Port Moresby to establish an advanced echelon of his headquarters to control all Allied air operations in New Guinea. On the support side he redeployed northward all units and facilities south of Brisbane. He moved the headquarters of his Air Services Command, which controlled all American Air Force maintenance and supply units, from Melbourne to Brisbane; and, closed down the depots at Tocumwal in southern New South Wales and Charleville in central Queensland, transferring their personnel and equipment to Townsville. He also closed down the fighter pilot conversion unit at Williamstown near Newcastle and sent the pilots and aircraft to New Guinea. As soon as the air situation over Port Moresby improved he planned to move all of his medium and heavy bomber squadrons from their bases in North Queensland to Port Moresby.

(See Documents: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated August – November 1942)

² *Ibid*, p 98.

On 3rd September 1942, General MacArthur's General Headquarters issued the formal order for the formation of the US Army's Fifth Air Force:

1. Pursuant to authority contained in radiogram, War Department, August 9, 1942, the Fifth Air Force is hereby constituted. All United States Army Air Force troops, and troops of associated service elements of the United States Army, in the South-West Pacific Area are assigned to the Fifth Air Force.
2. Major General George C Kenney, United States Army, is assigned to command the Fifth Air Force.
3. The Fifth Air Force is assigned for operational control to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific Area.

by command of General Macarthur

(See Documents: GHQ General Order No 28 – Constitution of Fifth Air Force, dated 3rd September 1942)

Following immediately on GHQ's General Order No 28 came an order from Major General Kenney, as Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, setting out the internal organisation and mission of the Fifth Air Force. In this order he appointed Brigadier General E C Whitehead as his deputy and sent him to Port Moresby to control all Fifth Air Force and assigned RAAF squadrons operating from and through New Guinea, through the Fifth Air Force, Advanced Echelon (ADVON). He also appointed Brigadier General K N Walker to command the Fifth Bomber Command, with temporary headquarters in Townsville; forecast the early formation of Fifth Fighter Command; and, appointed Major General R B Lincoln to command the US Army Air Services Command, with a mission to serve the combat units.

(See Documents: HQ Fifth Air Force General Order No 3, dated 5th September 1942)

FORMATION OF RAAF COMMAND

In parallel with his reorganisation of the American air units in the Allied Air Forces, Major General Kenney developed his plans for the RAAF units. He put these to the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Jones in Brisbane on 23rd August. He told Jones that he intended to bring the RAAF operational squadrons together into a single command and to appoint Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as its commander. Jones 'thought it would work better but was not too keen when' Kenney said that he 'was going to put Bostock in command.' Kenney added, 'These two don't like each other'.

(See Documents: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated August – November 1942)

Following his interview with General Kenney, Air Vice-Marshal Jones reported to the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, on the proposed changes in the USAAF/RAAF organisation. He then went on:

The reason given for this change was that the Americans felt that their units were operating under considerable disability because of the present combination of staffs. They felt that this was causing confusion in the minds of their offices and undermining confidence; also that the effort involved in obtaining cooperation was too great, bearing in mind that the US and RAAF systems are entirely

different. It appears that this attitude has been brought about largely through failure of a senior RAAF and American offices of Allied Air Headquarters to cooperate successfully. After discussion with General Kenney and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, I had come to the conclusion that a separation of RAAF and American air staffs is inevitable.

Jones then went on to outline for the Minister his views on how the organisation of the RAAF should be adapted to meet the new arrangements. After criticising Kenney's proposal for RAAF operations to be controlled by an Air Officer Commanding with dual responsibility (for operations to the Commander AAF and for administration to Air Force Headquarters) as being 'unsound', he recommended 'that the RAAF operations staff should revert to the control of the Chief of the Air Staff' but with the operations staff remaining in Brisbane and the administrative staff in Melbourne. He then went on to recommend 'the appointment of a Deputy and an assistant CAS who would then be able to divide his time between operations and administration as may be necessary'. This was a view to which he would hold for the next three years.

On 4th September, the day after the formal announcement of the formation of the Fifth Air Force, General MacArthur wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, advising him of its formation as a 'self contained mobile force' and suggesting the formation of a parallel RAAF formation.

He then went on:

A number of squadrons of the RAAF, of which operational control has been assigned to the South-West Pacific Area, are performing defensive and anti-submarine missions around the perimeter of Australia, outside of the present active combat zones. In conjunction with the formation of the Fifth Air Force, it is considered advantageous to exercise operational control of these squadrons, through appropriate Area staffs, as a single element. It is anticipated that this element be designated 'Coastal Defence Command, Allied Air Forces', and that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be designated by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to exercise operational control of the units assigned thereto. These units will be largely RAAF squadrons, but may include any number of squadrons of the Fifth Air Force. Conversely, RAAF squadrons or groups may operate with the Fifth Bomber Command or Fifth Fighter Command, as, indeed, several are now operating in New Guinea.

It will be noted in this organisation that no essential change is contemplated. It is not proposed to request that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be named to command RAAF units. Command will rest, as at present, with the Chief of the Air Staff. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock will merely exercise operational control of certain US and RAAF units assigned to the Allied Air Forces which are performing a special function. He will remain at Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, utilizing the operations, intelligence and communications facilities now existing, thus avoiding duplication and increase in overhead. Eventually, upon the withdrawal of the Fifth Air Force, the RAAF

elements in the Coastal Defence Command and in Allied Air Force Headquarters will remain as an operating Headquarters, thus avoiding even temporary dislocation of RAAF functions. Its disposition will, of course, then rest with the RAAF.

(See Documents: Letter from the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, to the Prime Minister, dated 4th September 1942)

On Fifth September, Major General Kenney, as Commander, Allied Air Forces, issued the formal order forming Coastal Command:

1. The Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, is hereby constituted.
2. Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock, CB, OBE is hereby designated Air Officer Commanding with temporary Headquarters at Brisbane, Queensland.
3. The Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, is comprised of all RAAF operational units including operational Headquarters, and such other units of the Allied Air Forces as may be assigned or attached.
4. The Air Officer Commanding, Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, will exercise operational control over all units assigned or attached.
5. The organisation of the Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, within the Allied Air Forces, does not alter the functions and responsibilities of RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne, Victoria.

George C Kenney, Major General, Commander

(See Documents: Allied Air Forces General Order No 47, dated 5th September 1942)

Following Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's appointment as Air Officer Commanding, Coastal Command, his place as Chief of Staff, Headquarters Allied Air Forces was taken by Brigadier General Donald Wilson, who arrived in Australia on 15th September. In the interim period Kenney left the post vacant.

On 21st September, after representations, from the Minister for Air, the Chief of the Air Staff and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, General Kenney issued another order changing the designation of the new command from 'the Coastal Command' to 'Royal Australian Air Force Command.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, to the Prime Minister, dated 24th September 1942; and, Allied Air Forces General Order No 53 - Redesignation of the Coastal Command, dated 21st September 1942)

On 21st September, General Kenney recorded in his notebooks that:

Bostock [*came*] in to see me about changing the name of the RAAF Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces to simply the RAAF Command. Coastal Command was his original suggestion but it seems that most of the RAAF don't think the name does them justice. Of course they are running all the anti-sub patrol missions all round Australia, but in addition they are doing some real fighting in New Guinea and also out of Darwin. Told Wilson [*Brigadier General Wilson, his Chief of Staff*] to get out the order making the change.

Air Vice-Marshal Jones will probably sound off again. He questioned my right to create an RAAF organisation before. I told him I wasn't creating an RAAF organization, that it was RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces and that I could organize the Allied Air Forces any way I wanted to. He had nothing to say but his headquarters has not yet recognized the new Australian set up. The real reason of course is that Jones does not like Bostock and vice versa.

(See Documents: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated August – November 1942)

AUSTRALIAN CONCERNS

In a reply to General MacArthur's letter of 4th September, the Prime Minister expressed to him the following concerns related to the formation of the Fifth Air Force and the 'Coastal Defence Command':

What will be the position of RAAF squadrons in the Coastal Defence Command in regard to allocation of aircraft? There would appear to be a grave danger that the tendency of circumstances may be prejudicial to their equipment being the latest and best type of aircraft that are available.

What assurances can be given that RAAF squadrons in the Coastal Defence Command will be given opportunities for operational experience in combat areas to which the Fifth Air Force will be primarily allotted? If this cannot be assured, the RAAF will become a second line force and its morale will suffer accordingly.

In his reply, General MacArthur reiterated the point made in his previous letter that 'no essential change is contemplated' with the formation of the Fifth Air Force and the 'Coastal Defence Command.' He then went on to point out that:

... the new command would have no bearing upon the allocation of aircraft to the RAAF. Such allocation was made in Washington.

In regard to the question whether RAAF squadrons in the Coastal Defence Command would be given opportunities for operational experience in Combat Areas to which the Fifth Air Force would be primarily allocated, the Commander-in-Chief pointed out that the employment of RAAF squadrons was dictated to a large extent by their fighting equipment. As soon, however, as they receive equipment that would permit of their use in the forward zones, they would be used interchangeably with similarly equipped squadrons now in active operations. ... There was nothing involved in this organisation that would affect the full employment of the RAAF in active combat operations. It was his intention to use the fighting strength of air units of Australia and of the United States to the limit of capacity.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 29 to 30)

'NO ESSENTIAL CHANGE IS CONTEMPLATED'

The comment by General MacArthur in his two letters to the Prime Minister explaining the new air set-up that 'in this [*new*] organisation ... no essential change is contemplated' is a gross understatement. The new organisation in fact represented a massive change, and went well beyond MacArthur's authority in so far as the RAAF was concerned. The issue of the orders for the formation the Fifth Air Force the day before advising the Prime Minister, and for the formation the Coastal Command, and the designation of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as its commander, without awaiting comment from the Australian Government are indicative of MacArthur's propensity to consult with the Australian Government only when it so pleased him. On this occasion, as on so many others, the Australian Government chose not to challenge MacArthur, and to accept his contention that 'no essential change is contemplated'.

FORMATION OF NO 9 (OPERATIONAL) GROUP

On 1st September 1942 the first of the RAAF's operational groups, No 9 (Operational) Group, was formed in Port Moresby to take over operational control of all RAAF operational units in New Guinea from North-Eastern Area.³ However, for a time, Headquarters North-Eastern at Townsville retained administrative control of all No 9 Group units. Group Captain W H Garing, who had been Senior Air Staff Officer at Headquarters North-Eastern Area, was appointed as temporary commander of the Group.

FORMATION OF FORWARD ECHELON, RAAF HEADQUARTERS

On 8th September, Air Vice-Marshal Jones informed Major General Kenney that, in view of the changes in the arrangements within Allied Air Headquarters he intended to establish a section of RAAF Headquarters in Brisbane, later designated 'Forward Echelon, RAAF Headquarters', to effect liaison between his administrative staff and the operations staff at Allied Air Headquarters. This section was to be under the command of Wing Commander G Packer.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 8th September 1942)

REPORT BY THE CHIEFS OF STAFF ON THE NEW ORGANISATION

On 26th September, following a request by the Prime Minister as Minister for Defence, the Chiefs of Staff Committee submitted a report on the 'division of Allied Air Forces into Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command.'

They noted that the proposal by the Commander-in-Chief was, in effect, that the majority of the RAAF squadrons assigned to him, possibly with some United States squadrons, should be formed into an RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, under the operational command of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. It was posed that the

³ The number 9 was selected for this Group as being the next in sequence, after No 8 (Maintenance) Group, in the RAAF's organisation master plan. See Chapter 12.

administrative command of the whole of the RAAF, including the RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, would remain with the Chief of the Air Staff, who would have no operational control or responsibility. It was further contemplated that some RAAF squadrons would operate with the Fifth Air Force. The Chiefs of Staff considered that the organisation of the RAAF along the lines proposed would give rise to certain difficulties, and reviewed these under the following headings:

i. Organisation and Relation to Machinery for Command and Administration:

In the view of the Chiefs of Staff, the RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, will be likely to comprise the whole of the operational units of the RAAF, notwithstanding that it appears from General MacArthur's letters that some of these will from time to time, serve with the Fifth Air Force. It follows that, subject to directions from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, operational control of the RAAF will be vested in the AOC RAAF Command, while administrative control of the whole of the RAAF will be vested in the Chief of the Air Staff. In the opinion of the Chiefs of Staff, it is not possible to separate operational and administrative control without loss of efficiency, and any attempt to do so may give rise to differences of opinion between the operational and administrative Commanders. The anomalous position would be created whereby, if there were a difference of opinion between the operational commander and the Chief of the Air Staff in matters affecting the RAAF only, there would be no one to give an authoritative decision. Such a system of divided control, it is felt, might result in the formation of groups within the Air Force itself, which would be destructive both of morale and efficiency.

ii. Operational Efficiency, including Equipment and Operational Experience:

The Chiefs of Staff noted that the present intention of the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, is to allot to the RAAF Command a role which is at present mainly defensive, although it was realised that, in the event of developments in the North and North-West of Australia, this would be altered. It was noted that General MacArthur had advised the Minister that the creation of an RAAF Command will, of course, have no bearing upon the allocation of aircraft to the RAAF. Such allocation is made in Washington. It was observed that the role of the RAAF will inevitably affect any future supplies of aircraft allocated to it, whether those allocations are made in Washington or Australia. It was further thought that the acceptance of a defensive role for the major part of the RAAF would deprive RAAF personnel of fighting experience, notwithstanding that it is proposed that there will be the usual rotation of flying personnel and of flying units between the zone of active operations and the areas in which the strain upon flying personnel is less pronounced.

For the reasons stated in the preceding paragraph, the Chiefs of Staff were also of the opinion that acceptance of the proposed organisation would not be conducive to the maximum operational efficiency of the RAAF.

iii. **The Part of the RAAF in the Scheme of Australian Defence:**

a. **At Present:** With the RAAF part of the Allied Air Forces under the operational control of the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, and the Fifth Air Force operating as a separate tactical unit under the same control, it is that the independent role of the RAAF Command would be the carrying out of bombing missions from Darwin and the maintenance of reconnaissance and coastal patrols around Australia. Its strategic cooperation with the Navy and the Army would be determined by the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area. In the event of local operations, it has been agreed that, when an attack is impending, the operational control of the Air Force should be vested in the GOC of the area affected. It is visualised that this control would exist only so long as the emergency continued, and would affect only the forces that were allotted to the area affected.

b. **In the Event of the Withdrawal of Fifth Air Force:** In the event of the withdrawal of the Fifth Air Force from Australia, it is desirable that the RAAF should be a self-contained organisation ready to operate under the direct control of the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, and that the Chief of the Air Staff should be the Commander-in-Chief's adviser on air matters. To this end, it is desirable that the RAAF should be organised under unified and not dual control.

The Chiefs of Staff Report recommended:

That, while accepting the proposal that an RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, should be established, it is desirable that this Command should be established along lines similar to the Fifth Air Force, and that there should be unified operational and administrative control. This control should be vested in the Chief of the Air Staff, but his operational responsibility should be subject to the direction of Allied Air Headquarters and would normally be exercised through the AOC of the RAAF Command. This would enable day to day operational matters to be dealt with without delay by Allied Air Headquarters and the Commander, RAAF Command, and would at the same time preserve the principle of unified control of the RAAF.

The necessity is emphasised for opportunities equal to that of the Fifth Air Force being given to the RAAF for participation in operations against the enemy.

Subsequently, the Chiefs of Staff views were passed to General MacArthur at a set of discussions held between 20th and 26th October 1942.

The Commander-in-Chief was informed of the proposal of the Australian Chiefs of Staff that the Chief of the Air Staff should be in entire command of the RAAF and that his Deputy should have operational control as Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Allied Air Forces. General MacArthur pointed out that if this course were adopted the same position would be created in the RAAF as at present existed in the Australian Army, where General Blamey sooner or later must choose between going forward with the Land Forces in offensive operations or remaining in Australia to command the Forces allocated for the defence of the base. Under the present arrangement Air Vice-Marshal Bostock would go forward with the RAAF operational squadrons operating in conjunction with the Fifth Air Force, and Air Vice-Marshal Jones would remain in Australia and have entire control of the squadrons remaining there and the administrative services for them and for the Australian and American squadrons operating in the advanced areas.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 31 to 35)

Concluding Comment

In dividing his forces into two organisations, Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command, General Kenney achieved two organisational objectives. Firstly, he placed the prime control of the RAAF and USAAF units into nationally based commands, thus easing the national administration of those units and reducing the problems inherent in the control of multi-national forces. Secondly, he set up two areas of operational responsibility, one in the forward area and the other in the rear or support area. He then assigned the forward area to the Fifth Air Force and the rear area to RAAF Command. It was in the circumstances of the latter arrangement that he reassigned forces between the two commands. Thus, for example, he assigned the operational control of the RAAF's No 9 (Operational) Group, which was based in New Guinea, to the Fifth Air Force, and the operational control of the 380th Bombardment Group (Heavy) to RAAF Command for bombing operations out of North-Western Area. Thus the Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command were two nationally based formations, each with its own well defined geographical area of operational responsibility.

The concept of dividing the Allied Air Forces into two national components completely reversed the trend to integration set in place by General Brett. It was also eminently sound organisational practice. So too was Kenney's decision to employ the Fifth Air Force in New Guinea as a front-line mobile air striking force, and to leave the bulk of the RAAF squadrons to protect the left flank and the home base. While such a concept may not have met the natural desire of the RAAF to be equally involved with the USAAF in offensive operations in New Guinea, it was a realistic assessment of the capability of the RAAF at that time.

Kenney's action in forming 'the Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces' as an essentially RAAF formation, and his appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as its commander, was, however, also wrong on several counts. Firstly, having operational control of the RAAF's combat squadrons, did not give him any authority over questions of RAAF organisation. This prerogative rested with the Australian War Cabinet. The fiction later employed that this command was, somehow, merely an element of the Allied Air Forces, and hence not subject to any control by the Australian Government only added to the confusion as to its status. Secondly, having operational control gave Kenney no authority over such RAAF personnel matters as the appointment of senior commanders. He could make recommendations, but the final authority still rested with the Australian Government. Bostock was assigned to Kenney as his Chief of Staff. The normal protocol should have been to ask the Australian Government, in the person of the Prime Minister as Minister for Defence, to formally change his assignment. This would also have been in line with the agreement between Curtin and MacArthur to consult each other before making any changes in senior appointments, on either side.

It is also relevant here to note that Kenney did not act unilaterally to change the organisation of the US Army Air Forces in the South-West Pacific Area in the same way as he did with the RAAF. It was the War Department in Washington, as the appropriate national authority, that ordered the formation of the Fifth Air Force, and appointed Kenney as its commander. General MacArthur merely relayed orders issued from his national authority, and not by Allied authority, ie, the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

The unilateral formation of RAAF Command by the Allied Air Commander in September 1942 was the genesis of a major problem in higher command that dogged the RAAF for the remainder of the war in the Pacific.

As to MacArthur's contention that 'no essential change is contemplated', while this is, in most cases, quite incorrect, in one essential aspect it was correct. What did not change for the RAAF was the fact of divided control between operations and administration. The formation of RAAF Command had no affect on the responsibilities of the Chief of the Air Staff (or more correctly the Air Board). The aspect where the change had its greatest affect as far as the RAAF was concerned was on the status and position of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.

Having set up RAAF Command, Kenney thereafter treated Bostock as its commander in the normal sense. Yet Bostock was not such a commander; he had no authority over any aspect whatsoever of the administration of the operational units assigned to him, and no authority over any of the RAAF maintenance and support units that were essential for the day to day activities of the operational units. Thus Bostock's level of control over RAAF Command was far less than was Kenney's control over the Fifth Air Force. Notwithstanding MacArthur's suggestion that RAAF Command be set up in the same way as the Fifth Air Force, this was not done. Rather, RAAF Command was first ignored by RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne, then, as will be seen, given only grudging and limited recognition.

In setting up RAAF Command, Kenney no doubt thought that the Air Board would invest its commander with the necessary administrative powers to do the job required of him. Here Kenney was much mistaken; what he failed to appreciate was the stubborn resistance of Drakeford and Jones to giving even one iota of additional authority to Bostock.

A QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

At this point it may be of value to discuss, briefly, an oft confused issue related to the terminology used to explain command arrangements.

Much of the discussion to date has been in relation to the Chief of the Air Staff being responsible for the administration of the RAAF. Strictly, that responsibility rested with the Air Board, of which the CAS was merely the chairman, with the same vote as other members.

A similar misconception relates to that of command by headquarters. In the prewar RAAF the fiction was regularly, but not invariably, followed that Air Force Headquarters had command of the various stations and units, rather than the Air Board. Similarly, when the various Area and Group formations were established, the fiction was still frequently used that it was the Area or Group Headquarters that exercised command, rather than the Air Officer Commanding. In reality, a headquarters is merely a collection of staff officers whose duty it is to offer advice to the commander, or in the case of the RAAF as a whole, the Air Board. It is the commander (or the Board), and he alone, who carries the responsibility of command.

Section Three

Conclusion

Closely following on from the set up of the Allied Air Forces at the end of April 1942 and the assignment to that organisation of the operational control of the RAAF's operational squadrons, the organisation of the administrative side of the RAAF also underwent a significant change. First the Air Board was reorganised by replacing the appointments of Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, and Director General of Supply and Production with those of Air Member for Engineering and Maintenance and the Air Member for Supply and Equipment. Then in the field the process of establishing 'functional commands', which had started in August 1941 [*See Chapter 4*], was extended by the formation of two maintenance commands. These were changes for the better.

Then, in September 1942, the organisation of the Allied Air Forces itself underwent a significant change. The US Army Air Forces units in the South-West Pacific Area were joined organisationally through the formation of the US Fifth Air Force under the direct command of Lieutenant General Kenney, who at the same time retained the title of Commander, Allied Air Forces. This was also a change for the better.

RAAF operational units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area were similarly joined by the formation of RAAF Command, under the command of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. However, unlike the Fifth Air Force, RAAF Command contained no administrative support units and its commander had no authority over administrative matters even in relation to the assigned operational units. While this could have been a change for the better, in the event it was merely a change from one bad set up to another.

Notwithstanding the changes, the Hydra that was the RAAF remained in place, and did so right until the end of the war in the Pacific. It is the problems caused by this duality, and the conflict of personality between the two heads, that will occupy the remainder of this book.

Section Four

An Impossible Situation

Introduction

This Section covers the three years from October 1942 to the end of the war in September 1945. It details the consequences flowing from the two fateful decisions made in late April/early May 1942. The first was to, in essence, divide the higher organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force into two components, one dealing with operations and the other dealing with administration. The second fateful decision was to select Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and Jones respectively to head each component.

The net result of these two decisions was an impossible situation wherein a highly unsatisfactory organisation was delivered into the hands of two men who were quite unable to cooperate one with the other. Notwithstanding that the shortcomings in the organisation were clearly seen and acknowledged by all concerned, no one, from the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, and the Commander-in-Chief, General MacArthur, downward appeared to have the wit or the will to change the situation. Various solutions were offered, but none were accepted. Thus the Royal Australian Air Force was forced to suffer this impossible situation for three long years, while at the same time trying to take its place in the Allied air effort against Japan.

Chapter 14 deals with the first open clash between Bostock and Jones at the end of 1942, Chapter 15, with the Air Board's attempt to post Bostock, Chapter 16 with the Government's search for a senior RAF officer to head the RAAF, Chapter 17 with Air Marshal Williams' activities in Washington, Chapters 18 and 19 with further incidents in the clash between Bostock and Jones, and Chapter 20 with the final clash over Bostock's virtual self-proclamation as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command. Finally, Chapter 21 deals with an open clash, in press and parliament, between Bostock and Drakeford some twelve months after the war.

14

The Opening Shots

I'd rather have Jones and Bostock even if they do fight each other harder than the Jap.

*Lieutenant General George C Kenney
Commander, Allied Air Forces, May 1943*

INTRODUCTION

One of the least creditable aspects of the higher command of the RAAF during the Second World War was the very public squabble between Air Vice-Marsals Jones and Bostock. Jones, as Chief of the Air Staff, was responsible for the administration of the RAAF, and Bostock, as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, was responsible for operations. The squabble between the RAAF's two top officers started early in May 1942, when Jones was appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, and lasted, without abatement, until the end of the war.

THE CATALYST

The catalyst for the dispute was undoubtedly the appointment of Jones to be Chief of the Air Staff in May 1942 in lieu of Bostock, as recounted in Chapter 11. That Bostock was Burnett's choice as a successor was well known. Certainly it would have been Bostock's clear expectation. Unfortunately for Bostock two, possibly inter-related, matters got in the way. The first was the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford's strong opposition to having him as Chief of the Air Staff, and the second was the changes made in the organisation whereby the control of operations and of administration were separated. The control of operations was assigned to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, Lieutenant General Brett, who had strongly requested the services of Bostock as his Chief of Staff, while the control of administration remained with the Chief of the Air Staff. Bostock was appointed as Chief of Staff, Allied Air Forces, on 2nd May and Jones as Chief of the Air Staff on 5th May 1942.

Comment

Bostock's disappointment at not being appointed as Chief of the Air Staff would have been all the more so when measured against the power that would have befallen him had he been appointed as Chief of Air Staff under the fully integrated Allied Air Forces organisation proposed by Brett and Burnett. [See Chapters 7 and 8]. As Brett's deputy, with no Air Board and with little responsibility to the Minister for Air, Bostock would have had not only de facto control of the RAAF (Brett would have had his hands full running the air war and the USAAF side of the Allied Air Forces) but also a considerable say in the overall conduct of the air war and the management of the USAAF air units.

Along with Jones, Bostock had a close hand in developing the organisation proposals for the fully integrated Allied Air Forces. Thus he could readily see its possibilities and contemplate a key role for himself in the conduct of the war. For Bostock the stakes were high, and the loss a bitter disappointment.

Another interesting aspect that related to the appointment of Jones as Chief of the Air Staff over Bostock is that of perspective, one from Kenney (probably based on comment from Bostock) and one from Jones himself. Kenney said, in talking about the dispute: 'It dated back from a few months before when Sir Charles Burnett, an Englishman who was acting as Australian Chief of Air Staff, was called back to England. Bostock, the ranking RAAF officer, was passed by and Jones, considerably his junior, was selected for the job. Why, I didn't know.'¹

On the other hand, Jones stated that: 'Bostock was one place senior to me, and although there were eight other officers senior to us both, my own view was that Bostock would be given the job.'²

Thus we have two, apparently conflicting, claims: one that Bostock was the RAAF's ranking officer and that he was considerably senior to Jones; and the other that Jones was only one place behind Bostock, and there were eight other officers ahead of both. In the first statement the existence of Williams and Goble at the top of the RAAF Graduation List has been ignored. As to Bostock being considerably senior to Jones, this is indeed correct if substantive rank only is considered; Bostock was a substantive Air Vice-Marshal and Jones a substantive Wing Commander, three ranks lower than Bostock. However, in wartime substantive rank was, with a couple of exceptions, replaced by temporary rank. Thus Jones was a temporary Group Captain at the time of his appointment. Further, in an environment of rapid expansion, acting rank was widely used, and here again, Jones was an acting Air Commodore.

An alternative measure is to look, not at rank, but order on the (General Duties) officer Graduation List, which was based on relative temporary rank (or substantive rank if no temporary rank was held). Thus at the time of Jones' appointment as CAS, Bostock was at number three position, behind Williams and Goble, and Jones at number ten; that is, six places behind Bostock.

On the other side is Jones' claim that Bostock was only one place senior to him, and that there were eight others ahead of both of them. This claim is clearly based on the prewar *Graduation List where the circumstances as described had applied since the late 1920s*. In thinking this way Jones was not taking a single-minded myopic view, but rather reflecting what was a common way of thinking for senior prewar officers who had been playing 'follow the leader' for most of their Service careers. Promotion by seniority was the norm before the war and continued throughout, with two notable exceptions, those of Bostock and Jones themselves. From being in positions eleven and twelve respectively on the Graduation List in August 1939, they jumped to positions three and four respectively by May 1942, and held those positions until the end of the war. For the remainder, promotion by seniority applied, almost without exception.

¹ Kenney, G C, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, Air Force History and Museums Program, Washington DC, reprint 1997, p 80.

² Jones, G, *From Private to Air Marshal*, Greenhouse Publications, Richmond, 1988, p 83.

COMMENT BY GENERAL BRETT

An interesting perspective on the origins of the Jones – Bostock dispute comes from written comments prepared by General Brett late in July 1942 as part of his handover of command to General Kenney. In regard to Bostock he said:

Sir Charles Burnett who had been Chief of the Air Staff (in command) was due to leave. Bostock, his natural successor, was not popular; however at that time I thought Bostock to be a good man and at least officially he had a background which appeared to be valuable to me. There was no other man except Air Marshal Drummond, in the Middle East, who might have the necessary qualifications to fill the position of Chief of Staff of the Allied Air Forces, who should be an Australian as the Commander is an American. The disruption of the original idea created an organisation wherein RAAF maintenance, supply, engineering and all functions pertaining thereto are independent of the Allied Air Force Commander. This made the position difficult; however, due to my friendship with the Australians we have managed to get along.

There has been a continual tendency on the part of GHQ to build up the American forces and to give little consideration to the Australians. This applies especially to land forces. The Australians' reaction to this tendency has brought on quite a bit of trouble and is probably responsible for Bostock's dissatisfaction with his certainly peculiar position. Bostock has not turned out to be the cooperative personality I had hoped for and is therefore not nearly as valuable as he might have been. He has no true concept of an Allied Air Force and is always suspicious that some action is going to be taken to deprive the Australians of what they have gained. There also appears to be a lot of interior politics of which we, as Americans, are not informed. Bostock has a very poor personality. He always appears to be grumpy and discontented. He is rather arbitrary in his opinions, which of course will not work without adequate background. He is completely out on General Headquarters and is unsympathetic towards everything they do.

The situation regarding Bostock must be watched very carefully and any advice or suggestions offered must be given the most careful consideration as they may appear OK on the surface and still have something underneath which may cause trouble.

Brett, however, had a somewhat better opinion of Jones, of whom he said:

Sincere, earnest, honest. Having worked with him and having lived through the origin of the Allied Air Forces with him I feel I could handle Jones and get a tremendous amount out of him. Bostock has interfered with relationships between Jones and the Allied Air Forces unnecessarily. Bostock expected to be Chief of the Air Staff and to command the RAAF. His failure to do this has embittered him, with the result that he has picked on Jones and created some antagonism in return. However, I have always managed to clear this situation and get what I

wanted. I believe you will find Jones much more reliable, much more honest than Bostock.

(See Documents Chapter 12: Comments by General Brett, dated July 1942)

FORMAL RAAF RECOGNITION OF RAAF COMMAND

On 7th November 1942, in the absence of any clear directive from RAAF Headquarters on the command arrangements related to RAAF Command, Bostock wrote to the Secretary of the Air Board asking that: 'the organisation of the RAAF Command, the responsibilities of the Air Officer Commanding and the relationship of the RAAF Command to the Air Board and to the RAAF as a whole, should be promulgated at the earliest possible date. This is urgently necessary to ensure that subordinate Commanders and Staff Officers throughout the Service may be properly informed and instructed.'

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Secretary, Air Board, dated 7th November 1942)

The reply to Bostock's letter to the Air Board came on 20th November, signed by Jones himself:

It will be recalled that RAAF Command was constituted by order of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, on the abolition of the combined operational staffs which previously constituted Allied Air Headquarters. No administrative action has been taken by this Headquarters to form this Command as an RAAF formation, because the decision was not concurred in by this Headquarters or the Minister for Air.

2. The effect of the decision of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, has been to abolish the combined staff, and for reasons such as indicated in your letter, it now becomes necessary to embody the personnel who previously constituted the RAAF component of Allied Air Headquarters into the RAAF organisation, in a form both acceptable to this Headquarters and most convenient from the point of view of administration and organisation.

3. It is therefore proposed to organise the staff required by the Allied Air Commander to exercise operational control of RAAF units, as a portion of RAAF Headquarters, under the title of Directorate of Operations, Communications and Intelligence.

4. The organisation so created will overcome the difficulties referred to in paragraph 3 of your letter, by enabling the officer holding the appointment of Director to deal with these matters of organisation and administration in the normal manner.

5. The necessary action will be taken, and orders issued to give effect to the organisation outlined above, and appropriate establishment tables will be issued in due course.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the AOC, RAAF Command, 20th November 1942)

Comment

Jones' outright refusal to recognise RAAF Command as a RAAF formation, and his proposed solution to the organisational problem thus posed, can only be viewed as extraordinary. He clearly took this action without consulting the Government, whose prerogative it was to accept, or otherwise, General Kenney's initiative in forming RAAF Command and appointing Bostock to be its commander. While Kenney clearly exceeded his authority in forming RAAF Command in the way he did, the fact that the Government chose not to challenge him indicated an acceptance, by the Government, of his actions.

Further, Jones' proposal to form a Directorate of Operations, Communications and Intelligence under his control at RAAF Headquarters was nothing more than a backdoor bid to regain operational control of the RAAF's combat forces. As a form of organisation there is little doubt that it would have been an abject failure.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In December 1942, RAAF Headquarters issued two Air Force Confidential Orders dealing with the organisation of the RAAF.

The first of these, AFCO 374, dealt specifically with the higher organisation of the RAAF. It made no mention whatsoever of RAAF Command, but rather outlined the blueprint for the higher organisation that had been approved in June 1942 [See Chapter 12]. Under this arrangement the RAAF was to be divided into five (operational) areas, three Training Groups and five Maintenance Groups. The formation of one or more mobile Operational Groups was also forecast.

(See Documents: Air Force Confidential Order 374 – Higher Organisation of the RAAF, dated 2nd December 1942)

The second, AFCO 391, dealt with operational control, and is reproduced here in full:

AFCO 391 – Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force: Operational Control

1. Effective from 30th April 1942, Allied Air Headquarters exercised operational control of the Royal Australian Air Force. Administrative control, however, remained unchanged. As a consequence, some re-organisation of the RAAF Headquarters was necessary, and the operational staffs were attached to Allied Air Headquarters. (AFCO 63/42 refers).

2. Upon transfer of Allied Air Headquarters to Brisbane, the RAAF staff attached for duty was formed into a separate unit – 'Extra RAAF (Staff with Allied Air Headquarters)', under the direct command of RAAF Headquarters for administration and discipline. (AFCO 180/42 refers).

3. By General Order No 47, dated 5th September 1942, the Commander, Allied Air Forces constituted the Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, to exercise operational control of certain RAAF units, and by General Order No 53, dated 21st September 1942, changed the name from Coastal Command to 'RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces'.

4. This action was taken by the Commander of Allied Air Forces as a temporary measure to facilitate his operational control of the RAAF operational units assigned to him. It is intended that, on relinquishment of control by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, the staff now known as RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces, shall revert to RAAF Headquarters as Directorates of Operations, Intelligence and Communications respectively. The staff is therefore being organised on this basis, and appropriate establishment tables are being issued.

5. This staff is to be responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, for operational control only of RAAF units assigned to it by him. All matters of RAAF policy, administration, discipline, training, supply and maintenance are the responsibility of RAAF Headquarters. Nevertheless, RAAF staff, Allied Air Forces, is to offer advice to RAAF Headquarters on all matters affecting operations, and is to give its views and relevant information on such matters as may be requested by RAAF Headquarters from time to time.

(See Documents: Air Force Confidential Order 391 – Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force: Operational Control, dated 5th December 1942)

Comment

Clearly AFCO 391 was a follow-up to Jones' letter to Bostock of 20th November. Its basic argument was that the present arrangements, that is, the assignment of operational control of RAAF combat units to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and the formation of RAAF Command, were a mere temporary expedient and that on relinquishment of operational control back to the RAAF, that control would be exercised by CAS through the normal air staff arrangements. In the meantime the staff, and presumably the commander, of RAAF Command would operate as part of RAAF Headquarters.

On 14th December 1942, the Minister for Air wrote to the Prime Minister, as the Minister for Defence, enclosing a copy of AFCO 391, and explaining 'that it became necessary to issue this order because the Officer Commanding RAAF Command had expressed certain dissatisfaction with the present arrangements and had shown a tendency to exceed his authority in matters of policy and administration, which were the responsibilities of the Air Board.'

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 36)

BOSTOCK OBJECTS

The 'certain dissatisfaction with present arrangements' referred to by the Minister for Air in his letter to the Prime Minister is set out in a letter, dated 12th December 1942, sent by the 'Officer Commanding RAAF Command', Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to the Secretary of the Air Board in relation to AFCO 391. In his letter Bostock said:

AFCO 391 dated 5th December 1942 reflects a confusion of ideas, misrepresents Allied Air Forces General Order No 47, fails to enunciate the responsibilities of the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command and misrepresents the functions of the RAAF Command Headquarters Staff.

2. Allied Air Forces General Order No 47 constituted the Coastal Command by aggregation of RAAF operational units into an integral formation. The Order then designated the Air Officer Commanding and specifically charged this officer with the responsibility to exercise command. The name 'Coastal Command' was later altered to 'RAAF Command' without other change. The Commander, Allied Air Forces, constituted the RAAF Command to facilitate the operational control of the Air Officer Commanding, on whom he has placed, as an individual, the responsibility of command. It is clear, therefore, that the statement in paragraph 3 of AFCO 391 is incomplete and inaccurate, since the Command, as such, cannot exercise operational control over itself, but must be provided with a Commander. The Commander must, in turn, set up a Headquarters and be provided with an appropriate staff.

3. The action taken by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, reflects the organisation he has decided to adopt. A change of Government Policy, or the termination of the war, are the only contingencies which he visualises as requiring a change of organisation. The statement in paragraph 4 of AFCO 391 that the organisation was intended as a 'temporary measure' is therefore misleading. Further, any intentions regarding future reorganisation are irrelevant and certainly should not be permitted to influence the methods to be adopted now to implement the organisation of the RAAF for war, as required by the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

4. Paragraph 5 of AFCO 391 is unintelligible on close examination. The staff of RAAF Command Headquarters is, of course, directly responsible to the Air Officer Commanding and not to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. RAAF units are not assigned to the staff, but to the RAAF Command as a formation. The formation is in turn commanded by the Air Officer Commanding and it is the sole function of the staff of RAAF Command Headquarters to advise the Air Officer Commanding, who, as an individual, is responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. Similarly, it is ridiculous to require the staff to offer advice to RAAF Headquarters; this duty can only be carried out by the Air Officer Commanding

(after taking advice of his staff) on whom the responsibility rests to obtain the administrative services necessary to carry out the orders of the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

5. The apparently deliberate omission of all mention or reference, in AFCO 391, to the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command, has resulted in presenting a picture of a complicated and impracticable organisation for which there is no justification. The presentation of the Air Officer Commanding in the correct perspective immediately simplifies the organisation which then assumes a practical, orthodox and efficient aspect.

6. It is submitted that as AFCO 391 is badly drafted, misleading and likely to add to the already dangerous state of confusion now existing throughout the RAAF, it should be withdrawn and a more suitable order published as early as possible.

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Secretary, Air Board, dated 12th December 1942)

THE AIR BOARD REPLIES

At a meeting on 28th December the Air Board agreed on the following Minute to the Minister for Air:

For submission to the Minister

The Board has before it a memorandum from Air Vice-Marshal Bostock dated 12th December 1942 and numbered RAAF 1269, file No 320.9Z, referring to Air Force Confidential Order No 391 dated 5th December 1942.

Expressed in simple terms, the Board regards Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's attitude as a challenge to the position and authority of both the Chief of the Air Staff and the Board. It would appear that he is unwilling to cooperate within the organisation laid down, and for some months has been urging the adoption of an organisation which is wholly unacceptable to the Chief of the Air Staff and the Board.

The organisation which Air Vice-Marshal Bostock desires is not in accordance with the principles laid down in War Cabinet Minute No 2127, dated 29th April 1942 [*See Documents: Chapter 10*]. Furthermore, it is not consistent with General MacArthur's letter to the Prime Minister dated 4th September 1942 [*See Documents: Chapter 13*], or with the terms of General Order No 47, dated 5th September 1942, by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, South-West Pacific Area. [*See Documents: Chapter 13*]

That organisation which he desires would give him complete command, involving operational and administrative responsibility over all operational and associated units of the Royal Australian Air Force.

In view of the fact that already there are a number of Area Commands to which the Air Board has delegated appropriate responsibility, the Board considers that a further superior command headquarters could be set up only by transferring the whole or part of the powers and responsibilities of the Chief of the Air Staff and the Board to such command. This would be unnecessary duplication, and in the Board's opinion would lead to a hopeless state of confusion. In order to serve any useful purpose, such a command would inevitably have to become the superior headquarters of the RAAF.

In the Board's view the present organisation, which, in accordance with the directives referred to in the third paragraph of this minute and embodying as it does a division of responsibility for operations and administration, is working reasonably well. If any change is to be made, the Board considers that it should be to re-unite all sections of RAAF Headquarters staff on the same basis as existed before the arrival of the United States Forces. It may be necessary for the post of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff to be situated normally at the Headquarters of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, whose directions in regard to operations he would accept as representative of the Chief of the Air Staff; and also to create a new appointment of Assistant Chief of the Air Staff who would, when necessary, represent the Chief of the Air Staff on the Air Board. This organisation would be in accordance with the recommendations of the Chiefs of Staff Committee which examined this subject.

In conclusion the Air Board records that it views with alarm and apprehension any move which would tend to divide the RAAF into two sections not wholly under the same controlling authority, as it considers that this would seriously weaken the fighting value of the Service, and may do very great harm to discipline and morale.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper No 225/42 – Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated December 1942)

Comment

Given the outlandish nature of Jones' proposed organisation for the control of operations, and the fact that it so obviously ran counter to that promulgated by Kenney, it is no wonder that Bostock should be so strongly opposed. On this occasion it was Jones who was in the wrong. For his part, while his own position as AOC, RAAF Command, may have been at stake, Bostock also had a duty to do his best to give effect to the organisational arrangements set down by his superior, General Kenney.

Jones' contention that: 'a further superior command headquarters could be set up only by transferring the whole or part of the powers and responsibilities of the Chief of the Air Staff and the Board to such command', and that: 'such a command would inevitably have to become the superior headquarters of the RAAF' is clearly an exaggeration. Certainly, to have set up another superior command headquarters

would have introduced an extra step in the administrative chain, but this could have been offset by reducing the responsibilities of the Area Commands in the administrative sphere. Also, in all of this Jones seems to have conveniently forgotten the fact that at least half of the RAAF's effort was devoted to training, for both the Empire Air Training Scheme and the operational force, and that there was never any suggestion that this function, or any part of it, would be transferred to Bostock.

As to why Jones would have taken the position that he did, two factors appear to have come into coincidence. The first was his, by then, almost obsessive, desire to regain full control of the RAAF's operational activities, to have in effect the same powers as did previous Chiefs of the Air Staff. The second was his growing dislike of Bostock. And while it may have been Bostock who started the feud, it was Jones who took it to new heights of the ridiculous. In that Festive Season of 1942 there was little 'Peace on Earth and Good Will to all Men', especially in the highest ranks of the RAAF.

A PROMOTION FOR JONES

On 18th December 1942, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, wrote to the Prime Minister recommending 'that Air Vice-Marshal Jones be granted the temporary rank of Air Marshal as from 1st January 1943' but without increase in salary. Drakeford gave as his reasons the following: Jones' predecessor had held the rank of Air Chief Marshal; the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Navy held higher rank; three RAAF officers were senior to Jones and five held the acting rank of Air Vice-Marshal; and that it was desirable that Jones be given a status appropriate to the post of Chief of the Air Staff 'to facilitate his administration of the Air Force, as well as his official contacts with the higher ranking officers of the other Australian Services and of the US Forces.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 18th December 1942)

In a reply dated 11th January 1943, Mr Curtin asked for clarification as to why Air Vice-Marshal Goble and Bostock should be superseded, and for further consideration of the position of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, who had been 'specially selected for his present position of Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and (who) has operational command of the RAAF squadrons allotted to the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 11th January 1943)

In his reply to the Prime Minister, dated 13th January, Mr Drakeford said that he considered the supersession of both Goble and Bostock by Jones to be 'quite justified' on the grounds of the nature of Goble's present duties and his long absence from Australia; and the fact that the War Cabinet, on his recommendation, had selected Jones over Bostock for the position of Chief of the Air Staff. Drakeford then went on: 'I consider it is not altogether sound in principle that the Chief of the Air Staff should have status junior to that of an officer holding a subordinate although important Command, but that the responsibilities of the Chief of the Air Staff justify the promotion recommended, while, further, I feel since it would greatly assist him in his administrative control of the Force generally - rank and seniority being regarded in the Services as very important from that aspect.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 13th January 1943)

The Prime Minister's decision on the Minister's recommendation that Jones be promoted to the rank of Air Marshal did not come until 26th February, when he wrote that, while he had no objection to the supersession of Goble, he did not agree as far as Bostock was concerned. He then went on:

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. The position is clearly set out in my personal and confidential letter of 25th April 1942.

Until the question of RAAF organisation referred to in my separate letter is satisfactorily disposed of and a sound working arrangement established, I consider it would be unwise to make any changes in the present ranks of senior officers.

(See Documents Chapter 10: Second Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942; Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 26th February 1943)

Comment

There can be little doubt that the responsibilities of Chief of the Air Staff at that time fully justified the rank of Air Marshal. Likewise, the responsibilities of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, would have also justified the rank of Air Marshal. Had Drakeford taken such a line it is quite likely that he would have been successful. However, what is clear is that he was more concerned with furthering the position of Jones vis a vis Bostock than he was with obtaining for Jones the status appropriate to his level of responsibility. Such was his own dislike of Bostock that the idea of also recommending that he too be promoted to Air Marshal probably did not occur to the Minister, or his chief air adviser, Jones.

Promoting Jones to a rank higher than Bostock would have done nothing to resolve the dispute, except in that it may have driven Bostock to resign. Even this latter course may not have helped in that MacArthur and Kenney would, more than likely, have refused to either accept such a resignation or whoever may have been put forward as a replacement as AOC, RAAF Command.

As it was, Jones in his position of Chief of the Air Staff, with responsibility for the administration of the RAAF, in effect held the whip hand over Bostock, whose only card was the support of MacArthur and Kenney and the lack of any obvious alternative appointee within the senior ranks of the RAAF.

Jones too no doubt considered that being senior in rank to Bostock would enable him to, in effect, put Bostock in his place. What both Drakeford and Jones failed to realise was that, aside from the issue of personalities, the fundamental problem was one of divided responsibility, not of relative rank. As AOC, RAAF Command, Bostock was not subordinate to Jones, notwithstanding the latter's claims to the contrary.

One of the more common misconceptions within the military is that authority is derived from rank; it is not. Authority is derived from position, with rank being a consideration only when the authority of position is unclear, due normally to some urgent and essentially temporary situation. While rank and position normally go hand in hand such a juxtaposition, while desirable within a military organisation, is not essential.

DEFENCE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

On 7th January 1943 the Defence Committee met, at the direction of the Prime Minister, to consider the differences between Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Bostock over the place of RAAF Command in the higher organisation. Both Jones and Bostock attended the meeting which reached the following conclusions:

1. The Defence Committee are of the opinion that to achieve the maximum efficiency of the RAAF as an Australian organisation there should be unified operational and administrative control of the whole RAAF within Australia and its Territories under one head. This view was previously expressed by the Chiefs of Staff in their report to the Minister for Defence on 26th September 1942. [See *Documents Chapter 13: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 31 to 35*]

2. It is understood that the organisation of the Army Command is to come under review in the light of experience gained by the functioning of the existing organisation in the operations in New Guinea. As the results of this review may have a bearing upon a parallel re-organisation of the RAAF, the following procedure under the existing organisation of the RAAF is recommended pending such re-organisation:

(i) RAAF Command to be established as an RAAF Unit to exercise operational control only over RAAF units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area.

(ii) The Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command, to have operational responsibility as at present, but administrative requirements for operational purposes are to be met through the existing RAAF machinery. This requires the closest cooperation between RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command. The Chief of the Air Staff will consider the measures necessary to achieve this

including the provision of suitable administrative advisory staff for the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command.

(iii) In view of the necessity for the close relation between operational requirements and the administrative provision to enable such operations to be carried out, it is essential that the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command should keep the Chief of the Air Staff fully informed in regard to operational plans and the Chief of the Air Staff is similarly to acquaint the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command regarding any proposed changes in organisation and administration which affect the RAAF Operational Command.

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock stated that he agreed with the foregoing conclusions.

(See Documents: Defence Committee Minute No 6/1943 – RAAF Command, dated 7th January 1943)

GENERAL MACARTHUR'S VIEWS

The Prime Minister, on receipt of the Defence Committee's views on RAAF Command, put them to General MacArthur, who replied on 16th January 1943:

I have given most careful consideration to the question of the RAAF Command which was discussed in your letter of January 11, 1943. The basis for the procedure outlined therein is the proposal to withhold from the senior officer of the RAAF Command the authority to command that organisation, and to give him only operational control thereof. I consider this idea to be completely violative [*sic*] of sound military principles and cannot concur therewith. Australian or American units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area must be actually commanded by officers who are assigned to that Area. Administrative control flows down through national command channels, but the command function of the senior officer over his organisation cannot be impaired. 'Operational control' is, in fact, the military physiology that describes the condition in which strategic or tactical direction rests in an officer who cannot exercise full command.

The Allied Air Forces contain American and Australian units. The headquarters staff is a mixed organisation with, for example, RAAF officer with an American assistant as Director of Intelligence, and a US Army Air Force officer with an RAAF assistant as Director of Operations. The American echelon is organised into the Fifth Air Force, a tactical unit with command, communications, combat and service elements. The RAAF echelon is operating as the RAAF Command, which is also a tactical unit and is commanded by the senior RAAF officer assigned to the South-West Pacific Area, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock. The Commander of the RAAF Command functions directly under the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and under the administrative policies of the Chief of the Air Staff. It is absolutely essential that the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF

Command, exercise full and complete command over his organisation, and that the Chief of the Air Staff exercise his administrative functions through the chain of command. In order to effectuate this basic principle, it is requested:

- a. That the AOC RAAF Command have full legal command of his organisation with the responsibilities, authorities and limitations prescribed by regulation and customs of the Service;
- b. That the AOC RAAF Command be provided with the minimum staff necessary to operate and administer his command;
- c. That forward service elements essential to the immediate operation of his organisation be assigned to be South-West Pacific Area as a part of the RAAF Command;
- d. That communications pertaining to the administration of the RAAF Command or of its component parts be directed to the AOC by the Chief of the Air Staff.

Favourable action in this request will have the effect merely to give the RAAF Command the inherent structure essential to and present in every military organisation and will make it possible to coalesce its combat squadrons and essential auxiliary service units into an effective fighting organisation. The Chief of the Air Staff, dealing with its AOC will, of course, support it administratively according to the policy of the Commonwealth Government to the limit of his resources, while the AOC, RAAF Command, will keep the Chief of the Air Staff fully informed as to his administrative position and needs, and of his routine operational records.

The basic principle involved in this matter would apply equally to any branch of service of the United States or of Australia or to any echelon thereof.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 38 – 42)

THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE REPLIES

General MacArthur's comments were in turn examined by the Defence Committee on 23rd February 1943. After reiterating the view that an Air Officer Commanding RAAF, or other single authority, should be appointed to 'secure unified operational and administrative control of the RAAF' the Committee went on to make the following observations on General MacArthur's letter:

The present organisation of the RAAF whereby the AOC RAAF Command has merely operational control over the RAAF units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area while command rests with the Chief of the Air Staff was set up at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area. The Commander-in-Chief now states that to withhold from the AOC RAAF Command the authority to command that organisation and to give him

operational control only is an idea completely violative [*sic*] of sound military principles and one with which he cannot agree. It will be noted that the organisation which the Commander-in-Chief criticises was set up notwithstanding the recommendations of the Defence Committee in deference to the wishes of the Commander-in-Chief.

Without any detailed elaboration of the implications of acceding to the requests of the Commander-in-Chief, the Committee is of the opinion that to do so would result in the virtual separation of the RAAF units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area from the RAAF and would constitute RAAF Command as an Air Force Headquarters which would absorb the greater part of the existing RAAF Headquarters, which would retain the form without the substance of power. To effect the division of the RAAF which is proposed, would disrupt the existing personnel, supply and maintenance services.

That the remedy for disadvantages resulting from the division between operational and administrative control of the RAAF is not to be found by the assignment of administrative units to be South-West Pacific Area and by a division of responsibility for administrative control but rather by unifying operational and administrative control of the whole of the RAAF under one commander.

The fusion of operational and administrative control that is necessary should take place at the top of the RAAF and not at the plane proposed in the letter of the Commander-in-Chief.

In conclusion, 'the Defence Committee reaffirmed its previously expressed conclusion that there should be unified operational and administrative control of the whole of the RAAF within Australia and its territories under one Commander who would be responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, for the operations and to the Government for the administration of the Air Force.'

Comment

General MacArthur's proposal 'that the AOC RAAF Command have full legal command of his organisation with the responsibilities, authorities and limitations prescribed by regulation and customs of the Service'; that he 'be provided with the minimum staff necessary to operate and administer his command'; and, 'that forward service elements essential to the immediate operation of his organisation be assigned to be South-West Pacific Area as a part of the RAAF Command' was the first sign of rationality in the whole organisational argument to date.

Unfortunately, the Defence Committee, led no doubt by Jones and influenced by the set-up of General Blamey as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces (which was the Army equivalent to having an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF), was fixed on its notion of 'unified operational and administrative control'. For his part, Jones was intent on regaining full control of the RAAF, and in ousting Bostock. Thus he put forward every possible difficulty, real or imagined, as to why the MacArthur proposal would not work.

As to the grant of administrative authority to Bostock, Jones, either deliberately or through ignorance, mixed up the proposal that such powers be delegated by him to Bostock, with the idea that such powers should be handed over to Bostock. With a delegation of powers, which is what had been proposed by MacArthur, Bostock would have been responsible to Jones for the exercise of those powers, and would have been required to follow Jones' orders related to such delegated powers. On the other hand, a handover of powers would have removed them completely from Jones', and maybe the Minister's, control. Such a course would certainly have caused excessive duplication and much confusion, and was, in any case, neither justified nor necessary.

Had Jones, and other members of the Defence Committee, but looked at the organisation of the Fifth Air Force they would have seen a clear model of what MacArthur was proposing. Kenney as Commanding General Fifth Air Force, had full national command over both operational and air service units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area. Thus he was responsible, as Commander, Allied Air Forces, to General MacArthur, as Commander-in-Chief, for the operational control of those forces, and as Commanding General Fifth Air Force through US Army channels to the War Department in Washington for administrative matters. The only complicating feature of these arrangements was the two-hatted nature of both MacArthur's and Kenney's appointments and the dominance of the Americans in the Allied arrangements.

There was, within the Fifth Air Force, unity of operational and administrative control. The same would have applied to RAAF Command under MacArthur's proposals. The only difference was that it would have been Bostock who would have exercised that unified control, not Jones.

One point apparently lost on Jones when he so strongly rejected MacArthur's proposals for RAAF Command was that, had they been implemented, Bostock would have become responsible to Jones for the administration of his Command. As it was Bostock had virtually no responsibility to Jones, and so could in effect treat with him on the basis of equality.

A MEETING BETWEEN JONES AND BOSTOCK

On 18th February 1943, Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Bostock met in Jones' office at Forward Echelon in Brisbane. The meeting, notes on which were recorded by Jones' staff, was somewhat acrimonious:

CAS outlined to Bostock the queries raised by Mr Spender as to what are the differences in the higher organisation of the RAAF. Bostock denied that he had canvassed anybody, including politicians, and forcefully emphasised that RAAF Headquarters did not realise that he was serving two masters, being created by and responsible to General Kenney, which necessitated certain powers being required by him in order to carry out his responsibilities. He bitterly complained [*that*] administrative orders were given and decisions made without consulting him, and he felt it was his duty to disagree and say so when he did not believe it was in the best interests of the Service. He was not going to remain a 'dumb post office'. ...

He [*Bostock*] then became very outspoken and said, 'Look here, let's have all the cards on the table, you've come here with the intention of "let's shoot this bloody fellow down"'. CAS replied in a firm manner that this was not so. Bostock continued with an apology if his language was too forceful but stated that he had written in this manner for 40 years, and it was the only way he knew how to write. If the CAS did not like the way he phrased his letters, the remedy was in his own hands to recommend his replacement by the Prime Minister.

At this stage, CAS pointed out to Bostock that his disagreement with the administrative decisions amounted to insubordination, and as a result, Bostock's attitude became much more reasonable. Bostock stated RAAF Headquarters did not cooperate and carry out his recommendations, instancing a disagreement on squadrons being formed on a two-flight basis or a three-flight basis. CAS stated we had done everything in our power to assist him, reminding Bostock that at no time had he (CAS), interfered with operations in any way. Bostock enquired if there was any reply to the recent Defence Committee recommendation regarding higher organisation of the RAAF, but CAS stated that Shedden was overworked and had not yet been able to give it his attention. Bostock regarded the aforesaid Defence Committee recommendation as an interim measure only and he was prepared to try it out pending a finalisation.

CAS suggested Bostock calling in all the Senior officers, including himself, so that they could speak with one voice. (Group Captain Flower, Group Captain Wiggins, Wing Commander Charlton, Group Captain Gibson and Group Captain Packer).

Additionally, Bostock suggested CAS invite him to Melbourne to address the Directors of RAAF Headquarters on similar lines.

The suggested talk to Senior Officers was to be on the lines that 'Difficulties have arisen owing to the peculiar nature of the relationship of operations and administration, and the division between Melbourne and Brisbane, and it was up to the Senior

Officers of the RAAF to pull together with a full loyalty to the Service as a whole.'

The meeting concluded with the following comment from Bostock to Jones:

Since you are the Prime Minister's channel of communication, will you please tell the Prime Minister that I will give my full cooperation provided I am in a position to carry out my responsibilities.

Subsequent to the meeting between Jones and Bostock, a meeting of the senior RAAF officers stationed in Brisbane was held at Forward Echelon and addressed by both Jones and Bostock. However, Bostock's suggestion for a similar meeting at RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne was not followed through.

(See Document: Notes on a Meeting Between AVMs Jones and Bostock in Brisbane on 18th February 1943)

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A Posting for Bostock

VIEWS OF GENERAL BLAMEY

Having obtained successive views from General MacArthur and the Defence Committee on the higher organisation of the RAAF [See Chapter 14], the Prime Minister had the Secretary, Department of Defence, write to General Blamey on 9th March 1943, to seek his views as to whether an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, should be appointed and the Air Board abolished, thus putting the RAAF on a similar footing to the Australian Army.

General Blamey's reply came on 11th March, strongly supporting the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, and the abolition of the Air Board. He then went on:

The Air Officer Commanding should be responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, in all operational matters and to the Commonwealth Government in all matters other than operational pertaining to the RAAF in precisely the same manner as the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces.

There is, however, a difference between the relationship of the Air Officer Commanding and the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, to the Command of the SWPA in that the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces is also Commander Allied Land Forces.

Such air forces as may be allotted to the SWPA are somewhat in the nature of task forces and the operational command of these forces will be exercised by an RAAF Commander under the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

Such a position may also arise in relation to the Allied Land Forces at various times and there may be an interchange of command as between Australian and American Commanders both in Air and Land Forces.

This does not affect the issue under consideration, however, but it emphasises the factor that a close personal relationship must exist between the Command of SWPA and RAAF and Allied Air Forces Headquarters. This can only be achieved when the operational and administrative control of the RAAF are under the one officer.

The appointment of an Air Officer Commanding RAAF will facilitate these interchanges and will ensure close cooperation which is essential and without which the full value of the RAAF cannot be exercised in the war.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 43 – 45)

Comment

Blamey's support for the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, and the abolition of the Air Board is quite understandable, given that such a move would support his own position as Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, a position of which General MacArthur was extremely critical. Dr David Horner in his book *High Command* details much of this criticism of Blamey's dual position, including MacArthur's comment to Shedden that 'it would be necessary for General Blamey sooner or later to make a decision as to whether he was going forward in command of the advanced forces in any offensive operations, or was remaining in Australia to command the forces left there for the defence of the base.'¹ This criticism was aimed precisely at the idea that one man could give adequate attention to operational matters in the field, while at the same time trying to run a national headquarters, especially when the field command was in New Guinea and the national headquarters was in Melbourne.

This criticism is at the nub of the objections to having an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF. As the war was moving forward, and the Force growing in size, it was becoming increasingly difficult for one man to take the load of both operations and full administration of the RAAF, including professional military advice to the Government.

DELAY IN FORMALLY ESTABLISHING RAAF COMMAND

On 10th March 1943, General MacArthur complained to the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, that he had been informed that the recommendations of the Defence Committee of 7th January concerning RAAF Command had still not been put into effect. He again emphasised the recommendations set out in his letter of 16th January. He added: 'The basic issue is a military one which does not properly admit of doubt. Reduced to its simplest terms it is that the forces placed at my disposal shall not be vitiated by outside control. This is fundamental and to deny it would produce a situation the gravity of which I cannot over-emphasise. May I ask that decisive action be taken in the matter.'

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 43 – 45)

On 17th March the Prime Minister replied to General MacArthur, pointing out he had been given to believe that the required action in relation to RAAF Command had been taken and that he was 'disturbed to find that this had not been done'. He then went on to say that the whole question of the organisation of the RAAF was before the Government and that the General's recommendation that the AOC, RAAF

¹ Horner D M, *High Command*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982, pp 212–213.

Command, be given full command authority would be considered in that context. In the meantime he suggested that the interim measures recommended by the Defence Committee should be put into effect.

On 21st March General MacArthur replied saying 'that, in view of the existing unsatisfactory situation and pending the reorganisation of the RAAF, he agreed that the interim measures, as recommended by the Defence Committee, should be implemented.' He also added that 'while such measures would not, of course, satisfy the principles of military organisation which ... (he) ... outlined in his letter of the 16th January, ... (he) ... felt that the recognition, by the RAAF, of the RAAF Command as a tactical formation and the establishment of RAAF Command Headquarters as a unit, might tend to facilitate coordination of the administrative services with operational requirements, to meet tactical needs.'

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 46 – 48)

As well as writing to General MacArthur, the Prime Minister wrote to the Minister for Air requesting him 'to issue instructions for effect to be given to the approved interim measures at once.' Mr Drakeford replied on 24th advising that the Chief of the Air Staff had promulgated an order suitably covering the approved arrangements.

FORMAL RECOGNITION

Formal recognition of RAAF Command as an RAAF unit, as recommended by the Defence Committee on 7th January 1943, came on 30th March 1943, almost eight months after its formation as part of the Allied Air Forces. This recognition came in the form of a revision of the provisions set out in AFCO 391. [*See Chapter 14*]

Air Force Confidential Order A44 – Organisation of Royal Australian Air Force – Operational Control

1. To conform with the change in the designation made by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, on 21st September 1942, the title of 'Extra RAAF (Staff with Allied Air HQ)' as an RAAF unit is hereby changed to 'Headquarters RAAF Command', with effect from 27th March 1943. Headquarters, RAAF Command, will continue to be a separate air-force unit administered directly by RAAF Headquarters.
2. The function of Headquarters, RAAF Command, is to exercise, under the direction of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, operational control of those RAAF units which are from time to time assigned to it by the Commander, Allied Air Forces.
3. The component of the Allied Air Forces which comes under RAAF Command for operational control comprises such RAAF operational units, including area and operational headquarters, and such other elements of the Allied Air Forces, as may be assigned or attached by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, from time to time.

4. RAAF Headquarters ceased to exercise direction and control of RAAF operations in the South-West Pacific Area as from 30th April 1942, on which date Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, was established. The formation of RAAF Command does not, therefore, alter or affect the present functions and responsibilities of RAAF Headquarters.

5. The AOC, RAAF Command, is responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, for the exercise of operational control of RAAF units assigned to his command, but his responsibilities do not extend to administration of those units. The administrative arrangements for operational requirements are to be met through existing machinery controlled by RAAF Headquarters.

6. In view of the necessity for the closest relations between operational requirements and the administrative arrangements to enable operations to be carried out, it is essential that Headquarters, RAAF Command, should keep RAAF Headquarters fully informed in regard to the operational plan. Similarly, RAAF Headquarters will acquaint Headquarters RAAF Command regarding any proposed changes in organisation and administration which may affect the operational control of the units assigned to RAAF Command.

[Paragraphs 7 to 10 omitted]

(See Documents: Air Force Confidential Order A44 – Organisation of Royal Australian Air Force – Operational Control, dated 30th March 1943)

GRUDGING RECOGNITION

Formal recognition of RAAF Command by Jones came only grudgingly, after strong protests by General MacArthur and a firm directive from the Prime Minister, and all this notwithstanding Jones' agreement in the Defence Committee Meeting of 7th January 1943 to take the required action.

However, on close examination, what had been recognised was not RAAF Command, as an RAAF tactical formation, as requested by MacArthur, but merely the headquarters of RAAF Command, which was recognised as an RAAF unit. Under Jones' formulation, the sole purpose of Headquarters RAAF Command was to plan operations and issue operational orders only to RAAF combat formations and units. RAAF Command as an organisational entity, for him, just did not exist.

For those who wish to be pedantic, the recommendation of the Defence Committee on 7th January was that: 'RAAF Command [*was*] to be established as an RAAF Unit to exercise operational control only over RAAF units assigned to the South-West Pacific Area.' Clearly Jones interpreted this as meaning that 'Headquarters RAAF Command (was) to be established ...etc', whereas Bostock interpreted the recommendation as meaning that RAAF Command, comprising the headquarters, area headquarters, and all operational units, was to be established as an RAAF formation, and that he, as AOC, was to exercise operational control only over the units assigned to RAAF Command.

Another interesting twist in the wording of the AFCO is that Headquarters RAAF Command was to keep RAAF Headquarters fully informed, etc, while RAAF Headquarters would acquaint Headquarters RAAF Command, etc. This is typical Service language as used between a superior headquarters and a subordinate formation.

No wonder Bostock felt frustrated at his treatment by Jones and the Air Board! However, more obstruction by Jones was to come.

NEW ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

On 15th March 1943 an instruction was issued by RAAF Headquarters in effect banning direct communication between RAAF Headquarters in Melbourne and Headquarters RAAF Command in Brisbane. From that date all such communication was to be passed through the Forward Echelon of RAAF Headquarters in Brisbane.

(See Documents: RAAF Headquarters Office Memorandum No 446 - RAAF Command - Channel of Communication, dated 15th March 1943).

Then, a short time later, an order was issued, by RAAF Headquarters, to all formations and units within RAAF Command forbidding all communication between Headquarters RAAF Command and its formations on administrative matters, including the status of aerodromes, supply facilities and administrative arrangements, except for major matters reflecting on immediate operations. Even this latter exception was qualified by specifying that Area Headquarters must not answer RAAF Command Headquarters directly, but must advise RAAF Headquarters, who would in turn advise RAAF Command.

Comment

The restrictions placed by Jones on Bostock's access to administrative information related to operations can only be described as ridiculous. It is no wonder that Bostock was forced to complain to Kenney, in a letter dated 19th March, 'that the appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, is rapidly becoming impracticable and untenable.' [See Documents: Letter from AOC RAAF Command to Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 19th March 1943]

PROPOSAL TO ALTER COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRADE

George Odgers in the Official History records that:

In March 1943 General MacArthur had set up the South-West Pacific Sea Frontier Force, charged with the responsibility (under the Commander, Allied Naval Forces) of giving naval protection to sea communications in the South-West Pacific. This organisation was commanded by Admiral Sir Guy Royle, Chief of the Australian Naval Staff. Royle's command and RAAF Command were jointly responsible for the protection of shipping. Air Vice-Marshal Jones, Chief of the Air Staff, had proposed to MacArthur in March that a

similar organisation for the RAAF should be set up whereby he would take over responsibility for air force operations in defence of Australian territory when the main RAAF combat force moved forward towards Japan. MacArthur rejected the proposal without offering any reasons.²

ATTEMPTED POSTING OF AIR VICE-MARSHAL BOSTOCK

At its meeting on 6th April 1943, the Air Board resolved to post Air Vice-Marshal Bostock from RAAF Command to command North-Western Area, and to replace him as AOC, RAAF Command, by Air Commodore J E Hewitt, then AOC, No 9 (Operational) Group, in New Guinea. Orders to this effect were then issued.

That evening the Minister for Air so advised the Prime Minister who, as Minister for Defence, 'directed that the instructions issued by the Air Board for these postings should be withdrawn for the following reasons:

- a. Changes of this importance should be submitted to the Minister for Air.
- b. Changes in higher appointments are subject to the approval of the Minister for Defence.
- c. The change in an appointment such as that held by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as OC of the RAAF for Operations, should be the subject of preliminary consideration between the Minister for Defence and the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area.'

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 50 – 55)

The Prime Minister's views were conveyed to the Chief of the Air Staff by the Secretary, Department of Defence, via the Secretary, Department of Air. This communication, and the subsequent exchange of minutes between the Minister for Air and the Air Board are reproduced below in full:

Minute from Secretary, Department of Air, to CAS, dated 7th April 1943 **CAS**

I informed the Minister (in Canberra) of the proposed changes in AOC appointments, as decided yesterday by Air Board.

2. The Secretary, Department of Defence, rang me last evening to the effect that the Minister had discussed those changes with the Minister for Defence, and both agreed that no action be taken at this stage to give effect to those proposals, that any signals which might have already been dispatched in that connection be cancelled, and that Air Board's recommendations should be formally submitted as soon as possible for consideration by the two Ministers – the concurrence of the Minister for Defence in changes of higher command appointments being necessary before effect is given thereto.

3. Would you please arrange for action to be taken accordingly.

² Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan, 1943 – 1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p 140.

Air Board Minute, dated 7th April 1943

For submission to the Minister.

The Board had before it a minute by the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 7th April 1943 relating to the Board's minute of 6th April 1943.

In making the changes in command mentioned in the above minute, the Board carefully considered all relevant factors. Its decision was made in furtherance of the duty imposed upon it by statutory provision to control and administer the Air Force. The Board was firmly of the view that these changes were essential in the interests of the Service and that without them the administration of the RAAF could not be efficiently carried on.

The Board has given full and detailed consideration to the minute of the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 7.4.43 and upon receipt of that minute, again carefully reviewed its above-mentioned decision. This further review has only served to convince the Board of the necessity for its decision of 6th April 1943 and that the changes made by the Board are essential for the efficient administration of the Service. In these circumstances, the Board is convinced that it would be failing in the duty imposed upon it and acting detrimentally to the interests of the RAAF if it departed from its decision which has already been put into effect. The Board therefore finds itself unable to depart from its decision in any way and regards that decision as involving matters considered by the Board to be fundamental for the efficient control and administration of the Air Force.

The Board desires to add that it was most careful in making the postings to ensure that the personnel selected would be acceptable to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, where this consideration was important. In addition, it was ascertained that General MacArthur would offer no objection to a change provided that the officer filling the post were efficient.

The Board also desires to refer to AFCO A44/1943 (annexed hereto) which constituted Headquarters RAAF Command as a separate RAAF unit directly administered by Air Force Headquarters. That formation is accordingly an RAAF unit in every sense of the term, and the personnel posted to it are subject to the control and administration of the Board in the same way as the personnel of every other unit. The decision of the Board, from which it finds itself quite unable to depart, involves therefore no more than an inter change of RAAF offices between RAAF units, an inter change which the Board considers to be essential to the best interests of the RAAF.

In conclusion, the Board desires to say that it is unaware of any custom, practice, direction or order which would require proposed postings to be submitted to an approved by higher authority before being put into effect.

F J Mulrooney, Secretary, Air Board

Minute from the Minister for Air to CAS, dated 7th April 1943
CAS

I note Air Board Minute dated 7.4.43 on abovementioned Board Paper.

2. In a later telephone conversation this afternoon with the Minister for Defence, I informed him of the Board's views.

3. After that discussion with myself, the Minister for Defence desired that all action to give effect to the proposed changes be withheld pending our further discussion early next week, and that those concerned be suitably advised immediately. Will you please arrange.

Arthur S Drakeford, Minister

Air Board Minute, dated 7th April 1943 (1745 hours)
For submission to the Minister.

The Board gave further consideration to its decision of 6th April 1943 and its Minute No 1 of 7th April 1943 in the light of the Minister's Minute of 7th April 1943.

After discussion, the Board records that it too deeply regrets the necessity for adhering to its decision of 6th April 1943 and is keenly conscious of the issues involved. However, the Board feels, and respectfully submits, that the good of the Service transcends any personal considerations. The Board is completely convinced that, having regard to all the circumstances, the action it has taken is necessary for the proper administration of the Service.

F J Mulrooney, Secretary, Air Board

Minute from the Minister for Air to CAS, dated 8th April 1943
CAS

I note Air Board Minute No 2 dated 7.4.43 on Air Board Paper No 269/1943 – Changes of Command.

2. I wish to point out that, in accordance with recognised practice of the Service Departments since their establishment, all changes in higher command appointments must receive approval of the Minister for Defence. When the Air Board was under Department of Defence, it was also the recognised practice for all

changes in command and higher staff appointments to be discussed with or reported to the Minister for Defence before being effective.

3. You will also appreciate that previous changes proposed by you since your assumption of the office of CAS have been discussed with me before being implemented, and that I have in turn referred the proposals to the Minister for Defence. The same practice was followed by your predecessor.

4. The proposals now under discussion are exceedingly important and, whilst I appreciate the reasons underlying the Air Board's decision, they cannot be given effect to until concurrence of the Minister for Defence is obtained.

5. You will recall that, in December last, you submitted to me recommendation for the transfer of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to another post, but that, in view of the Service and political implications involved, and of the fact of his having been assigned to a command under the direct control of the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces, for operations, that recommendation was not approved. You will also be cognisant of our later discussions with the Secretary, Department of Defence, on that particular matter.

6. In view of the foregoing, and of the nature of our recent discussions with the Minister for Defence, relating to RAAF Command, as well as of the fact that all of the proposals now put forward relate to operational commands in which the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces, is directly concerned, you will, I feel sure, realise the absolute importance of obtaining the concurrence of the Minister for Defence in such changes before being effected. The Minister for Defence directs that such a course be followed, and the matter is accordingly to be the subject of discussion [*between*] him and myself early next week. I thus direct that all action to give effect to those changes be deferred until concurrence of the Minister for Defence is obtained, and that the personnel concerned be appropriately informed without delay.

Arthur S Drakeford, Minister

**Air Board Minute, dated 9th April 1943 (1100 hours)
For submission to the Minister.**

1. The Board as given anxious consideration to the Minute of the Minister dated 8th April 1943 in relation to Air Board Minute No 2.

2. The Board desires to record that the postings ordered, and made by it, were made in pursuance of its powers under Air Force Regulation 26 which charges it with the control and administration of the Air Force. At the time when the Board made its decision of 6th April 1943, it was unaware of any ruling or policy which required

such matters to be discussed with and reported to the Minister for Defence or the Minister for Air before putting its decision into effect. The contents of the document entitled 'Changes in machinery for higher direction of War' (to which the attention of the Board has now been drawn) had never been communicated to the present members of the Board nor had it been filed in the Board's records. In such circumstances the Board could only assume that its undoubted lawful authority, conferred upon it by the abovementioned regulation, to effect postings of officers was untrammelled by any such policy and notification of the Board's decision would be communicated to the Minister in the normal manner as required by Air Force Regulation 29(f).

3. The Board again desires to confirm its view that the action taken by it was and is essential for the efficient administration of the Service and that unless this decision is permitted to operate without delay the effect on the Service generally will be most detrimental.

4. The Board therefore reiterates that it is convinced that the future successful administration of the Service is dependent on its decision being implemented without delay and accordingly strongly recommends that the Minister support the Board's decision and take action as is necessary to secure the concurrence of the Minister for Defence.

5. In order to enable the concurrence of the Minister for Defence to be obtained at the discussions stated in the Minister's minute to take place early next week, the Board has, in order to comply with the Minister's direction, deferred the postings concerned until Monday, 19th April 1943.

F J Mulrooney, Secretary, Air Board

Minute from the Minister for Air to CAS, dated 9th April 1943
CAS

I note Air Board Minute No 3 on Board Paper 290.

2. As indicated in paragraph 2 the Air Board is aware of the instructions by the Minister for Defence that appointments to higher posts are to be submitted to War Cabinet through the Minister for Defence. Pending such action effect cannot be given to such proposals.

3. Under those circumstances I direct that all action in connection with the proposed postings, which are the subject of consideration, be deferred until that decision is given and that all concerned be advised that no further action is to be taken pending further instructions.

4. As intimated in one of my earlier minutes these proposals are to be the subject of discussion with the Minister for Defence early next week.

Arthur S Drakeford, Minister

(See Documents: Air Board Paper No 269/43 - Changes of Command, dated April 1943)

In the face of this final directive by the Minister for Air, the Air Board put the postings of Bostock and Hewitt on hold.

EXTRAORDINARY BEHAVIOUR

The open defiance shown by the Air Board to repeated directives by the Ministers for Defence and Air that the proposed posting of Bostock out of RAAF Command be deferred pending full consideration by them was quite extraordinary, as were so many other aspects of Jones' behaviour over this period.

On this, as on other occasions, Jones chose to ignore the fundamental principle that the military should be subject to civilian (ie. Ministerial) control. Indeed, Air Force Regulation 26, which is quoted as the source of the Air Board's authority to 'control and administer the Air Force', carries the important caveat: 'subject to ... the policy laid down by the Minister'.

In this case, the Air Boards direct rejection of a very clear directive by the Minister for Defence should have earned it a strong rebuke from the Minister for Air. Instead, Drakeford took the 'diplomatic' path, and got his way by gentle insistence.

Eventually, the Board had to back down and cancel Bostock's posing. It was foolish of it, in the circumstances, to have even made the attempt. It also showed a gross ignorance of, or disregard for, political reality.

CURTIN'S CONCERNS

According to the George Odgers, in April 1943 Mr Curtin became concerned over the impact of the controversy between the RAAF's two senior officers on the Americans. He 'feared that the turmoil created by the division of responsibility would have a bad effect in American quarters on the supply of the necessary aircraft, and their use by General Kenney.'³

This assessment probably arose from comments in a cablegram sent by Mr Curtin to Mr Bruce in London on 28th April 1943. In part he said:

A. There is a danger that unless the situation is firmly grasped by a capable officer, the Australian air effort may become prejudiced in the eyes of the Americans.

B. General MacArthur's mission to Washington having secured an increased allotment of aircraft for the United States Air Force in the South-West Pacific Area, Dr Evatt is accordingly concentrating on a greater allocation for the RAAF under the 73 squadrons program.

³ *Ibid*, p 16.

C. It is imperative, therefore, that the control and direction of the RAAF should be such as to evoke the fullest support of General MacArthur in supporting our case for the provision of aircraft for the expansion and maintenance of the RAAF and in ensuring its use to the fullest operational extent.

(See Documents Chapter 16: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 57 to 64)

Support for Mr Curtin's concerns comes, in part, from the following extract from General Kenney's Notebooks for the 25th September 1942 following discussions he had that day in Brisbane with the Chief of the US Army Air Forces, General H H (Hap) Arnold:

Explained to him [*General Arnold*] the RAAF set up and recommended that he not pass out equipment too fast to them as they are going to be a lot slower training and organizing their squadrons than the schedule shows. I told him that I got this information from responsible RAAF officers who I believe knew what they were talking about. In the meantime, I will share my equipment with them whenever necessary to keep the combat show going. I won't let the fighting slow down no matter whether it is RAAF or Fifth Air Force.

(See Documents Chapter 13: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated August – November 1942)

Concluding Comment

Curtin had every reason to be concerned about the effect of the divided control of the RAAF, and the exacerbation of its impact due to the inability of Jones and Bostock to work together, on American perceptions of the war fighting capability of the RAAF. And while it may have suited General Kenney's aspirations for his own Fifth Air Force to have most of the aircraft allocated to the South-West Pacific Area assigned to the USAAF, rather than to the RAAF, he can hardly be blamed for taking such a stance. Although Kenney had operational control of the RAAF's operational squadrons, he had no control, either directly or indirectly through his RAAF subordinate, Bostock, over their administrative support. This was in marked contrast to his own Fifth Air Force where he had full control over both operations and administrative support. The divided control of the RAAF certainly reduced his ability to employ the RAAF forces assigned to him to best effect.

This concern over the impact of the Jones/Bostock controversy on American support for the RAAF was possibly at the heart of the Government's resolve to solve the problem by, once again, seeking the services of a senior officer from the RAF to take overall command of the RAAF.

16

Air Officer Commanding, RAAF

BACKGROUND

The idea of appointing an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, had been around since April 1942 when the Defence Committee recommended that, under the Commander, Allied Air Forces there should be 'an Australian Chief of the Air Staff who would also be appointed Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, who would possess the powers of the Air Board.'

(See Documents Chapter 8: Minutes of Defence Committee Meeting No 55/1942, held on 13th April 1942)

In the event, this proposal was not accepted. Rather operational and administrative control of the RAAF was split, with the Commander, Allied Air Forces exercising operational control of all RAAF combat formations and units and the Chief of the Air Staff retaining administrative control. When, in September 1942, the US Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command were formed, the Chiefs of Staff Committee, while accepting the formation of RAAF Command, recommended that operational and administrative control be unified under the Chief of the Air Staff. Then, in January 1943, when the Defence Committee met to consider the differences between Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Bostock it reaffirmed its previous recommendation that 'there should be unified operational and administrative control of the whole of the RAAF under one head.'

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943 - Organisation of the RAAF, dated 16th March 1943)

WAR CABINET DECISION

On 16th March 1943, the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, as Minister for Defence, issued War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943, the main thrust of which was to propose the appointment of an RAF officer as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF. Consideration of this Agendum was, however, delayed. In the meantime General MacArthur had written to the Prime Minister on a number of occasions urging action as the situation within the RAAF had, in his view, become critical. On 11th April he wrote: 'The RAAF situation is still in somewhat of a turmoil.'

In one of his letters (of 24th March) General MacArthur made comment on the draft Agendum:

I believe the plan proposed in the Agendum is a workable one if the officer selected is a man of good will and understanding. There will be no difficulty in temporarily maintaining the present set-up during the interim. As far as General Headquarters is concerned, my main

interest is to obtain 'peace' within the Australian Air Force. There are different ways in which it can be accomplished, and any way that will do so will be acceptable to me. But it is imperative that we have mutual cooperation and a willingness to subjugate special interests to the general good.

Supplement No 1 to War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943 was issued on 15th April, setting out additional consideration and comment. As well as the comments by General MacArthur discussed in the previous paragraph, it contained comment by General Blamey, who spoke in favour of the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, the abolition of the Air Board, and, incidentally, strongly against the reintroduction of the Military Board.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943, Supplement No 1 – Organisation of the RAAF, dated 15th April 1943)

On 15th April, War Cabinet and approved the following:

- (a.) Adoption of the principle of unified operational and administrative control of the RAAF as recommended by the Defence Committee.
- (b.) Appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, who will be responsible to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, for the operational control of the RAAF, and to the Minister for Air, for the administration and for all matters other than operations, pertaining to the RAAF.
- (c.) Effect is to be given to (a) on the appointment of the officer referred to in (b). In the meantime, the procedure recommended by the Defence Committee in its Minute No 6/1943 and approved by the Minister for Defence on 11th January 1943 is to continue in operation and to be made effective to the highest degree possible.
- (d.) In regard to the relation of the functions and status of the Air Officer Commanding to those of the Air Board, this matter is to be considered by the officer following his appointment and after he has had the opportunity of examining the position.
- (e.) The Prime Minister is to ask the High Commissioner to obtain the services of a suitable Australian officer serving in the RAF.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (2782) - Agendum No 107/1943 and Supplement No 1 – Organisation of the RAAF, dated 15th April 1943)

NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN AIR OFFICER COMMANDING, RAAF

On 17th April, the Prime Minister sent a cable to the Australian High Commissioner in London setting out the situation in relation to the higher command of the RAAF and asked him to seek the services of an Australian officer with the RAF to take on the position of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF. In his cable, the Prime Minister stated a desire to obtain the services of Air Marshal Drummond, if still considered suitable and available. If Drummond were available, Bruce was 'authorised to enter into negotiations with the Air Ministry and with Drummond at once'.

Mr Bruce replied on 20th April that Air Marshal Drummond who 'had just been brought back from the Middle East to become Member for Personnel on the Air Council' would be unlikely to be available. On 22nd April Mr Bruce cabled that 'the matter was proving to be extremely difficult', and that there might be several days delay before he could get an answer.

On 28th the Prime Minister again cabled Mr Bruce stressing the urgency of the situation, saying in part:

In the interests of Empire and Australian defence, as well as the joint effort of the United Nations in the South-West Pacific Area, 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. The importance of the South-West Pacific Area warrants it and service here should not in any way prejudice the career of the officer in the Royal Air Force.

It is a matter of vital national importance that we secure Drummond. As only practicable alternative we would need high ranking officer Australian born.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943, Supplement No 2 – Appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, dated 10th June 1943)

AIR CHIEF MARSHALS JOUBERT AND LONGMORE

On 29th April, the High Commissioner reported the results of his enquiries and discussions in London. He confirmed that it would not be possible to secure the services of Air Marshal Drummond, and that the only other Australian who might be considered, Air Vice-Marshal Champion de Crespigny, did not possess the necessary qualifications or experience. He then went on to report that:

As the results of an examination of all serving officers of the Royal Air Force who could be made available, Sinclair [*Secretary of State for Air*] and Portal [*Chief of the Air Staff*] both consider that Air Chief Marshal Joubert would be the most suitable. The points they emphasised with regard to him were:

- (1) That he had had great experience including Commander-in-Chief India, Commander-in-Chief Coastal Command which appointment he only left some three months ago.
- (2) That he is particularly strong on the scientific side and is well informed as to all modern developments.
- (3) That he is flexible in outlook and always willing to try something new.
- (4) That he has a personality which is likely to enable him to get on very well with the Americans.

The only point that emerged against him in a close cross examination was that he is apt to be a little hasty in his judgments but, against this, both Sinclair and Portal stressed that he was ready to think again and prepared to admit when he was wrong and not attempt to maintain his original contention.

At present he is Inspector General Royal Air Force. I know Joubert personally but not sufficiently to express a considered judgment. I have, however, checked up Sinclair's and Portal's views and have found them generally confirmed.

It is desirable that you should know that Joubert is a man round whom some controversy has centred. About two years ago he did official broadcasts for the Air Ministry. In this work he was extremely successful and built for himself an outstanding reputation. This was not very acceptable to service traditions and an atmosphere was created that he was somewhat of a 'limelighter'. In fairness to Joubert this does not appear to have been a just criticism. His broadcasts were made under instructions from the Air Ministry, were irrefragable and because they were so successful he is not to be blamed.

His performance as Commander-in-Chief Coastal Command has also been the subject of some criticism. I am not in a position to say whether technically this was justified or not. It has, however, to be borne in mind that he was greatly handicapped when Commander-in-Chief Coastal Command by the indecision on the highest level with regard to the utilisation of the air against the sea. This has now happily been overcome and his successor is in a much happier position.

After weighing all the circumstances, my view is that Joubert is the best serving officer available. Were it possible to get Air Vice-Marshal Coningham from North Africa, Air Vice-Marshal Park from Malta, or Air Vice-Marshal Saundby, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Bomber Command, their suitability would have to be weighed. I have, however, ascertained that all these three are considered in immediate operations from which they could not be detached. Apart from these three, my enquiries have not disclosed any other serving officer that it would be desirable we should consider.

The only alternative that Sinclair and Portal suggested to Joubert was Air Chief Marshal Longmore who is now retired. He has had great experience and his record is good but as he visited Australia in 1939 all information with regard to him will be available in Australia. He has the advantage of having been born in Australia but, as far as I can gather, left when he was very young.

I am sorry not to be able to make a definite recommendation. The problem, however, is a difficult one and I have felt no alternative but to put all the facts to you and to ask for your decision.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 57 to 64)

On 8th May the Prime Minister asked the High Commissioner for further information about Air Chief Marshal Longmore and the reasons for his retirement. Mr Bruce replied immediately, saying in part:

At the commencement of the war, he was AOC Training Command until appointed AOC in Middle East, May 1940 to July 1941. His removal from the Middle East Command was a direct act by the Prime Minister, but opinions differ as to the reasons for the Prime Minister's action between the extremes that the Prime Minister did not think that Longmore was carrying out his duties effectively, and that Longmore refused to accept dictation from the Prime Minister in the exercise of his command in the Middle East.

On his return to England, Longmore was Inspector General, RAF, until retired at his own request, March 1942, to stand for Parliament. He was not successful in election.

All my inquiries show that Longmore has first class qualifications. My only doubt is how he would get on with our own people and the Americans as his manner strikes me, though possibly wrong, as somewhat difficult.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943, Supplement No 2 – Appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, dated 10th June 1943)

On 22nd May the High Commissioner cabled the Prime Minister advising him that further enquiries had strongly indicated that Air Chief Marshal Joubert 'was the better selection'. However, in the meantime the Prime Minister had inclined towards Air Chief Marshal Longmore. On 28th May he put his views to Mr Bruce, asking him for any further observations. In his cable the Prime Minister said:

Blamey and others who have had contact with Longmore, either in Australia or in the Middle East, were impressed by him. In the absence of definite information as to why the Prime Minister removed him from the post of Air Officer Commanding, Middle East, I am more inclined to rely on Blamey's opinion, particularly as one of the probable causes of disagreement mentioned by you was refusal to accept the dictation of the Prime Minister. As against this mark against Longmore, Joubert apparently had his troubles with the Air Ministry.

By comparison with Joubert, the following is noted:

- (a.) Longmore was born in Australia. Joubert is understood to be of French extraction.
- (b.) Longmore was a Commandant of the Imperial Defence College, but Joubert was only a member of the directing staff.
- (c.) Longmore's operational experience as Air Officer Commanding, Middle East, is probably wider than that of Joubert and would appear to be more suited to the needs of the Australian situation.

What we require is an officer who can act strongly and independently to put the RAAF on a sound footing and will win the fullest confidence of Generals MacArthur and Kenney by the highest decree of effective cooperation from the RAAF. This is essential, not only for the conduct of the war in the South-West Pacific Area, but also for the future development of the RAAF.

Comment

Maybe Mr Curtin's preference for Longmore had something to do with the fact that he too had had a disagreement, or two, with Mr Churchill.

The High Commissioner's reply to the Prime Minister's request came on 1st June:

1. Both Joubert and Longmore have excellent qualifications for the post. Either would be capable of putting the RAAF on a sound footing.
2. Neither Longmore's differences with the Prime Minister nor Joubert's troubles in the Coastal Command should be weighed against them. Each probably was largely in the right, but conditions were against them in each case.
3. Joubert is more likely to achieve good cooperation with the Americans and Australians.
4. Joubert's experience as a member of the directing staff of the Imperial Defence College is hardly less than Longmore's as Commandant.
5. Joubert is much more in touch with modern developments and his experience in A/S warfare will be of first importance in the Pacific in the future.
6. Joubert would be the better selection.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 107/1943, Supplement No 2 – Appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, dated 10th June 1943)

VIEWS OF GENERAL KENNEY

The views of General Kenney on the appointment of an RAF officer to be Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, as revealed in the following notebook entry for 28th May 1943, are of particular relevance:

In an effort to settle the brawl between Jones and Bostock in the RAAF, Prime Minister Curtiss [*Curtin*] has been trying to get a top RAF man from Churchill to head the RAAF and sit over both Jones and Bostock. Churchill gave him the names of Joubert and Longmore to choose from. Gen MacArthur asked me for a recommendation. Both are cast-offs. I don't want either of them. I'd rather have Jones and Bostock even if they do fight each other harder than the Japs. They both cooperate with me OK so I don't worry about the RAAF internal politics.

(See Documents: Extract from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated 28th May 1943)

The following day General Kenney wrote to General MacArthur:

Appointment of AOC RAAF

My analysis, after talking with some people who have served with or know the two men in question is as follows:

Air Marshal Joubert: Likeable, excellent broadcaster, fair able commander but not a brilliant one. The criticism of his broadcasting is not wholly justified, as he did what he was told to do. It is rumoured that he is about to be retired as *not up to the standard* demanded by the RAF of senior officers of his age.

Air Chief Marshal Longmore: A satisfactory commander, not brilliant. Inclined to be difficult to deal with on account of his personality. Retired last year on his own request but probably as he was not up to RAF standard for senior officers of his age.

Both appear to be second string men, decidedly not in the class of Douglas, Tedder, Harris and other top operating men in the RAF. Joubert has been criticised for his handling of the Coastal Command and Longmore as C-in-C of the Middle East RAF Command. Joubert's personality probably suits him better for dalliance with Australians and Americans. It is true that Longmore was born in Australia but he left the country at an early age and is enough an Englishman to have stood for election to the British Parliament. He lost that contest. I do not believe it would be wise to put Longmore in charge of the RAAF when he is *persona non grata* with Mr Churchill, or Joubert, who apparently has had trouble with the Air Ministry. Australia must have the goodwill of both the RAF and Mr Churchill to ensure that her needs for aircraft, equipment and personnel can be taken care of.

If one of these officers is to be selected, I recommend Joubert for the following reasons:

He is two years younger than Longmore.

He has had more actual combat experience. During World War I he was a flight commander, mentioned several times in despatches.

His personality would probably not clash with Australians and Americans as much as Longmore's.

Testimony seems to indicate that his mind is open on both tactical and technical aspects of Air development.

He is still on the active list and should be in better touch with what has been going on than a man who has been retired for a year.

(See Documents: Memorandum from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 29th May 1943)

VIEWS OF GENERAL MACARTHUR

In discussions with General MacArthur in Brisbane from 25th to 31st May 1943, the Commander-in-Chief expressed the view that the Government would be most unwise to accept either Air Chief Marshal Joubert or Air Chief Marshal Longmore. They were what he described as 'culls'. They each had doubtful marks against them in their records and this would prejudice any possibility of giving inspiring leadership to the younger men. They were also too old. He said that he was disappointed with the attitude of the United Kingdom Government, who apparently were not anxious to assist the RAAF with a good man. In the circumstances, he suggested that the present arrangement, unsatisfactory though it was, should be carried on. He proposed to arrange a conference between Lieutenant General Kenney, Major General Sutherland, and Air Vice-Marshals Bostock and Jones, with a view to exploring the possibility of improving the present arrangement to minimise the unsatisfactory features that existed.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 57 – 68)

JOUBERT AND LONGMORE REJECTED

On 11th June 1943, the Prime Minister advised the High Commissioner of the Government's decision on the appointment of an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF:

I have discussed the proposed appointment with the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area. We both regret that the services of Air Marshal Drummond or one of the more distinguished Australian officers in the RAF with outstanding operational experience cannot be made available. It is not considered that either Air Chief Marshal Longmore or Air Chief Marshal Joubert would be entirely suitable because of their age and the doubtful marks against them in their records, which might prejudice the possibility of giving inspiring leadership to the younger officers of the RAAF. It is therefore proposed to adhere to the present arrangement and endeavour to effect improvements.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944 Paragraphs 67 – 68)

POSTSCRIPT

In an after the event attempt to influence the Prime Minister, the Minister for External Affairs, Dr Evatt, who was then in London cabled, on 8th July 1943, that:

Joubert, who had Coastal Command, is an outstanding personality and might be appointed for a limited period. It is possible that he may not get on well with MacArthur and Kenney. Bruce and I think there is reason to believe that he would be a great success.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944 Paragraphs 67 – 68)

Comment

While neither Longmore nor Joubert were ideal candidates for the post of AOC RAAF, of the two Joubert was the better prospect for taking hold of the RAAF and putting both Jones and Bostock in their place. He should have been able to work in harmony with Kenney, particularly so as he would have been working in a supporting role with Kenney still very much in control of operations. Douglas, Harris and Tedder would have been grossly overqualified for the job. MacArthur's rejection of the two men, however, had more to do with keeping the British out of the Pacific than with their suitability as AOC, RAAF.

SUMMARY

At this point a summary of the Jones/Bostock controversy to date may be of value. This is provided here by a quote from George Odgers:

In summary, the 'divided control' controversy had taken this course: War Cabinet and the Advisory War Cabinet [*Council*] had [*on advice from the Minister for Air*] decided in April 1942 to set up an RAAF organisation which divided the operational from the administrative control of the force. [*See Chapter 10*]. This arrangement was repeated during the reorganisation of the Allied Air Forces in September 1942 [*See Chapter 13*], but thereafter the Defence Committee recommended that the RAAF should be unified under one head. [*See Chapter 14*]. Mr Drakeford and the Air Board wanted Air Vice-Marshal Jones as the single commander, but MacArthur would not agree. Mr Curtin, in the position of a mediator, was not prepared to go against MacArthur's wishes, nor to force Drakeford to extend Bostock's powers. Another alternative, to bring an officer from overseas, was attempted and failed, because MacArthur was against the men nominated. [*See above*]. No further action was taken until later in 1943 when conversations were held between Kenney, Jones and Bostock.

The RAAF, therefore, had continued to be the victim of a mischievous dual control, because those responsible could not agree on a solution which would give it the unity it needed. Disputes arose over the appointment of officers, over the provision of staff for RAAF Command Headquarters, over airfield construction, training (especially advanced operational training), fighter-sector organisations, supply and other matters. Inevitably, too, there was a conflict of loyalties among the men of the air force, tending towards the creation of groups. These troubles are inherent in such a system of dual control.¹

Comment

Although it would appear that the proposal to have Jones as the single commander of the RAAF (to be in effect AOC, RAAF) was never put formally to MacArthur, if it had it is most unlikely that he would have agreed. There is also reason to doubt that Curtin would, in any case, have been willing to support such a proposition, even if he had felt confident of obtaining MacArthur's agreement.

All of these, unsuccessful, efforts to find a solution to the debilitating dispute between them appeared to have no effect on Jones and Bostock themselves who continued their squabble with scant regard for the consequences.

¹ Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan, 1943 – 1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, pp 18-19.

17

Gone But Not Forgotten

WILLIAMS' APPOINTMENT TO WASHINGTON

On 20th April 1942, the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, wrote to the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, proposing that Air Marshal Williams be appointed as 'Service representative on the Pacific War Council at Washington, and that he should retain the London appointment for the present'. He also proposed that Air Vice-Marshal McNamara should continue to act as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Overseas Headquarters, in his absence.

(See Documents Chapter 8: First Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 20th April 1942)

On 25th April, Mr Curtin replied to Mr Drakeford's letter, advising him of his decision, which was that Air Marshal Williams was to be appointed as 'the Air member of the Service Mission in Washington, of which Lieutenant General Smart has been designated the Head.' No mention was made of the proposal that Williams should also retain his (current) appointment as AOC, RAAF Overseas, London.

(See Documents Chapter 10: First Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942).

WILLIAMS' DIRECTIVE

In May 1942, the Minister for Air issued Air Marshal Williams with his Directive, which said, in part:

You have been appointed Australian Air Force representative at Washington, and will, as soon as it is conveniently possible to do having regard to the work you have on hand, report to the Australian Legation there.

2. You will take on to your staff, supervise and coordinate the work of the RAAF officers now in USA, ...

3. The object of your mission is to present the Australian point of view in regard to air-force matters and to further the development of the effectiveness of the Australian and Allied Air Forces in the South-Western Pacific area.

4. You will work under the general direction of the Australian Minister in Washington, and in close collaboration with the Australian Naval and Military representatives.

5. You will perform the functions of air-force adviser to the Australian Minister in Washington on matters affecting the Air Force.

6. Your relationship with the Combined Chiefs of Staff and the Joint American Chiefs of Staff is not yet defined, but it is proposed some machinery will be established whereby the views and advice of the Australian Service representatives can be directly conveyed to the Chiefs of Staff concerned. You will cooperate with the other authorities concerned in getting that such machinery established as soon as possible.

7. On purely technical air-force matters affecting the RAAF and its equipment, you are authorised to communicate direct with RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne. On all matters of policy, you will communicate through the normal Australian Legation channels.

8. ...

9. You will retain the appointment of AOC Overseas Headquarters. Air Vice-Marshal McNamara will deputise in your absence. Should it be necessary for you to visit London (whilst holding the office of Australian Air Force Representative at Washington), in connection with the functions and responsibilities of Overseas Headquarters, such visits will be subject to arrangements being made with the Australian Minister in Washington.

(See Documents: Directive from the Minister for Air to Air Marshal Williams, dated May 1942)

Comment

This Directive, a copy of which appears in the Williams' Papers at the RAAF Museum, Point Cook, makes no mention of Williams' relationship with Lieutenant General Smart, who had been appointed 'Head of the Service Mission in Washington' of which Williams was to be the Air Member. Rather, it suggests that Williams had coequal authority with Smart, under the Australian Minister in Washington. It is also of interest that the copy in the Williams' Papers is unsigned and not fully dated, giving the impression that it may have been a draft, and that this particular Directive may not have been approved by the Minister for Defence.

REVISED DIRECTIVE

On 21st January 1943, the Minister for Air wrote to Air Marshal Williams in Washington, issuing him with a revised Directive. This Directive clearly spelt out Williams' subordination to Lieutenant General Sturdee, who had replaced Lieutenant General Smart as 'Leader of the Australian Joint Staff Mission'.

The revised Directive stated:

An Australian Joint Staff Mission will be established at Washington, and will comprise Heads of the existing Australian Military Mission and Australian Air Mission and an Australian Naval Representative.

2. The Australian Joint Mission will:
 - a. work under the general direction of the Australian Minister and Accredited Representative on the Pacific War Council, and will keep him advised on Naval, Military and Air matters;
 - b. present to the Service authorities at Washington the Australian point of view on Naval, Military and Air matters;
 - c. provide Australian Service representation on Inter-Allied Service Boards and Committees;
 - d. take facilitating action to ensure the procurement of war materials required in Australia, and work in close collaboration with the Director-General of Australian War Procurement.

3. Lieutenant General V A H Sturdee, CBE, DSO, will be Leader of the Australian Joint Staff Mission and will call periodical meetings of the Joint Staff Mission to discuss problems of common interest and coordinate action.

4. On all matters of policy and other matters excepting technical matters, the channel of communication will be through the Minister at Washington.

5. You will act individually as the representative in Washington of the Chief of the Air Staff in Australia and will correspond direct with him on technical matters affecting the RAAF.

6. Lieutenant General Sturdee will act as representative of the Australian Chiefs of Staff with respect to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington when questions affecting Australia are under consideration by that body. When questions specifically concern the RAAF, you will be associated with Lieutenant General Sturdee in his contact with the Combined Chiefs of Staff.

7. You will be responsible for advising the Australian Minister and Accredited Representative on the Pacific War Council at Washington on Air Force matters. You will work under the general direction of the Australian Minister in Washington and in close collaboration with the Australian Naval and Military Representatives.

8. You will take on to your staff, supervise and coordinate the work of all RAAF personnel in USA.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to Air Marshal Williams, dated 21st January 1943)

Comment

Williams' revised Directive, while making quite clear his responsibilities in Washington, is silent about his simultaneous retention of the post as AOC, RAAF Overseas Headquarters, in London.

VISIT TO LONDON

In September 1942, Air Marshal Williams was 'directed by the Minister for Air to go to London to discuss with the Air Ministry the renewal of the Empire Air Training Scheme agreement.'¹ He left Washington on 5th October and remained in London until 3rd January 1943.

WRIGLEY APPOINTED AS AOC, RAAF OVERSEAS HEADQUARTERS

Also in September 1942, Air Vice-Marshall Wrigley, who had until that time been Air Member for Personnel, was appointed as AOC, RAAF Overseas Headquarters replacing Air Vice-Marshall McNamara. Wrigley was apparently unaware of the Minister's wish that Air Marshal Williams retain the position, while he, Wrigley, acted as AOC in his absence.

In his personal diary for the period Wrigley describes his takeover from McNamara, McNamara's manoeuvring for a post with the RAF, rather than returning to Australia, his encounters with Air Commodore Cole, who was then on exchange with the RAF, and the imminent arrival of Air Marshal Williams from Washington. From these exchanges it is quite apparent that there was little love lost between these four senior RAAF officers.



Air Vice-Marshall Henry Wrigley
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

¹ Williams, R, *These are Facts*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1977, p 299.

Monday, 21st September 1942. ... This afternoon was spent at headquarters and I had to listen to all McNamara's moans as to the unfair and unreasonable treatment he has received. And as if this was not sufficient for one day, Cole blew in like a wintry gale and I had to submit to an account of his ill-treatment by a lot of 'bloody air vice marshals.' He has lost a lot of weight and looks the better for it even though he had a few drinks under his belt and was looking rather bleary-eyed. He has a scar on his right cheek where he got a crack while observing the Dieppe raid and also has a mouth full of silver teeth at present that look vile.

Thursday, 1st October 1942. ... From there I went to Whitehall where I joined McNamara and we called on the CAS, Sir Charles Portal. I had quite a long talk with him, and from his conversation had confirmation that the RAF simply loathe the sound of the name of Air Marshal Williams. Apparently they had no idea that he is coming over here again even for the EATS conference, and several of the most senior people here have said they will agree to almost anything if only we can keep him out of it. He apparently argues over here [*more*] than he does at home.

From one or two remarks I have heard over here, and one or two questions I have been asked at the Air Ministry, it is quite obvious that McNamara has been indulging in a bit of intrigue. He knows, as everyone does, that the RAF, like ourselves, is very short of experienced officers, and he is trying to work a job with the RAF instead of returning to Australia.

Monday, 5th October 1942. Nothing special to record today, except that Cole, who has been up for a medical board, has been celebrating his DSO and making a beastly nuisance of himself.

On 8th October, Air Marshal Williams arrived in London and immediately made his presence felt with Wrigley and the staff at Overseas Headquarters. From then until his departure in early January, according to Wrigley, he made life difficult for all concerned, and particularly so for Wrigley who was somewhat unsure of his position as AOC vis-a-vis Williams. Wrigley's diary records the progress of this clash, as well as adding further insight into the attitude of Cole and the performance of McNamara:

Friday, 9th October 1942. Air Marshal Williams arrived last night. ... we could not get accommodation for him in any of the London hotels and finally had to get the RAF Club to see if they could get a room for him for the night. The Secretary was very decent and by changing some officers around managed to make a room available. It was a very small one and he did not like it much. However he is very lucky to get a room of any sort. He is [*a*] most selfish brute and the start today was typical. The car was to call and pick up McNamara and then pick me up afterwards. 1000 hours arrived and still no car so I walked to took a train to Holbourn and walked to

Headquarters. Found McNamara had not arrived and we heard nothing further concerning the car until mid-afternoon. Air Marshal Williams had cleared off with it and hadn't told anyone ...

This afternoon Air Marshal Williams has been throwing his weight around and even the airmen are asking how long he is staying. He expressed displeasure because I had already cleared up some of the points connected with the EATS conference and I am afraid he is going to force some of his ideas even though they are contrary to the views of Air Board and are not in accordance with the terms of reference in the brief given to me by Air Board. ... The Air Marshal does not appear to be in any hurry to get on with business for, when Isitt and Barrow of New Zealand came over and asked if he would be ready to get to business straight away as they were anxious to get back to NZ as soon as possible, he said that what he had in mind was to spend a week just reading over what papers there are on the subject. I thought both Isitt and Barrow would have a fit as they have had to hang about filling in time and waiting for him for the best part of a month already. It certainly looks as if he intends making a holiday of it ... I find that by some means or other he continues to draw his special Washington allowance of three guineas a day.

Saturday, 10th October 1942. Had the whole morning at headquarters, most of it with Air Marshal Williams. He does not appear to be in any hurry to get away again and, in fact, I am more certain than ever he intends making a sort of holiday over here. ... I am afraid I may have to send a signal to the CAS saying the position must be clearly defined so that I know where I stand. Air Marshal Williams says he is going back to Washington, but he is trying to get everything he can under his control. He is undoubtedly intriguing to have himself made AOC, and possibly AOC in C of all RAAF units and personnel outside Australia and the SW Pacific. This morning he has been tearing round the place saying 'I want this done' and 'I want that done' and in general upsetting everyone and the whole headquarters as well.

Monday, 12th October 1942. Today has been somewhat unpleasant as Air Marshal Williams called a conference first thing this morning, as he said, to go over matters concerning the EATS conference. We spent all morning listening to him saying what he was intending to have notwithstanding that we pointed out that a number of his ideas were contrary to the brief given to me by the Air Board. Relations became very strained at one stage, and when poor old Knox-Knight pointed out that everyone had lots of work to do and these seemingly endless discussions were wasting their time, he was told that he (Air Marshal Williams) would decide what was a waste of time, and nobody else. At 1330 hours he was still going strong and, although I reminded him several times that people would get no lunch unless he

adjourned, we kept going another ten minutes. Bill Sheehan's language and comments were lurid.

Wednesday 14th October 1942. We are having another spot of bother with Air Marshal Williams. He has asked the Air Ministry for one of the special all station passes and has described himself in the application form as the AOC here. The Air Ministry people have objected as they have already issued me with one in that capacity and their view, quite rightly, is that there can only be one AOC. Air Marshal Williams refuses to alter his application so I am afraid he is working up for bother.

Friday, 16th October 1942. We have been trying to get some finality as to who is AOC here. Air Marshal Williams is over-ruling everything that is being done and causing confusion, but will not come out into the open and say he intends to be AOC. ... I pointed out to him that although I left Australia to take up the appointment of AOC, he was signing himself AOC and I did not know where I stood as he appeared to have taken upon himself the functions of AOC and in such circumstances it was essential to have the situation clarified. As I said, if it is left to me to make decisions I must be AOC and my decisions must not be over-ruled. After a long discussion on these lines however he still avoided declaring himself and his attitude.

Friday, 23rd October 1942. Air Marshal Williams went on the rampage again today and poor old Knox-Knight bought into trouble with him again. Knox is working very hard but is having spanners thrown into all he has done and is doing, with the result that he gets a bit tactless at times. Noel Heath also got a good trouncing today when he asked a plain question. Air Marshal Williams threw down his pencil, cast a glassy eye on Heath and said in his most biting tone, 'Really, Heath, may I ask just how long you have been an officer in this service?' Heath told him and this brought forth the comment that in that period of time a school child would have learned more. This type of treatment is very trying and is rapidly undermining enthusiasm for the chaps whose jobs are sufficiently trying without this sort of thing.

Saturday, 24th October 1942. Another trying day as Air Marshal Williams was on the warpath about personnel records. In this case, I must say he had some justification for making it now but, on the other hand, nobody with any knowledge or experience of keeping personnel records could possibly agree with some of his views.

Monday, 26th October 1942. Cole came in this afternoon. The group he was commanding in Northern Ireland has been amalgamated with the other Group there to form one command known as the RAF Northern Ireland and the Air Ministry has asked him to command it. It carries the rank of AVM and although we have not yet approved of his being granted acting rank he is already

wearing the rank badges. We shall not raise any objection but he should have waited for the formal approval. He now wants the pay of an RAF AVM which is considerably higher than ours, and is being a silly ass by saying that if the Air Board doesn't agree to this he will refuse to accept the appointment. Air Marshal Williams told him not to be a damn fool because if he adopted that attitude Air Board and Cabinet would probably drag him home and he would be finished. I tried to get him to realise this before he saw Air Marshal Williams, but he is very stubborn.

Tuesday, 27th October 1942. McNamara has certainly been on the intrigue. He got Air Marshal Williams to send a signal to Air Board recommending him for promotion to temporary AVM as the post at Aden is an AVM's one. I cannot understand the Air Marshal's attitude in this matter as he has been performing about Mc at a great rate and saying that one cannot depend upon him in anything.

Tuesday, 3rd November 1942. Had another of our unsatisfactory days when almost the whole day was spend with Air Marshal Williams. Why he must have everyone with him, I'm sure I don't know as it means that officers who have lots to do are kept about listening to things which they are not concerned and with which they are not even interested. ... It was about 1900 hours before anyone got away to his own office again and then there was the day's accumulation to deal with.

Wednesday, 4th November 1942. About 1430 hours however, a commotion occurred outside my office and on investigation I found Air Marshal Williams messing about arranging the whole staff in a group for a photograph. He also had Knox-Knight on the job and was ordering him about in fine style. The whole process reminded me of a drover (Air Marshall Williams) whistling and yelling at a sheep dog (Knox-Knight) rounding up and barking at a flock of sheep (the staff) ... (the whole episode is described very much as a fiasco) ... I'm afraid some of the staff paid for their merriment during the photographic episode for we were again called to a session with Air Marshal Williams and were kept there until after 2000 hours, which was beyond a joke as it was then very difficult to get a meal anywhere.

Tuesday, 10th November 1942. The last week has shown up a number of faults in the administrative arrangements here and it is not exaggerating to say they are in absolute chaos at present. Air Marshal Williams undoubtedly started to make some improvements when he first arrived here as AOC, and really should have been left here and not recalled to Australia until things were in reasonably decent order. McNamara was left here of course, and a fellow of his rank should have been able to keep things in order. He has, however, never been noted for his ability in this direction and of recent months has been much more interested in keeping in the good books of the

Air Ministry than in doing his job from the RAAF point of view. He has exercised no supervision over the staff and when any of them have done anything that was in accordance with Australia's point of view but not in accordance with Air Ministry desires, he has overruled them and given the decision the Air Ministry wants. This can be seen time after time in the files here. Air Marshal Williams is most annoyed and is tearing into some of the staff as if they were to blame.

Wednesday, 18th November 1942. Once more we spent the whole afternoon in the dungeon. The amount of quite unnecessary work that Air Marshal Williams is making people do is heart breaking. He wants everything done quicker than is humanly possible, and complains that officers have not done things that they should have, but he forgets he has had them in his office all day and sometimes till late at night. ... This afternoon there was a great deal of unpleasantness and I had a brush with him when he started abusing people. ... He complained bitterly concerning the lack of system about the place but, after all, he and McNamara were in charge here for months and they really should have taken steps to introduce an organised system if one did not exist. He apparently considers he is in no way responsible for the existing state of affairs. I agree that things are in a mess, but they will not be improved if he wastes as much of everyone's time as he has done during the last few weeks.

Thursday, 10th December 1942. Today has been almost as bad as yesterday in many ways and in one way even worse because we finished after midnight. Air Marshal Williams is now definitely passing on the buck to me ... He has produced a paper naming himself as AOC and detailing the duties of the officer holding that appointment. It also lays down the duties of a DAOC and has named me as the holder of that appointment. All this has been done on his own authority and the situation here has really become quite impossible. From a quick glance at this paper it looks as if he places himself on a theoretical throne from which he will just wave his hand in a lordly way and order this or that to be done. His apparent intention is that I take charge of everything, do everything, and shoulder the responsibility for everything except in those cases where credit is to be gained, in which case he, Air Marshal Williams will take the applause.

Thursday, 7th January 1943. I was sent for this morning by Mr Bruce who wanted to see Air Marshal Williams and me, but the Air Marshal was out and could not be found anywhere. The High Commissioner says there appears to be some confusion as to who is really his official air adviser and he wants to know what the position is. I told him that when I left Australia it was to take up the appointment of AOC here, whilst Air Marshal Williams, as I understood the position was RAAF Representative in Washington but had been authorised by the Minister to come to London as an

additional delegate to the EATS conference. I said I had not received any instructions that modified this in any way. The HC thanked me for the information. It looks as if a showdown may be working up, which should clear the air.

(See Documents: Extracts from Air Vice-Marshal Wrigley's Diary, September 1942 to September 1943)

AOC POSITION UNRESOLVED

With Air Marshal Williams back in Washington discussion of the issue of who should be AOC, RAAF Overseas Headquarters, continued. On 1st March 1943, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal Jones, wrote to Williams, advising him that the Minister still wished him to retain the appointment of AOC, Overseas Headquarters, adding that this then raised the difficulty of how the delegation of certain powers to him are to be exercised. Jones concluded: 'I would like your views on this matter.'

(See Documents: Extracts from a Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Marshal Williams, dated 1st March 1943)

In a rather long reply, dated 22nd April, Williams pointed to the confusion arising from a signal from RAAF Headquarters of 4th March which terminated his appointment as AOC, Overseas Headquarters, while at the same time appointing Wrigley as 'Acting AOC'. This was not, he pointed out 'in accordance with the Ministers' wishes'. He then went on to propose that he be appointed AOC RAAF Overseas, with responsibility for London, Washington and Ottawa.

(See Documents: Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 22nd April 1943)

Air Vice-Marshal Jones did not reply to Williams' proposal that he be appointed 'AOC, RAAF Overseas' until 7th June. He rejected Williams proposal, and went on to point out that his appointment had 'been discussed by the Air Board in an endeavour to arrive at some workable arrangement, and at the same time comply with the Minister's wishes, which are that 'you should resume command of Overseas Headquarters if and when that became desirable.' The Board's view, and incidentally the view of the Defence Committee when the matter was referred to it sometime ago, was that it was not practicable for you to exercise command of Overseas Headquarters whilst your duties kept you in Washington. The importance of these duties to Australia are such as to call for no further comment.'

(See Documents: Extracts from a Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Marshal Williams, dated 7th June 1943)

By August 1943, the discussion between Air Marshal Williams and Air Vice-Marshal Jones had shifted from the issues of 'AOC, RAAF Overseas', and who should occupy the post of AOC, RAAF Overseas Headquarters, to the most effective means of coordinating the personnel matters associated with the flow of EATS and other RAAF personnel to and through North America.

(See Documents: Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Marshal Williams, dated 16th August 1943; and, Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 25th August 1943)

Comment

The idea of the Minister, and Williams, that he should retain both posts, as Air Representative on the Australian Joint Staff Mission in Washington, and as AOC, RAAF Overseas Headquarters, had more to do with his desire to enhance his own status than with any practical need. In the end, common sense prevailed and cooperation rather than command was used to effect such coordination between Ottawa, London and Washington as was required. However, Williams' frustration in being confined to the job in Washington is quite understandable. 'I had never in my Service career held an appointment with less responsibility than this one'². As the saying goes, 'the Devil makes work for idle hands'.

WILLIAMS AND GOBLE

While Williams was in Washington his old rival Goble was close by in Ottawa. For his part, Williams seemed to be unable to forget. For example, in a letter to the Secretary, Department of Air, Major Langslow, with whom he corresponded regularly and maintained cordial relations, Williams had this to say about Goble:

Goble called in here a week or two ago and I had a discussion with him regarding certain EATS matters in Canada which concern London. He was on his way back from the Bahamas.

It really is farcical to put the school there under the supervision of the Liaison Officer at Ottawa, for it has nothing whatsoever to do with Canada – it is an RAF School, and is administered from Washington. It does, however, give the Liaison Officer in Ottawa an opportunity to visit Miami occasionally, going right across this country to do so.

I gather from him that he thought he might have been given the appointment here or in London. If the interests of this Service are to be considered, neither of such moves should be contemplated.

(See Documents: Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 23rd April 1943)

ARMY TAKEOVER RUMOUR

In June 1943 Williams received a letter from his wife about a rumour then circulating in Melbourne that, in order to resolve the RAAF's higher command difficulties, the Service was to be placed under the control of the Army, along similar lines to the US Army Air Forces. Having had to fend off a similar bid during his era as Chief of the Air Staff before the war, Williams was quick to put pen to paper. On 2nd July 1943 he wrote to the Minister for Air through Major Langslow setting out his argument against such a course. He left it to Langslow's discretion whether or not to pass his letter on to the Minister.

(See Documents: Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 2nd July 1943)

² Williams, *These are Facts*, p 298.

Comment

Although there would appear to be no corroboration of the rumour, given the circumstances of an apparently insoluble problem with the higher command of the RAAF, the idea of placing the RAAF under Blamey's command would not have been all that outrageous. Indeed, such a proposition, had it been seriously contemplated by the Government, may have, if nothing else, served to bring Jones and Bostock to their senses.

A RETURN TO AUSTRALIA

On 29th July 1943, Air Marshal Williams wrote a 'Secret and Personal' letter to Major Langslow, intimating that, based on discussions he had had with Dr Evatt in Washington, that the Government, or at least some persons within it, might be contemplating his return to Australia, 'for consultation purposes'. He then went on to detail the matters requiring face to face discussions in Melbourne and ended with the following statement:

Further, if there is anything behind the suggestion, and there is a possibility that I might stay in Australia, it is essential that I should not miss the opportunity of being up-to-date on all Overseas matters, for I am convinced that a great deal of our administrative troubles today arise from the fact that those at home are not acquainted with Overseas conditions.

(See Documents: Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 29th July 1943)

Comment

While Williams couches the reasons for his return in terms of resolving, by face to face discussions in Melbourne, the problem of coordination between London, Ottawa and Washington of the movement of EATS personnel in North America, he ends with the insinuation that the Government may be contemplating his return to the post of Chief of the Air Staff, particularly after its failure to obtain an AOC, RAAF from the RAF.

In the event, Williams did not return to Australia until after the war.

While it is doubtful that the return of Williams to be CAS was ever a serious consideration, given the lack of support for such a course in March/April 1942, it was nevertheless an option that the Government should have considered. Certainly, Williams would have found it difficult having to work within the organisational framework of divided control of operations and administration then in place. However, he may have been able to break the seemingly impossible deadlock that had developed between Jones and Bostock. At that stage, almost anything would have been better than a continuation of the dispute between Jones and Bostock.

18

The Controversy Drags On

Both AVMs snapped at each other at every possible opportunity and we probably got nowhere.

*Lieutenant General George C Kenney
Commander, Allied Air Forces, February 1944*

RESOLUTION BY NEGOTIATION

Having failed to resolve the dispute between Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock through the appointment of a senior RAF officer as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin returned to the avenue of discussion between the parties concerned. On 11th June 1943 he wrote to General MacArthur 'asking him to arrange the proposed conference between Lieutenant General Kenney, Major General Sutherland and Air Vice-Marshals Bostock and Jones, with a view to exploring the possibility of improving the present arrangement to minimise the unsatisfactory features that existed'.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 69 to 70)

Some four months later, on 21st October 1943, General MacArthur wrote to Mr Curtin advising him that 'the exigencies of the service had prevented the holding of the proposed conference' between Kenney, Sutherland, Jones and Bostock. He added, however, that:

A number of conversations had been held between General Kenney, Air Vice-Marshal Jones and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock with regard to RAAF activities affecting South-West Pacific Area air operations. Various details have been adjusted from time to time to the satisfaction of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, but there are numerous points of difference between the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, to which attention has been drawn in my previous communication. Certain of these points, concerned with internal organisation, have an important bearing on the efficiency of the RAAF and I feel that it would be beneficial to permit the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, to report his observations and present his views to the highest authority. I suggest, therefore, that the Minister for Defence receive Air Vice-Marshal Bostock in a conference in which all aspects from the operations viewpoint can be presented. I feel that such a course of action might well lead to a satisfactory solution of existing internal difficulties.

On 13th November Mr Curtin expressed his regrets that the proposed Service level conference had not taken place and agreed that: 'he would endeavour to grant an interview to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.' He also pointed out that the Minister for Air, under whose administration Bostock came, and the Chief of the Air Staff would also need to be present.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 71 to 78)

PASSING THE BUCK

Here we have a classic case of high level buck passing. First Curtin tried to pass the problem to MacArthur. He in turn procrastinated for a time, then passed the problem back to Curtin. He in turn, in effect, passed the problem to Drakeford..

REPLACEMENT OF AOC No 9 GROUP

In December 1943 the Air Officer Commanding, No 9 (Operational) Group in New Guinea, Air Commodore J E Hewitt, was replaced by Air Commodore F W F Lukis, who had previously been Air Member for Personnel. Such was the perceived seriousness of the change that the Minister for Air felt compelled to report it to the Minister for Defence, and to seek his approval. In his letter to Mr Curtin of 17th November 1943, Mr Drakeford reported that the change was necessary due to dissatisfaction over the administration of No 9 Group by Air Commodore Hewitt.¹

Comment

The real reason for Hewitt's replacement is not at all clear. According to Hewitt it was due to jealousy and a scramble for 'one of the few operational commands available to senior officers, all of whom wanted a turn.'² Here it is of significance that his place should be taken by the person responsible for the posting of senior officers, the Air Member for Personnel, Air Commodore Lukis. However, in the face of Hewitt's apparent good relations with the Americans and the general operational success of his Group, and the fact that he had earlier been proposed as a replacement for Bostock as AOC, RAAF Command, the reasons given for his early removal from his post are a little thin.

Looking deeper, Hewitt did not appear to have taken sides in the Jones/Bostock dispute, although his 'neutrality' may have been perceived by Jones as siding with Bostock. As AOC, No 9 Group, Hewitt was responsible for operational matters, not to Bostock, but to the Deputy Commander of Fifth Air Force, Major General Whitehead. It may also have been that Hewitt, in the interests of operational effectiveness, acted at times in ways that appeared to challenge Jones' control of the administration of the RAAF, an issue over which he was particularly sensitive.

On his relationship with Jones and Bostock, Hewitt had this to say:

¹ Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan 1943 - 1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p 102.

² Hewitt, J E, *Adversity in Success*, Langate Publishing, Melbourne, 1980, p 215.

Jones' most admirable quality was his dogged determination to succeed. Despite a lack of scholarship, this characteristic was to see him through a welter of difficulties. Bostock, with a greater breadth of view and being a student of guile, was equally determined to become the 'Blamey' of the RAAF. I was caught between these two men and having studied both I expected the string of barbs from Bostock, but not from Jones to whom, as chief of air staff, I gave unswerving loyalty while he remained in the chair.³

Another element in the equation may have been Hewitt's practice of occasionally flying with his crews on operational missions. Laudable though such a practice may have been from the point of view of the commander showing his willingness to share the dangers of operations with his aircrews, from the security point of view it was sheer madness, especially for someone like Hewitt who had been Director of Air Intelligence at Allied Air Headquarters. Indeed, General Kenney had issued strict orders against such a practice, and had been most annoyed and upset when the Commander of the Fifth Bomber Command, Brigadier General Walker had been killed during a bombing raid over Rabaul. Hewitt would have been well aware of Kenney's instructions. Interestingly, when Hewitt's replacement was announced, Kenney appeared to make no effort to intervene on his behalf, although he did take Hewitt back into his Allied Air Headquarters as Director of Air Intelligence.

BACK TO THE MINISTER FOR AIR

Again on 17th November 1943, Mr Curtin wrote back to Mr Drakeford agreeing to Air Commodore Hewitt's replacement but expressing his concern about the higher administration of the RAAF. The Prime Minister wanted to discuss this matter with Drakeford. Mr Drakeford agreed but sought more information on 'the numerous points of difference between the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command', to which General MacArthur had referred to in his correspondence with the Prime Minister. He also called for a report from the Chief of the Air Staff on 'conversations that had taken place between Lieutenant General Kenney, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and the Chief of the Air Staff.'

Air Vice-Marshal Jones reported in writing to the Minister for Air on 30th November:

The discussions were initiated by Lieutenant General Kenney at the instance of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, and consisted mostly of complaints by the latter that his recommendations concerning matters of organisation and policy were not always accepted, and that undue delay occurred in some instances in replying to his letters. The cases quoted were relatively unimportant in character and, in one case, which related to the provision of a Zone Filter Room at Millingimbi, was quite incorrect. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock stated that he considered that RAAF Headquarters had adopted the attitude of 'passive resistance', but this was quite contrary to fact. However, as I had not with me the files relating to the matters raised, I was not in a position to discuss them in detail, but denied that there was

³ *Ibid*, p 161.

anything but the fullest desire on the part of RAAF Headquarters to meet the operational needs of and recommendations by RAAF Command, and that I was prepared to discuss the organisation in principle.

Lieutenant General Kenney's view was that it should be possible for the Chief of the Air Staff to give wider administrative powers to RAAF Command as a subordinate formation, in the same way as the Fifth Air Force is subordinate to US Air Force Headquarters, Washington. I pointed out that this was not a parallel case and was not practicable in respect of units on the Australian mainland without delegating practically the whole of the authority of RAAF Headquarters to RAAF Command, and neither Lieutenant General Kenney nor Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was able to suggest any solution to the difficulties which would inevitably arise through interposing another Headquarters, ie RAAF Command, in the channels of Supply, Maintenance, Postings, Promotions and similar matters.

I described the position which applied to RAAF forces outside Australia which were already being treated as expeditionary forces, the Commander of which had all the powers necessary to enable him to carry out his responsibilities.

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock made it quite clear that he desired to have greater control of organisation and policy of the RAAF, and looked with disfavour upon any refusal on my part to accept his recommendations in such matters. He, however, agreed that very few of his recommendations had been disapproved, and appeared to accept the view that, as the responsibility for organisation and policy rested with the Chief of the Air Staff, I had a right to make the final decision. It was clear that nothing could be gained by pursuing the matter further, so the discussions ended at that stage.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 71 to 78)

Comment

It is quite clear from Jones' account of the meeting between Kenney, Bostock and himself that it was a meeting of closed minds. Once again Kenney suggested that Bostock be given greater administrative powers and once again Jones countered that to do so would amount to handing over control of the RAAF to Bostock. Jones' stubborn refusal to delegate to Bostock the authority he needed to carry out his responsibilities for the operational direction of the RAAF lay at the very heart of why the dispute between Jones and Bostock was so detrimental to the fighting efficiency of the RAAF. Whatever the relative merits of the case for either Jones or Bostock, the fact remains that Bostock was not able to effectively fulfil his role as commander of the RAAF's operational forces because of the lack of coordination between the operational activities and the supporting logistic effort.

To have delegated such necessary administrative powers as was essential would not have in any way reduced Jones' authority since Bostock would have then been responsible to Jones for the exercise of those powers. All that would have happened is that control over the detail of the administrative matters directly related to the support of the RAAF's operational effort would have passed to Bostock; control over policy related to these matters would have remained with Jones.

Yet another inconsistency within Jones' arguments is his contention that operational forces outside Australia should be treated differently from operational forces on the Australian mainland. From this came the view that he would be willing to give the commander of operational forces outside Australia (in an expeditionary force) authority over administrative matters, but not while on the mainland.

BOSTOCK'S VIEWS

While Mr Drakeford was seeking views from Air Vice-Marshal Jones, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock had earlier put his case to General Kenney. On 29th September 1943 he wrote:

As a result of a direction by the Prime Minister, the Defence Committee, on 7th January 1943 recorded the opinion that to achieve the maximum efficiency of the RAAF as an Australian organisation there should be unified operational and administrative control of the RAAF under one head. [See Chapter 14]

2. In my letter RAAFC 752, dated 10th March 1943 [See Chapter 15] I requested your attention to this matter and reported that in the absence of action to implement the Defence Committee's recommendation, with which I am in full agreement, I felt I was unable to discharge my responsibilities to you satisfactorily as I had no means to ensure the maximum fighting efficiency of my Command.

3. On the 19th March 1943, in my letter RAAFC 863 [See Chapter 15], I reported to you that the Chief of the Air Staff had issued an instruction to the Commanders of all RAAF formations comprising RAAF Command, which denied me direct information relating to supply, maintenance, personnel, works and organisation and that, in consequence, my appointment was becoming impracticable and untenable. Despite my representations to the Chief of the Air Staff that his order imposed unnecessary restrictions on the activity of my Command, his order is still current.

4. Subsequent to my report of the 10th March 1943, referred to in para 2 above, the interim measures recommended by the Defence Committee were implemented to the extent that RAAF Command Headquarters was established as a RAAF unit, although RAAF Command has never been defined as an organisational

formation. However, the basic weakness of the present RAAF organisation remains. [*See Chapter 15, AFCO A44*]

5. Though I am the operational Commander of the RAAF, I am denied, completely, any authority in regard to organisation, works, supply, maintenance, or other administrative functions of the force I am required to command. I contend that such an organisation is fundamentally unsound and can lead only to confusion and failure. As is to be expected in such circumstances, the administrative services of the RAAF are progressively diverging from operational requirements, resulting in an extravagant use of manpower concurrently with a loss of operational efficiency.

6. For the above reasons, I conceive it to be my duty to inform you that in my opinion the standard of the fighting efficiency of the RAAF is below that which you might reasonably expect, having regard to the strength and composition of the Force.'

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 29th September 1943)

REORGANISATION PROPOSAL

In the latter part of 1943 the Government became increasingly concerned with the manpower situation in Australia. Limits were placed on the intake into all three Services. As a consequence, limits were placed on the growth of the RAAF and on its contribution to the Empire Air Training Scheme.

As part of the quest to save manpower, the Air Board recommended to the Government a revised higher organisation of the RAAF's Areas and Groups in South-Eastern Australia. In essence, what was proposed was the creation of a new Area Command by, in effect, dividing Eastern Area into two Areas; and the absorption of the two Training Groups into Southern, Eastern and the new Central Area. The two Maintenance Groups were to remain in being. Figure 18.1 shows the proposed revised organisation, and Map 18.1, the new Area command boundaries.

The May 1942 reorganisation proposals approved by the Government [*See Chapter 12, and in particular Figure 12.3*] there were to be five operational Areas, five maintenance Groups and three training Groups. In the event, by late 1943, while the five operational Areas were in place, only two each of the maintenance and the training Groups had been formed. In addition there was one operational Group (No 9 (Operational) Group in New Guinea).

In putting its case to the Government the Air Board claimed that: 'experience has shown that in operational areas it is more satisfactory to adhere to a geographic organisation, and therefore the formation of maintenance groups was not proceeded with. Also, 'it has also been found that, in areas where the functional organisation was introduced, the wide geographic distribution of units within the respective commands has militated against efficient administration.'

Thus, argued the Board:

It is now desired to revert to the original organisation of geographical areas, having all units, irrespective of their functions, under a unified command, except that it is desired to retain the two

maintenance groups in Victoria and New South Wales respectively, which have already been established. The reason for this is that the groups concerned provide services for the Royal Australian Air Force in the South-West Pacific Area as a whole. This revision will eliminate two of the existing formation headquarters in South-Eastern Australia. In addition, it is desired to form a further operational and training area in Southern Queensland to be known as Central Area, as the existing size of Eastern Area (both operational and training) is too great for satisfactory control by one headquarters.

A further point in favour of the proposed reorganisation is that the geographic boundaries of the areas and groups would correspond more nearly to those of the latest reorganisation of Army L of C Areas, and would facilitate cooperation between the Services. Moreover, the organisation now recommended would give a more balanced division of responsibility, resulting in a saving of personnel. The change in organisation will be made progressively.

(See Documents: Extract from War Cabinet Agendum No 457/1943 - Data Relating to RAAF as Required by War Cabinet Vide Minute No (3065) (Review of the Nature, Extent and Balance of the War Effort in Light of the Manpower Position), dated 8th November 1943)

War Cabinet subsequently deferred making any decision, 'pending discussions between the Prime Minister, the Minister for Air, the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command in regard to questions related to the operational and administrative control of the Royal Australian Air Force.'⁴

FORMATION OF NO 10 (OPERATIONAL) GROUP

While the dispute between Jones and Bostock raged, the business of war continued. As Odgers points out: 'The success of the Allied campaign in the South-West Pacific in 1943 and the prospect of greater success in 1944 pointed to the urgent need for reorganisation of the RAAF in New Guinea. It needed more mobility.'⁵

As a result of a proposal by Bostock, RAAF Headquarters ordered the formation of No 10 (Operational) Group on 13th November 1943. It was formed in Brisbane and deployed to Nadzab in New Guinea in December. The Group was commanded by Group Captain F R W Scherger and was comprised, initially, of a fighter wing and a dive-bomber wing. It was intended to be a highly mobile air task force, capable of rapid movement and with a minimum of administrative support services.

When first formed, No 9 (Operational) Group had been intended to be such a mobile force, but, over time, had acquired a range of fixed supporting services. As Odgers pointed out: 'It had become a standard area force, similar to those other RAAF areas on the mainland'.⁶ When No 10 Group was formed it was designated as being subordinate to No 9 Group.

⁴ War Cabinet Minute No (3180) - Agendum No 457/1943 - Strength and Organisation of the RAAF, dated 24th November 1943, paragraph 2, Recommendation (h).

⁵ Odgers, *Air War Against Japan 1943 - 1945*, p 182.

⁶ *Ibid.*

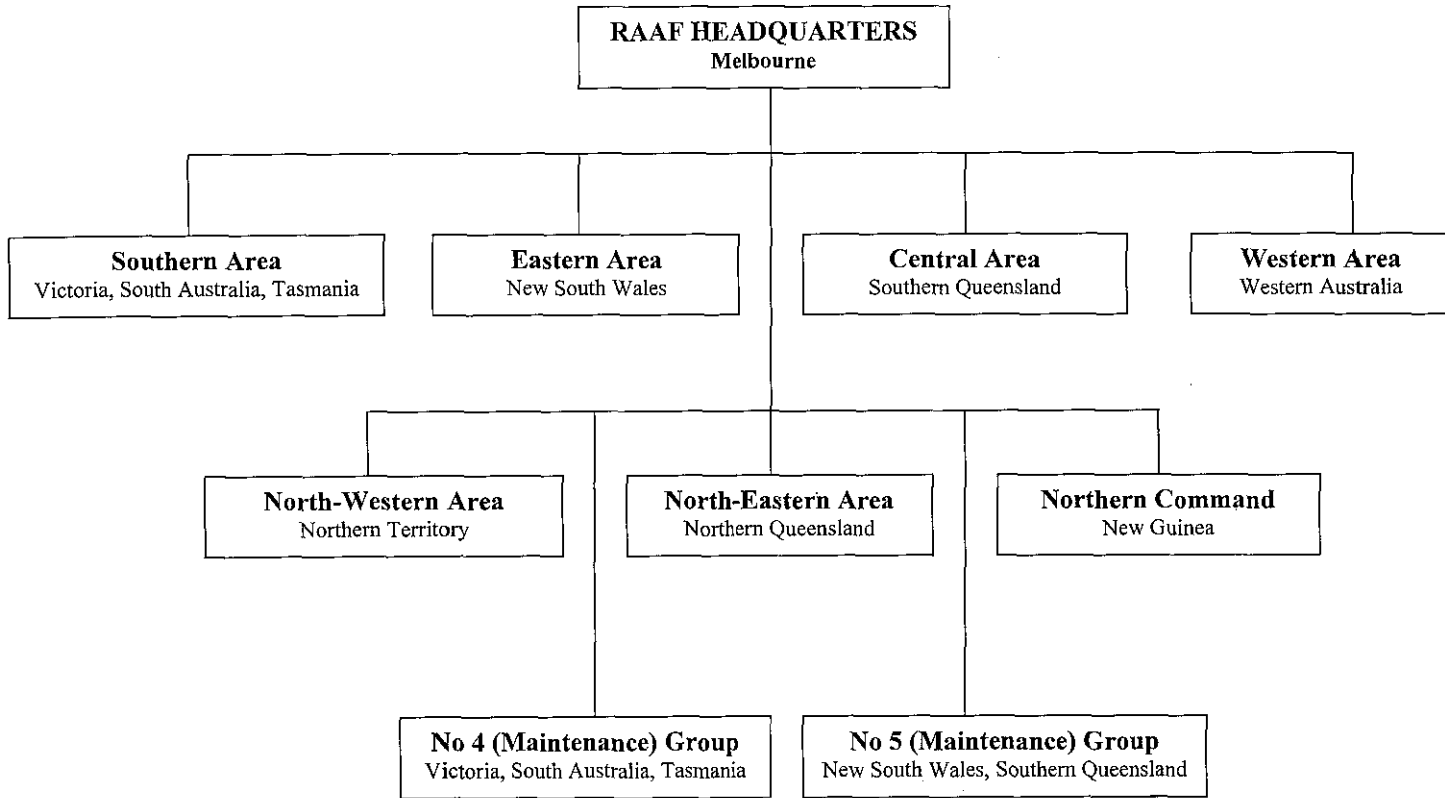
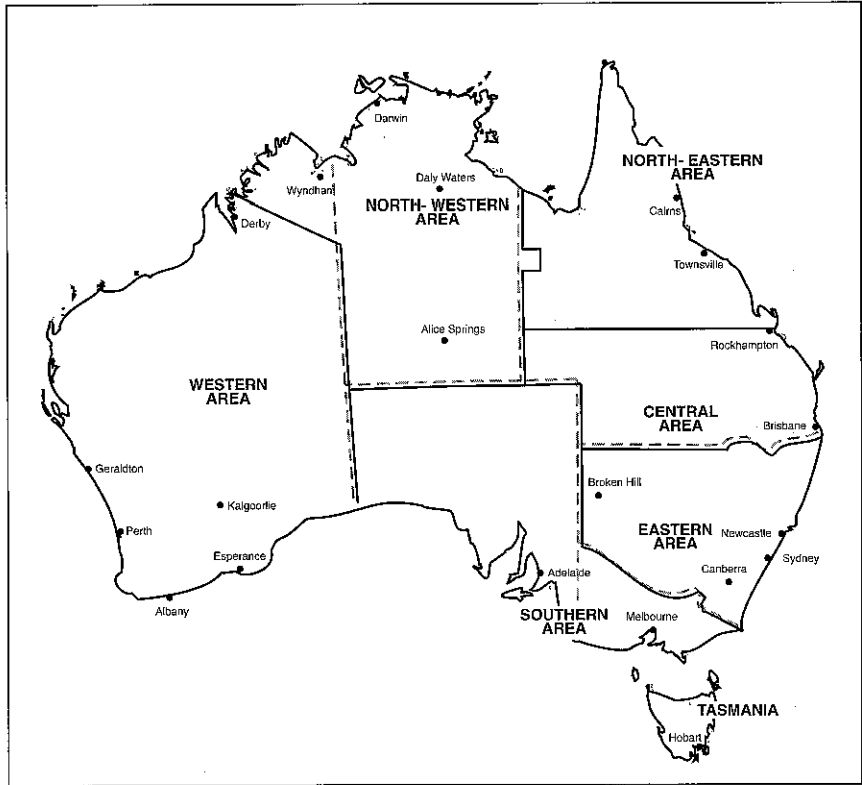


Figure 18.1: Royal Australian Air Force Proposed Reorganisation on Geographic Basis
October 1943



Map 18.1: Proposed Area Command Boundaries
October 1943

BOSTOCK ASKS TO BE RELIEVED AS AOC RAAF COMMAND

Air Vice-Marshal William Bostock, March 1944
[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

On 2nd February 1944, no doubt frustrated by the lack of progress in resolving the dispute between himself and Jones, Bostock sent a message direct to Mr Curtin, as Minister for Defence, seeking an interview with him on a matter of urgency concerning basic RAAF organisation and control. Mr Curtin replied that Bostock should seek an interview first with the Minister for Air.

(See Documents: Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 71 to 78)

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock then asked General MacArthur that he be relieved of his appointment as AOC, RAAF Command. General MacArthur in turn passed his request to Mr Curtin. In a message to Mr Shedden on 5th February he said:

1. Bostock has made request that he be relieved of the appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF [Command], Allied Air Forces. His service in his present command has been superior in every respect. His efficiency, zeal and loyalty have been outstanding.
2. Grounds for request are that he considers he is unable efficiently to discharge his responsibilities to Commander, Allied Air Forces, due to present status of organisation and relationship with the RAAF.
3. Owing to the increasing combat strength of RAAF and the offensive role which I plan for it in impending operations, I recommend that the Prime Minister closely review the situation as a matter of urgency. I shall take no action on Bostock's application until I know his views.

(See Documents: Message from the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, to the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 5th February 1944)

A MEETING WITH THE MINISTER FOR AIR

On 8th February 1944 the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, met with Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock in an attempt to resolve their long standing dispute. The results of this meeting are set out in a comprehensive letter report to the Prime Minister.

Mr Drakeford's report opens with a criticism of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock for dealing directly with the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, concerning his complaints, and of seeking an interview with the Minister for Defence, rather than first approaching himself as the Minister directly responsible for the RAAF.

Mr Drakeford then went on to detail the points made to him by Bostock. These were:

- (a.) that the officer who commands the Service for operational purposes must also be granted the administrative, supply, etc., responsibilities commensurate with his command;
- (b.) that the present internal organisation of the RAAF which divorces the operational command from any responsibility in connection with organisation, supply, maintenance, administration and war training of the Force which he is required to command is unsound;
- (c.) that, while two offices are responsible respectively for administration and operations, the officer responsible for operations should be the 'dominating partner' rather than the officer responsible for the administration, ... since it is for operational purposes that the RAAF is established.

In reply to this Air Vice-Marshal Jones is reported as having made the following points:

(a.) If RAAF Command, which is responsible for the operational control of RAAF units assigned to the SWPA, is given its own administrative, supply, works etc. organisation, the CAS explained that it would result in definite duplication and the creation of two sets of administrative, works, supply, etc. machinery being established, as those facilities must also be maintained for the existing training organisation to which the Commonwealth is committed, and ancillary units inseparable from that organisation.

(b.) & (c.) Two views expressed by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock raised question of who shall have command of the all of the RAAF. The CAS agreed with Air Vice-Marshal Bostock that power of the matters of organisation, supply, administration, works and training, should not be divorced from the operational control. The officer in command of the RAAF, working through his Headquarters and responsible to the Minister for matters of policy, organisation, supply, etc., must have also have ultimate power over those matters, and that power cannot be given to the officer direct in operations unless he is appointed to command the whole of the RAAF and made directly responsible to the Minister.

Mr Drakeford then went on to observe that: 'it was quite clear from those discussions that both Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock agreed that the existing set-up of RAAF Command in relation to the RAAF is not a satisfactory arrangement, that they both regard the basic organisation of the RAAF, which divorces operational control of its fighting units from administration, supply, maintenance, organisation, etc., has been fundamentally unsound, and that it is responsible, to an extent, for the difficulties experienced in the past.'

Mr Drakeford followed his report on his meeting with Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock with the following recommendations:

(a.) That RAAF Command, Brisbane, should be merged into the RAAF, thus making the RAAF a self-contained organisation as obtained before the former Command was created.

(b.) That, in order to take full advantage of the experience of operational work of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and use his services to the best advantage in the operational field, he be appointed to take charge of the new command (Northern Command), the establishment of which I recommended in a recent letter to you. That command would, as then pointed out, embrace Nos 9 and 10 (Operational) Groups in the New Guinea area, which, in effect, form the RAAF Field Force. As AOC of that Command, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock would control not only the operations (in conjunction with the USA forces) of the RAAF Service squadrons, but also administrative responsibility and command of all ancillary units, including stores units, repair and salvage units, operational bases, etc., within that command, which functions are, at the present time, being carried out by the AOC, No 9 (Operational) Group.

(c.) That the Chief of the Air Staff should be the direct link between the RAAF and Allied Air Forces Headquarters, he to proceed to Brisbane and work in closer association with Lieutenant General Kenney for a period sufficient for him to ensure complete understanding between the two Forces, as well as to devise the organisation considered most suitable to ensure the fullest cooperation and most efficient functioning of the RAAF with its American counterpart.

The amalgamation of the operational with the other functions of the RAAF will not entail removal of operational control of RAAF squadrons from Brisbane as, under the arrangements proposed, there will then be an Advanced Headquarters in Brisbane working in closest collaboration with the US Forces, and with RAAF Headquarters proper in Melbourne.

(d.) The deputy Chief of the Air Staff would act at RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne, in the absence of the Chief of the Air Staff in Brisbane. The latter would, of course, be available to attend Advisory War Council, War Cabinet, etc, meetings as and when required. Further, when Air Vice-Marshal Jones is absent from Brisbane, the duties there would be undertaken by a suitable deputy.

He added that he felt 'confident that the adoption of these recommendations will very largely, if not entirely, solve past differences, that will bring about most efficient coordination and operation of all functions of the RAAF in the SWPA, as well as ensure maintenance of closest collaboration with the US Forces particularly from the operational standpoint.'

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 16th February 1944)

On 1st April 1944, after a delay of some six weeks, Mr Curtin, as Minister for Defence, rejected Mr Drakeford's recommendations for the reorganisation of the RAAF. In his letter he said, in part:

Though there can be no doubt of the desirability of re-integrating the RAAF ... I note that your proposal will apparently involved Air Vice-Marshal Bostock being given a subordinate status to that of the Chief of the Air Staff in relation to the operational control of the RAAF. You will recall that, when you raised the question of the promotion of the Chief of the Air Staff in December 1942 and January 1943 [See Chapter 14], I was not prepared to agree to your recommendation because it involved the supersession of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock who, as you know, was selected for the senior operational appointment in the RAAF when Air Vice-Marshal Jones was appointed Chief of the Air Staff. For the reasons given in my letter of 26th February 1943, I am unable to agree to the proposal now under notice which would have the same effect.

Mr Curtin concluded his letter with the observation that he was '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, RAAF'.

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 1st April 1944)

Comment

This February 1944 meeting between Drakeford, Jones and Bostock, Drakeford's subsequent recommendation for a reorganisation of the higher command arrangements and Curtin's rejection of Drakeford's proposals in many ways summarises the position of all four of the major players in the dispute between Jones and Bostock.

Bostock reiterated his view that he be given control over the administrative aspects related to his command, while Jones countered with his long held view that such an arrangement would lead to a large duplication of staff. Bostock wanted everything in relation to the administration of the units of RAAF Command; Jones was willing to concede nothing. In this matter Bostock's case was far sounder than Jones'. Clearly an operational commander needs control over at least some of the immediate administrative support being given to his operational units. To limit him in this regard, especially to the extent imposed by Jones, was, to put it mildly, unsound. Also, Jones' argument that to give Bostock even minimal control over administration within his command would entail a major duplication of staff was fallacious.

Bostock's view that he, as the RAAF's operational commander, should be senior to the head of the administration of the RAAF, and Jones' contrary view that, as Chief of the Air Staff he was senior to everybody else in the RAAF, was an important element underlying the dispute. Indeed, not only did Jones oppose Bostock's claims for the superior position, he himself actively sought to restore to the post of CAS control over the RAAF's operational activities. In effect, both men were seeking for themselves the role of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF.

Drakeford's proposal for the reorganisation of the higher command arrangements, logical though it may have been, would have had the effect of making Jones AOC, RAAF, and of removing RAAF Command from the direct, and somewhat independent, control, as he saw it, of General Kenney. Such a change would have also enhanced Drakeford's own position as Minister for Air.

For his part, Curtin rejected Drakeford's proposals on the grounds that such an arrangement would place Bostock in an inferior position to Jones, and this was a situation that he was unwilling to accept. No doubt, also in Curtin's mind would have been the fact that neither MacArthur or Kenney would have been likely to have accepted the downgrading of Bostock and the elevation of Jones to the position, in effect, of AOC, RAAF.

KENNEY'S INVOLVEMENT

Differences of view on the extent and nature of the authority of the AOC, RAAF Command, versus that of the Chief of the Air Staff were not confined to exchanges between Bostock and Jones. From time to time General Kenney, as Commander, Allied Air Forces, put his views. Thus on 15th February 1944 he wrote to the Chief of the Air Staff reminding him, in forthright terms, that the coordination and supervision of war training for RAAF operational squadrons lay with him and that he had delegated such responsibilities to the AOC, RAAF Command.

(See Documents: Letter from Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 15th February 1944).

The following day General Kenney sent the following strongly worded signal to RAAF Headquarters, and to No 9 (Operational) Group, which was at the time operating in New Guinea under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force:

You appear to be misinformed. 9 OG is a formation of RAAF Command placed temporarily under command of Commanding General ADVON 5 by Commander Allied Air Forces. In all matters relating to planning, dispositions of operational units, operational requirements and similar matters directly relating to operations your correct channel of communication is to AOC RAAF Command through Commanding General ADVON 5. AOC RAAF Command is responsible to Commander Allied Air Forces for all matters affecting operations by the RAAF including formations or units of the RAAF which may be temporarily under operational control of Commanding General Fifth Air Force. RAAF Headquarters is concerned only with

administrative functions necessary to implement operational requirements.

(See Documents: Signal Message from Allied Air Headquarters to AHQ No 9 (Operational) Group and RAAF Headquarters, copy to RAAF Command, dated 16th February 1944)

CHANGES IN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

In March 1944, General Kenney shifted the operational control of No 9 Group from Fifth Air Force to RAAF Command and extended the area of responsibility of the Command to cover the Port Moresby – Milne Bay area. No 10 Group, however, remained under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force.

Odgers commented that: 'After this reorganisation, Bostock, on 2nd March, informed Air Force Headquarters that he desired the title of No 9 Group changed to 'Northern Area' and the title of No 10 Group changed to 'Tactical Air Force'. He also proposed 'to seek the approval of the Commander Allied Air Forces, for the transfer of the maximum number of squadrons from the defensive areas to the Tactical Air Force'. The effect of this policy would reduce No 9 Group to a line of communication area similar to those in Australia, and build up No 10 Group to a large mobile tactical force. Jones would not agree to the change of title.¹

On 8th March Air Vice-Marshal Jones wrote to General Kenney stating that: 'so far as this Headquarters is concerned, the whole of the RAAF units in New Guinea are under the command and administrative control of the AOC No 9 Group Air Commodore F W Lukis, and it is not intended for the present to change this arrangement'.²

On 15th March General Kenney replied to the CAS in effect making it clear that, while arrangements for the administrative support of RAAF operational activities was entirely a matter for Jones' discretion, the tactical disposition of these units was his responsibility and that he would continue to handle all operational matters involving RAAF units through the AOC, RAAF Command. He went on to inform Jones that if he, Jones, was unable to make the necessary arrangements 'to give effect to wishes of the Commander, Allied Air Forces' he would 'expect to be fully informed in order that substitute arrangements can be effected'.³

On 11th April 1944 the name of No 9 Group was changed to 'Northern Command'.⁴

Comment

This incident illustrates the differing agendas of the two protagonists. Jones was clearly pushing the idea revealed in Drakeford's report to Curtin on 16th February for the formation of 'a RAAF Field Force' covering all RAAF units in New Guinea (to which he could move Bostock while he resumed operational control of RAAF operational activities on mainland Australia). Bostock, on the other hand, was pushing for a mobile formation that would better meet the operational situation as it was evolving and over which he might, in time, exercise direct control.

¹ Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan 1943 – 1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, p 198.

² *Ibid*, pp 198-199.

³ *Ibid*, p 199.

⁴ *Ibid*, p 200.

FORMATION OF UNITED STATES FAR EAST AIR FORCES

On 15th June 1944, with the transfer of the (US) 13th Air Force from the South Pacific Ocean Area to the South-West Pacific Area, the United States Far East Air Forces was formed with General Kenney as its Commanding General. Kenney retained his position as Commander, Allied Air Forces, but handed over command of Fifth Air Force to Major General Whitehead.

(See Documents: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated February 1944 to June 1945)

PROPOSAL TO APPOINT AIR MARSHAL PARK TO BE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

During his visit to London in May 1944, Mr Curtin again asked the British Government to provide Australia with the services of a senior RAF officer to be Chief of the Air Staff, RAAF. As a result, the Chief of the Air Staff, RAF, gave him two names for consideration: Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, and Air Vice-Marshal H W L Saunders.

On his return to Australia in June 1944 Mr Curtin discussed the matter with General MacArthur. MacArthur said that he:

... considered that 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 cooperation. In so far as the operational set-up was concerned, he thought that, apart from the southern areas, there should be an operational command of the RAAF in New Guinea and another in the Darwin area, both of which should be under the officer on the staff of the Commander of the Allied Air Forces, to whom he would be responsible for operations, whilst also being a subordinate of the new head of the RAAF.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Agendum No 396/1944 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 3rd August 1944)

However, it was not until early August 1944 that the matter was put to the War Cabinet. At their meeting on 4th August the members of the War Cabinet agreed that:

- (i.) The appointment of Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, RAF, as Chief of the Air Staff, RAAF, with his present rank, pay and conditions to be arranged by the Treasurer and Minister for Air in consultation with the Prime Minister as Minister for Defence.
- (ii.) Re-affirmation of the principle of unified operational and administrative control of the RAAF, detailed arrangements to give effect to this to be made when Air Marshal Park takes up appointment and after he has had an opportunity of examining the position.
- (iii.) The position of Air Vice-Marshal Jones to be decided when Air Marshal Park assumes duty as Chief of the Air Staff.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (3693) – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 4th August 1944)

On 30th September 1944, Mr Curtin again raised the issue with General MacArthur in order to clarify details of the responsibilities of the new CAS in relation to operations. 'MacArthur referred to the difficulties that had existed in the past in relation to the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, and the concern that the Minister for Air had felt in this regard. Nothing serious had, however, resulted, and he felt that any differences that had existed in the past were now quiet. The strategic scope of the war has gone so far forward, (and) that an entirely different situation has developed. He considered it no longer necessary to bring a senior RAF Officer to Australia.'

General MacArthur added that 'the tempo of the campaign had gone so fast and conditions had changed to such an extent that it was no longer necessary to proceed with the proposal...'. Also, 'had this change taken place when it was first mooted, advantages would have accrued, but he now considered it too late to make such a change.'

(See Documents: Notes on Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, dated 30th September 1944)

In view of General MacArthur's opposition to the appointment of Air Marshal Park as Chief of the Air Staff, Mr Curtin decided not to continue.

Comment

An interesting sidelight on the offer by the Royal Air Force of the services of either Air Marshal Park or Air Vice-Marshal Saunders is that both were 'colonial' born, Park in New Zealand and Saunders in South Africa. Both had joined the Royal Flying Corps during the First World War and remained with the Royal Air Force after the war.

Also not specifically mentioned in the Agenda papers was the fact that Saunders had served as Chief of the Air Staff in New Zealand, apparently with some success, from early 1939 to the end of 1941.

VIEWS OF THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

On 4th November 1944, the Secretary, Department of Defence, Sir Frederick Shedden, wrote a minute, presumable to the Prime Minister, criticising General MacArthur's role in relation to the Government's attempts to solve problems in the higher organisation of the RAAF by obtaining the services of a senior RAF officer to command the RAAF.

Shedden said:

The whole course of this matter [*had been*] changed by the resubmission of the question to General MacArthur who, having blocked the appointment of either Air Chief Marshal Joubert or Longmore in May 1943, has apparently repented of his agreement to Air Marshal Park which was made with the Prime Minister in Brisbane. The objections raised by General MacArthur are not relevant to the main consideration of the Government which is its

desire to have the RAAF organisation placed on a satisfactory footing for its internal administration and operational effectiveness. As stated in my note of 30th October to the Prime Minister:

It must not be overlooked, in connection with General MacArthur's views, that the opinion is held by senior RAAF Officers that the Americans do not wish to have a senior RAF officer in the South-West Pacific Area, and prefer the divided arrangement, because they can play one side off against the other, whereas a Senior Officer with unified control would be in a stronger position to assert the views of the RAAF.

From the views expressed by General MacArthur, General Blamey, the Defence Committee, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock and Air Vice-Marshal Jones, the administration of the RAAF will continue to be unsatisfactory until the contemplated change is made. Some day there will be an outcry about the relatively poor RAAF effort in the South-West Pacific Area in relation to the resources allocated 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 also been necessary to send senior officers to Europe to get operational experience which should be provided in the South-West Pacific Area.

(See Documents: Minute by the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 4th November 1944)

Comment

Air Marshal Park had a distinguished operational career in the RAF and would no doubt have been eminently suitable for the post of Chief of the Air Staff, and certainly more so than either Joubert or Longmore. Indeed he would have been difficult to refuse on the grounds of suitability; maybe he was too good. In this case there can be little doubt that MacArthur was determined to prevent the British from gaining a place of influence in the Pacific Theatre, even as head of the RAAF.

Shedden's comments on the incident are also most apt. The RAAF's performance in the South-West Pacific was poor in relation to the resources allocated to the air effort, although to date there has been no public outcry. Shedden is also correct in praising the performance of the personnel in the squadrons and of criticising the lack of opportunity afforded senior RAAF officers to gain operational command experience.

FIRST TACTICAL AIR FORCE

In July 1944, No 10 (Operational) Group was taken from under command and administrative control of Northern Command and its commander, Group Captain Scherger, promoted to Air Commodore, thus giving it equivalent status to Northern Command and the other fixed area formations on the mainland. In August 1944 Air Commodore A H Cobby assumed command after Scherger had been injured in a jeep accident. Then, on 25th October 1944 the name of the Group was changed to 'First Tactical Air Force, RAAF'.

Odgers pointed out that: 'Unlike other formations of RAAF Command such as North-Eastern Area and North-Western Area, First Tactical Air Force was not confined to any definite area but would be moved freely wherever required. Bostock urged that First TAF should be kept strictly to its role, ie, that it should be the fast-moving, hard-striking formation of the RAAF. He warned against the tendency to add static units to its strength, thus reducing its mobility.'⁵

Comment

With the separation of No 10 Group from Northern Command and its change of name to 'First Tactical Air Force', Bostock eventually won through with a proposal that he had first put to Jones over six months earlier. It is also of interest to recall that, at this stage, Bostock did not have control of the Force, or any direct say in its operational employment, it being under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force.

REORGANISATION PROPOSALS RESURRECTED

In August 1944, an internal RAAF Headquarters Memorandum was raised by the Director of Organisation proposing a full reversion to a geographic based organisation for the RAAF's Areas and Groups. This latest proposal was similar to that proposed, and deferred, in November 1943, except that now, as well as the division of Eastern Area into two and the absorption of the two training Groups, it was proposed to absorb the two maintenance Groups as well. Figure 18.2 shows the proposed revised organisation, while Map 18.1 shows the proposed Area Command boundaries.

The Memorandum admits that the previous concept, from the May 1942 reorganisation proposals, of separating maintenance from operations in the forward areas has proved to be unsound; hence the proposal to absorb the maintenance Groups into the Area organisation. The Memorandum then goes on to argue that:

... the theatre of operations is now moving away from the mainland of Australia and maintenance units have been pushed forward to northern areas. Further, the training commitment is now confined to requirements of the South-West Pacific Area. These considerations, together with the present manpower stringency, require that the organisation in rearward areas should be simplified and staffs reduced accordingly.

While there was seen to be a clear need:

To have an operational organisation in South-Eastern Australia for local defence and reconnaissance duties, ... on account of the tactical situation, such duties as are carried out by Service squadrons in South-Eastern Australia are regarded as primarily training. There is a direct connection between the operational training units and the operational function, which would make it appropriate for the South-

⁵ *Ibid*, p 289.

Eastern operational areas to absorb these operational training units, and this would be in line with RAF practice. Supervision of training has largely gravitated to this Headquarters [*ie, RAAF Headquarters*], and the tendency is for the training groups to become largely administrative formations; therefore, the geographic organisation now proposed can be implemented without disturbance of functional requirements.

The Memorandum then goes on to argue that:

The organisation now recommended would give a balanced division of responsibility and eliminate duplication, overlapping; and confusion in administration. By the more convenient grouping, supervision and control of units would improve, and a considerable saving effected in communications and interstate travel by staffs of the respective formations.

A further point in favour of the proposed reorganisation is that the geographic boundaries of the areas and groups would correspond more nearly to those of the latest reorganisation of Army L of C Areas, and would facilitate cooperation between the Services. Moreover, there would be one Air Force formation commander in each area to whom the other Services can refer as occasion arises.

The Memorandum concluded by recommending that:

- (a.) Southern Area absorb training and maintenance units in Victoria and Tasmania.
- (b.) Eastern Area absorb training and maintenance units in New South Wales.
- (c.) An area headquarters, to be known as Central Area, be established in Southern Queensland to control operational, training and maintenance units in that area

(See Documents: Memorandum on the Higher Organisation of the RAAF, dated 19th August 1944)

Comment

In the event, this latest reorganisation proposal met the same fate as its October 1943 predecessor; it became lost in the administrative inertia caused by the ongoing dispute between Jones and Bostock.

What the proposal suggests is that the mixed geographic and functional basis of the higher organisation produced more of the disadvantages of each system of organisation than advantages. Here the remark about the supervision of training having 'largely gravitated to' RAAF Headquarters, thus allowing the training Groups to become mere administrators of central training policy, clearly illustrated the failure of RAAF Headquarters to delegate any policy function to lower formations.

Also of interest is the remark about maintenance Groups. Originally these Groups were set up to relieve operational commanders of the need to devote their attention to the detail of overseeing the maintenance function. Yet, in the event the only maintenance Groups formed were within Areas with minimal operational responsibilities.

This apparent failure of the functional basis for the higher organisation, and proposal to return to a geographic basis, was not in fact a failure of the functional basis, but rather a failure to set up a proper functionally-based organisation, such as that proposed by Goble in January 1940, in the first place. [*See Chapter 3*]

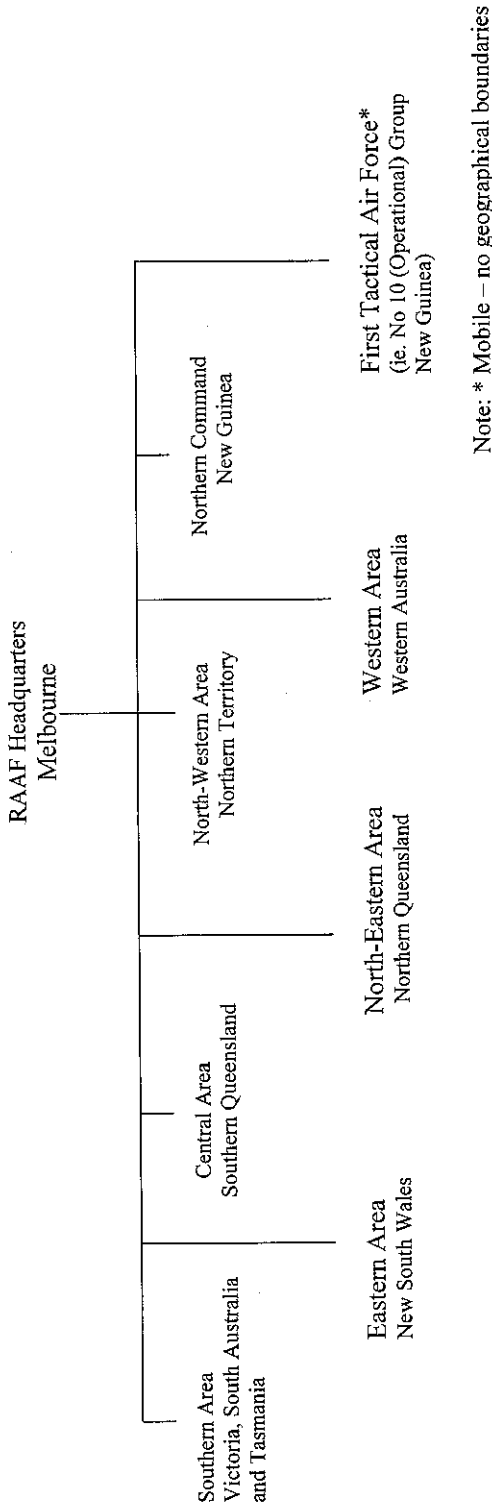


Figure 18.2: Royal Australian Air Force Proposed Organisation on Geographic Basis
August 1944

19

And Into 1945

ACTIVITIES OF THE BRITISH PACIFIC FLEET

On 5th January 1945, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock wrote to General Kenney, in effect complaining that he had not been informed of a requirement to provide air support to the British Pacific Fleet while in Australian waters, or of the intention to hand over all operational airfields in central New South Wales to the [*British*] Fleet Air Arm.

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 5th January 1945)

Comment

Bostock's complaint was, by implication, that RAAF Headquarters had not bothered to consult with either Kenney or himself when making arrangements for the air aspects of the basing of the British Pacific Fleet in Australia, notwithstanding that those arrangements had an impact on operational activities within Bostock's area of responsibility.

DISPUTE OVER OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

On 12th January 1945, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock wrote to Air Vice-Marshal Jones complaining about the activities of RAAF Headquarters Directorate of Operational Requirements:

Considerable unnecessary confusion and inefficiency is resulting from the improper dabbling, by staffs at your Headquarters, in matters relating to operational requirements of RAAF Command, AAF.

2. Since you set up a 'Directorate of Operational Requirements' at RAAF Headquarters, that Directorate – which has no legitimate function under the existing basic organisation of the RAAF – has progressively attempted to exercise improper control over the operational efficiency of RAAF Command. It is the prerogative of any operational commander to determine the operational requirements in regard to aeroplanes, weapons, equipment and detailed field organisation of units in relation to the force which he is to command. In conformity with the existing principles governing the division of responsibility within the RAAF between the Air

Officer Commanding RAAF Command, AAF (operational), on the one hand, and the Chief of the Air Staff (administrative) on the other, the formulation of operational requirements clearly is my duty and responsibility. Non-compliance with 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 RAAF 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 RAAF Command, AAF.

3. It is not generally understood throughout the Service that the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command, AAF, derives the whole of the authority of his appointment from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and that his appointment entails no responsibilities whatsoever to the Chief of the Air Staff, who, under the current higher organisation of the RAAF, is purely an administrative authority.

4. Since the formation of RAAF Command, AAF, I have represented, from time to time, that determination of operational requirements must be originated from my Headquarters. On each occasion, I have received an evasive or indefinite reply, the last example of which is your SAS 23661, dated 6th October 1944 (in reply to my RAAFC 5304, dated 29th September 1944) which indicates either a lack of appreciation of the situation or a further manifestation of the attitude of non-cooperation and unhelpfulness which has characterised your policy towards RAAF Command (and to me in particular, as Air Officer Commanding), since the inception of the existing higher organisation of the Service. In the face of this attitude, such progress towards operational efficiency, which it has been possible to achieve, has been an unnecessarily laborious and tedious task. As a typical illustration, I quote the static air defence re-organisation which I endeavoured to introduce more than a year ago (the economy in manpower and in the enhanced efficiency of which was so obvious that I appealed to the Minister in February 1944) and which, due to your opposition, is only now being implemented.

5. The Director of Operational Requirements (DOR) as a member of the staff of a non-operational Headquarters, is not in a position to form sound and balanced opinions on operational questions, nevertheless you improperly look to that relatively junior officer for advice on operational matters (which, in any case, are not your responsibility), in preference to accepting my representations. For example, in two matters of major importance, you have adopted lines of action which, in the one case, contrary to my stated operational requirements, have already committed the RAAF to serious operational inefficiency, and, in the other, will involve the

gross extravagance in manpower, which cannot be justified by the operational situation and which is directly against my strongest protests.

6. I am reliably informed that at present the Director of Operational Requirements, who holds the rank of Group Captain, employs a staff of between twenty and thirty experienced officers at your Headquarters. This, in itself, is a disturbing waste of valuable manpower which is urgently needed – and refused – to establish efficient field units. Since the Directorate can have no legitimate function at RAAF Headquarters, it can – and does – introduce only an obstructive and confusing element which militates disastrously against the development of the RAAF into an efficient fighting organisation.

7. The requirement indicated at para 6 of my letter RAAFC 5304, dated 29th September 1944, should be implemented with the least possible delay.

8. I am forwarding a copy of this letter to the Minister [*for Air*] for his information.

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 12th January 1945)

Comment

There would seem to be little doubt that Jones, who was clearly responsible for obtaining the equipment needed by the RAAF, should have recourse to staff advice from his own Directorate of Operational Requirements. It was Bostock's job to conduct operations; not to dictate the type and amount of the fighting equipment required by the Service. Certainly, there would have been a heavy responsibility on Jones to consult with Bostock on operational requirements. But having done so, the final responsibility was his.

Here is a clear case where close cooperation was needed, but not provided by either side. Also the tone of Bostock's letter is such that its only purpose would have been to allow Bostock to let off steam; it would have done nothing to cause Jones, or Drakeford, to re-examine the role and functioning of the Directorate of Operational Requirements.

DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE

Early in 1945, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock developed the practice of communicating directly with Mr Curtin, through the Secretary, Department of Defence. Thus on 5th January 1945 he sent the Acting Secretary, Colonel Wilson, a copy of his letter to General Kenney concerning the proposed activities of the British Pacific Fleet. Then, on 12th January he sent the following:

As I have sent a copy to the Minister for Air of a letter which I have today addressed to the Chief of the Air Staff, it occurs to me that it may be an advantage for you to be aware of the matter under discussion, and I therefore attach a copy for your informal information.

This latter letter at least was seen by the Prime Minister, on 27th February.

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Acting Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 5th January 1945; Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Acting Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 12th January 1945)

AN ACRIMONIOUS EXCHANGE

Some indication of the degree of hostility between Jones and Bostock can be seen from the following exchange of signals as reported by George Odgers.

The exchange opened with the following extract of a signal from Jones to Bostock on 19th January 1945:

I take strong exception to the insubordinate tone of your signal and your repeated attempts to usurp authority of this Headquarters. Communications couched in terms such as the one under reply are to cease forthwith.

The following day Bostock replied:

Secret, for CAS from AOC. I also have responsibilities. You do not understand current Allied Air and RAAF 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.¹

Comment

Underlying this exchange is the differing perceptions of the two men as to their respective position and status. Jones clearly saw himself as Head of the RAAF, which had been the position of the Chief of the Air Staff before Jones' appointment in May 1942. While the position of Head of the RAAF was one of perception and not part of the formal organisation, it arose from the fact that the CAS chaired the Air Board, which had been the top authority in the RAAF, and that he had previously outranked all other officers. Previous CASSs, such as Williams and Burnett, had used their senior position to put themselves in clear charge of the Service. In this they were not challenged, either from within the Service or by the Government. On the contrary, their position as virtual commander of the RAAF was widely recognised and accepted.

¹ Odgers, George, *Air War Against Japan, 1943-1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1957, pp 436-437.

In Jones' case, however, the position was different, as Bostock so rightly pointed out to him. At the time of Jones' appointment the Government had taken operational control of the RAAF's combat force away from the Air Board and passed it to General MacArthur. Bostock's sole source of authority was that delegated to him by General MacArthur through the Allied Air Force's Commander, General Kenney. The fact that Bostock had no responsibility to Jones, or to the Air Board, was due in large part to Jones' consistent and adamant refusal to delegate any of his or the Air Board's responsibilities to him. Had Jones done so he would have had a legitimate claim to treat Bostock as a subordinate.

ANOTHER REORGANISATION PROPOSAL FROM THE MINISTER FOR AIR

On 7th February 1945, Mr Drakeford once again wrote to Mr Curtin on the question of the organisation of the RAAF, and in particular 'the future disposition and functions of RAAF Command.' After going over some of the background to the formation of RAAF Command and of the Fifth Air Force he pointed out that General Kenney had, 'some time ago', moved his Headquarters out of Brisbane 'and is now at Leyte, with a Rear Echelon at Hollandia'. He then went on:

5. When Allied Air Headquarters moved from the Australian mainland, it was anticipated that RAAF Command would accompany it to ensure appropriate Australian participation in the higher operational command of RAAF field formations, squadrons, etc, employed in operations against the enemy. That Command, however, is still at Brisbane, RAAF representation on the operational sections of Allied Air Headquarters consisting of a small number of lower ranking officers only, while the control of the First Tactical Air Force, RAAF (our main striking force in the South-West Pacific Area), passed to the United States Fifth Air Force and recently to the 13th Air Force.

6. Having regard to the foregoing, and to the recent very favourable developments in the South-West Pacific Area which should, it is considered, diminish any likelihood of an enemy attack on the Australian mainland, it is felt that, to ensure that the RAAF takes its rightful place in operations in the South-West Pacific Area and to provide that necessary measure of coordination and control of our field formations and units with the United States authorities, RAAF Command should move to New Guinea (or other forward base, as operational necessity may require) and take over command of all RAAF formations in that and the more advanced areas. In such event, the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, would be vested with operational and administrative control of all RAAF formations, etc, in the South-West Pacific Area outside the mainland of Australia, he to be responsible to Allied Air Headquarters for operational control and to RAAF Headquarters on command and administrative aspects.

7. Adoption of that change in organisation would unquestionably result in more effective coordination of our formations in the field, facilitate their administration and mould them into a more self-contained fighting force, as well as facilitate RAAF Command in the fulfilment of its functions in connection with our field forces in the South-West Pacific Area.

8. Implementation of that proposal would also enable the placing of units on the mainland under the operational control of RAAF Headquarters, subject to operational direction by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, as well as overcome many of the difficulties inherent in the existing organisation (which have been the subject of much previous correspondence between us, as well as of consideration by the Defence Committee on several occasions and by War Cabinet).

9. It is desired that, for the reasons advanced in their support, the proposals in paragraph 6 and 7 may have early and favourable consideration, as I am of the opinion that adoption of those proposals would be most advantageous from both the operational and administrative aspects, as well as for the well-being and efficiency of the RAAF generally.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 7th February 1945)

KENNEY'S VIEWS

On 20th February 1945, Air Vice-Marshal Jones called on General Kenney at his headquarters in Leyte to solicit his support for the Minister's reorganisation proposals. Kenney recorded the discussions in his notebooks:

Air Vice-Marshal Jones in for conference. Wants to form Expeditionary Air Force RAAF to handle operating units outside Australia; Bostock in command of complete staff and Jones to run all mainland units. Suspect the idea is to get Bostock out of Australia. Told Jones I'd consider it but Darwin would have to be included in the Expeditionary Air Force. He agreed. Also agreed to turning over two troop carrier squadrons if the new show was formed.

The next day Kenney had a conference with Jones and Bostock 'on RAAF problems. Bostock will not buy Jones' proposition to move Bostock out of Australia with Hq at Hollandia and integrated staff. Told Jones idea was off.'

(See Documents Chapter 17: Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated February 1944 to June 1945)

FUTURE HIGHER COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY AND AIR FORCE

Mr Drakeford's proposals concerning the future, in particular, of RAAF Command coincided with issues of a similar nature related to the future of the Australian Army under General MacArthur's command. In brief, General Blamey was dissatisfied with the way MacArthur was handling the higher command of the Australian Army in the field. Also the Minister for the Army, Mr Forde, had suggested the reconstitution of the Military Board, a move clearly opposed by Blamey. Yet another element in the situation was British manoeuvring to gain a place in forthcoming operations against Japan in the Pacific. All of these issues, together with Mr Drakeford's proposals, were put to Mr Curtin in a minute from Sir Frederick Shedden.

(See Documents: Minute from the Secretary, Department of Defence, to the Prime Minister, dated 23rd February 1945)

On 27th February Mr Curtin wrote to General MacArthur on the future use and command of the Australian Army and Air Forces under his command. After discussing various aspects related to the Army, he went on to discuss the RAAF:

7. A similar question of principle relating to operational control and command of the RAAF in the South-West Pacific Area has arisen. You will recall from earlier discussions, that the arrangement for operational control by the RAAF Command and administrative control by the RAAF Headquarters has never worked satisfactorily. The suggestion for the appointment of Air Marshal Sir Keith Park, now Commander, Allied Air Forces, South East Asia Area, as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF, with operational responsibility to the Commander, Allied Air forces, South-West Pacific Area, which was originally endorsed by you was later abandoned on your advice.

8. As a result of the advance in recent months, Allied Air Headquarters has moved far from Australia, but the RAAF Command is still in Brisbane. RAAF representation on the operational sections of Allied Air Headquarters consists of a small number of lower ranking officers only, and the control of the First Tactical Air Force, RAAF (our main striking force in the South-West Pacific Area), passed first to the United States Fifth Air Force and later to the 13th Air Force.

9. In order to ensure that the RAAF takes its rightful place in operations in the South-West Pacific Area, and to provide the necessary measure of cooperation and control of our field formations and units with Allied Air Headquarters, the Minister for Air has recommended to me that RAAF Command should move to New Guinea (or other forward base, as operational necessity may require) and take over command of all RAAF formations in that and the more advanced areas. In such event, the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, would be vested

with operational and administrative control of all RAAF formations in the South-West Pacific Area, outside the mainland of Australia, being responsible to Allied Air Headquarters for operational control and to RAAF Headquarters for command and administrative matters.

10. The adoption of such a course would also enable the units on the mainland to be placed under the operational control of RAAF Headquarters, subject to operational responsibility to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. I shall therefore be glad to have your observations on the recommendations of the Minister for Air, in so far as your responsibilities as Commander-in-Chief of the South-West Pacific are concerned.

(See Documents: Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 27th February 1945)

BOSTOCK'S SUBMISSION TO THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Without awaiting General MacArthur's reply in relation to Mr Drakeford's proposals concerning RAAF Command, Mr Curtin referred them to the Defence Committee, with instructions that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was to be coopted for the meeting.

Having been advised of these arrangements, Bostock put his views on the Minister's proposal in a letter to the Chairman of the Defence Committee. These views are set out below in detail to illustrate Bostock's line of thinking on the whole question of the relations between RAAF Headquarters and RAAF Command:

Reference Defence Committee Agendum No 51/1945

A copy of the letter of the 7th February, 1945, from the Minister for Air to the Minister for Defence, attached to the agendum paper under reference, appears to me to have been written without complete information and to be based on unsound Service advice. Certain aspects of the text of the Minister's letter imply incorrect action on my part and I therefore offer the following information and comments in order that the Defence Committee may be correctly informed of the true situation.

A.

Paras 2 and 3 of the Minister for Air's letter make reference to General MacArthur's letter of the 4th September, 1942. This letter was written by General MacArthur on the day prior to the issue of the Allied Air Forces General Order (No 47 of the 5th September, 1942) which constituted Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces and introduced the current higher operational organisation of the RAAF. Allied Air Forces General Order No 53 of the 21st September, 1942, subsequently changed the title of Coastal Command, Allied Air Forces, without other change.

The Minister for Air ignores General MacArthur's letter of 16th January, 1943, to the Prime Minister [See Documents Chapter 14: *Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 38 to 42*] in which General MacArthur, at this later date, completely reverses his views after a few months' experience of the operation of RAAF Command in accordance with his first ideas.

General MacArthur states, inter alia, in his letter of 16th January, 1943:

I have given most careful consideration to the question of the RAAF Command which was discussed in your letter of January 11, 1943. The basis for the procedure outlined therein is the proposal to withhold from the senior officer of the RAAF Command the authority to command that organisation, and to give him only operational control thereof. I consider this idea to be completely violative of sound military principles and cannot concur therewith.

... The Allied Air Forces contain American and Australian units. The headquarters staff is a mixed organisation with, for example, and RAAF officer with an American assistant as Director of Intelligence, and a US Army Air Force officer with an RAAF assistant as Director of Operations. The American echelon is organised into the Fifth Air Force, a tactical unit with command, communications, combat and service elements. The RAAF echelon is operating as the RAAF Command, which is also a tactical unit and is commanded by the senior RAAF officer assigned to the South-West Pacific Area, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.'

... In order to effectuate this basic principle, it is requested:

- a. That the AOC RAAF Command have full legal command of his organisation with the responsibilities, authorities and limitations prescribed by regulation and customs of the Service.

... The basic principle involved in this matter would apply equally to any branch of service of the United States or of Australia or to any echelon thereof.

It is therefore apparent that, at this date, the letter from General MacArthur, from which the Minister for Air quotes (in his letter of the 7th February, 1945) is completely irrelevant.

B.

Para 4 of the Minister for Air's letter of the 7th February, 1945, contains, of course, incorrect statement since General Kenney's staff is not the staff of the Fifth Air Force – Fifth Air Force staff is responsible to the Commanding General Fifth Air Force, who is General Whitehead. General Kenney's staff is the staff of Allied Air

Headquarters, which consists of mixed American and Australian staff officers (as indicated in General MacArthur's letter of the 16th January, 1943, extracts of which are quoted on A above.)

Para 5 of the Minister for Air's letter of 7th February, 1945, implies that RAAF Command Headquarters should have moved when Allied Air Headquarters moved from the Australian mainland and that, as a direct result of not making this move, the First Tactical Air Force, RAAF, was transferred to the control of the Fifth Air Force and later to the 13th Air Force. The true facts are:

(a.) RAAF Command, as a subordinate formation of Allied Air Forces, is allotted an area of operational responsibility and the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command is given an operational directive from the Commander, Allied Air Forces. Obviously, in order to operate and control RAAF Command Forces, RAAF Command Headquarters must be physically situated in the most suitable position within its area of responsibility. It was for this reason that I retained RAAF Command Headquarters in Brisbane, with the full approval and concurrence of the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

In any case, there can never be any more justification for RAAF Command Headquarters to be physically alongside Allied Air Force Headquarters than is applicable to Headquarters Fifth Air Force or Headquarters 13th Air Force, or, in fact, to draw a parallel with the Army, for Headquarters 1st Australian Army to be physically alongside Headquarters, Allied Land Forces, SWPA.

RAAF Command is a separate subordinate formation of Allied Air Forces, with its own Headquarters through which the Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command implements the operational directives of the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

Australian interests in the planning stage are safeguarded by periodical conferences between the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and the AOC RAAF Command. The AOC RAAF Command is kept further informed of the trend of thought and preliminary planning ideas of the Commander, Allied Air Forces, through the RAAF members of the staff of Allied Air Headquarters with whom the Commander, Allied Air Forces, has agreed the AOC RAAF Command may correspond directly on all matters affecting the employment of RAAF Command.

Had the Minister been correctly advised, it would have been apparent to him, when he was writing his letter of the 7th February, 1945, that the correct location of the command post of RAAF Command Headquarters is not with Allied Air Headquarters, but with the Advanced Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, during such periods as elements of RAAF Command are operating in support of Australian Military Forces in major offensive operations. At all other times, the command post must be located centrally (from the point of view of communications) within the area of responsibility allotted to the Air

Officer Commanding and that location is on the mainland of Australia. I have always had well in mind the necessity for being prepared to move an Advanced Headquarters out of Australia, if, and when, the Commander, Allied Air Forces, allotted to me an offensive role.

To this end, more than a year ago, I established a mobile Advanced Headquarters, complete with adequate communications facilities, which at that time I thought may be required in connection with possible operations in the Banda Sea area. Those operations, however, did not materialise but I have kept the elements of the Advanced Headquarters in being and, in fact, the personnel for this purpose appear on my current personnel establishment, which, of course, is well known to the Chief of the Air Staff.

(b.) The implication that my failure to move RAAF Command Headquarters forward resulted in the control of the First Tactical Air Force, RAAF, passing to the United States Army Air Forces, is, in fact, a gross misrepresentation which the Minister could not have countenanced had he been correctly advised. The facts are that the operational control of the First Tactical Air Force (and the two previous forms of this formation, ie, No 9 Operational Group and No 10 Operational Group) has never been allotted by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the AOC RAAF Command, but continuously to the present date, has been under the operational control of American Air Forces since the original formation of No 9 Operational Group. It is only recently, as a result of my representations to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, following on the enunciation by the Prime Minister of the Government's policy (see teleprinter message to me from Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 16th September, 1944, copy of which I attach hereto) [*not included*] that the Commander, Allied Air Forces, has decided to allocate First Tactical Air Force for the first time to my operational control. My representations in this regard were made by means of my letter RAAFC 219 of 15th January, 1945, copy of which I attach for your information and in which you will see, at para 6 thereof, that I intend to move the command post of my Headquarters to a location adjacent to the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces.

The Commander, Allied Air Forces, officially concurred with my proposals (with the exception of minor variation in the disposition of No 15 GR/B Squadron) and in consequence of this approval I issued an Operational Instruction (No 46/1945, dated 26th February, 1945) requiring the movement of Advanced Headquarters, RAAF Command, to Morotai to be completed by the 15th March. I selected Morotai because I am advised that that is the location at which the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, proposes to locate his Advanced Headquarters.

C.

Having regard to the true situation, as indicated in 'A' and 'B' above, it is apparent that the Minister's recommendations and observations contained in paras 6 and 7 of his letter under reference are based on incomplete information and a lack of appreciation by his Service advisers of the current operational organisation of Allied Air Forces and the responsibilities and commitments of the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command.

I wish a copy of this memorandum to be attached to the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Defence Committee at which Agendum No 51/1945 is considered.

(See Documents: Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Chairman of the Defence Committee, dated 5th March 1945)

Comment

Bostock's letter to the Chairman of the Defence Committee, while it may be correct in its criticism of some of the statements in the Minister's letter of 7th February, fails to address the key issue, that of the establishment of a full blown RAAF operational command in New Guinea (with himself in command) and the return of operational control of mainland based RAAF activities to the CAS.

The letter also touches on one aspect of the organisation and control of RAAF air operations that often caused confusion, then and since. This was the fact that RAAF Command did not, until May 1945, control the activities of either No 9 Group or No 10 Group/First Tactical Air Force. These were controlled, in the main, by the Fifth Air Force, with Bostock having only a nebulous role as Kenney's point of contact with the RAAF on matters related to their operational employment. [See Chapter 17: *Kenney's Involvement*]

CONSIDERATION BY THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

On 6th March 1945 the Defence Committee, with Air Vice-Marshal Bostock coopted, met to consider the Minister for Air's proposals for RAAF Command. It found that:

... short of the re-integration of the RAAF under one command, the Defence Committee consider that, pending the completion of the impending operations to which the RAAF is now committed in conjunction with the AMF, it would not be advisable to introduce any change into the present organisation, but at the conclusion of these operations, the question of the operational and administrative control of any RAAF expeditionary force should be reviewed in the light of the future commitments of that force.

(See Documents: Defence Committee Minute No 76/1945, dated 6th March 1945)

Comment

The Minister's proposed reorganisation of the RAAF made a great deal of sense. It is, however, of interest that the previous objection to giving Bostock authority over the administrative as well as the operational aspects of his command had now vanished. It also made sense to divide the responsibility for operations in New Guinea and the islands, and including those to the north out of North-Western Area, from those on the Australian mainland, which were concerned mainly with the protection of sea trade.

However, the Minister's timing was bad and the Defence Committee was probably correct to suggest that the matter be held over until the completion of the *Oboe* operations by the First Task Force in Borneo.

20

The Final Chapter

Higher Direction of the Services

By early 1945 the war situation in the Pacific had changed quite markedly since April 1942 when Australia committed its forces to General MacArthur's South-West Pacific Area. MacArthur had moved his General Headquarters to Manila from where his prime attention was focused on the liberation of the Philippines and the forthcoming invasion of the Japanese home islands. While Australia and its forces were still part of his Command, he seemed little interested in using them, except in a garrison role in the New Guinea area and for the scheduled invasion of Japanese held Borneo.

One complication the picture at that time was the imminent return, on a large scale, of British forces, and the desire of General Blamey, and others, to take part in, or even to lead, a British move to regain Singapore and Malaya.

Another important consideration was the strained manpower situation and the consequent reduction in the size of the field forces that Australia could support.

On 28th May 1945 the War Cabinet met to consider 'the alternative possibilities for the command set-up in the South-West Pacific'. The options presented were:

- (i.) Extending the Eastern boundary of the South-East Asia Area to embrace the East Indies.
- (ii.) Creation of a new Area to include Japanese occupied islands in the South-West Pacific Area south of the Philippines.
- (iii.) Continuation of the present Command set-up.

The meeting then went on to consider and adopt a set of policy objectives:

2. The important consideration from the Australian viewpoint is the future assignment of our Forces. Reference has been made earlier to the importance of the Australian war effort guaranteeing the Commonwealth an effective voice in the peace settlement. The following reasons were noted in support of continuing to be associated with the forward movement against Japan under General MacArthur:

- (i.) Australia received considerable aid from the United States when this country was in grave danger of attack. It would probably

be the desire of the Australian people that their forces should fight alongside the Americans to the end of the war as a cooperative expression of their gratitude. The American people would no doubt appreciate the spirit promoting such a desire, and it should do much to strengthen future Australian-American relations which are of paramount importance from the aspect of security in the post-war period.

(ii.) The Australian Forces have fought with the Americans since 1942 and formed bonds of comradeship. General Blamey says that the slogan 'on to Tokyo' reflects the desire of the Australian Forces to be associated with the forward offensive.

(iii.) There have been criticisms that the liquidation of by-passed Japanese Forces is not a worthy effort for our Forces. The reasons for non-participation in the Philippines Campaign have been made clear. But with the American progress towards Japan, the operations against Borneo, the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya have assumed the nature of large-scale mopping-up campaigns. From the aspect of prestige, it is of greater importance to Australia to be associated with the drive to defeat Japan, though, for reasons of British and Australian prestige, it would be desirable to have a token force in the recapture of Malaya, in order to avenge the defeat of 1941.

It is of interest that the Canadians will have a Division with the United States Forces and not with the British Forces.

3. The Commander-in-Chief of the British Pacific Fleet has informed the Prime Minister that if any changes are made in the assignment of the Royal Australian Navy Squadron to the 7th United States Fleet, he would welcome it with the British Pacific Fleet.

4. Mr R G Casey, the Governor of Bengal, and Lieutenant General Gairdner, Mr Churchill's Liaison Officer with General MacArthur, have made enquiries as to the likelihood of the Australian Forces being assigned to the South East Asia Area.

5. It was decided that the undermentioned objectives of policy be adopted. They are to be communicated to Mr Bruce, Mr Forde and Dr Evatt, in conjunction with the discussions on the reduction of the Forces, with a view to discussion in London with the United Kingdom Government, and in Washington with the United States Government and Combined Chiefs of Staff in regard to the set-up in the South-West Pacific Area and the future part to be played by the Australian Forces. They are also to be communicated to General MacArthur for his information and support:

Army

The main force, of a strength to be decided, but consisting of at least one Division and ancillary units, as recommended by General Blamey, to be assigned to General MacArthur for participation in his offensive against Japan.

As recommended by General Blamey, a token force of a strength to be decided to be assigned to the South East Asia Area for association with the forces assigned for the recapture of Singapore, if that is possible.

In addition, there will be the Forces required in New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands, for neutralising or garrison duties.

Navy

Any change in the assignment of the RAN Squadron from the 7th United States Fleet to the British Pacific Fleet to be decided in the light of later information.

From the aspect of Empire cooperation, assignment to the British Pacific Fleet may be desirable if the opportunity offers.

Air Force

The RAAF Tactical Air Force to continue to be assigned to General MacArthur for his forward advance.

It has been proposed that three RAAF Squadrons from overseas be provided as a contribution to the very long range RAF Task Force in the Pacific.

Residual Forces in Australian Territory and Adjacent Waters

That all remaining land and air forces on the Australian mainland and adjacent territory should revert to the Australian authorities. Naval Forces other than the RAN Squadron are already controlled by the Naval Board under the Sea Frontier Command.

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (4217) - Machinery for the Higher Direction of the Services – Future Commands and the Assignment of Australian Forces, dated 28th May 1945)

War Cabinet also directed the Chief of the Air Staff and the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command 'to submit to the Minister for Air their recommendations on machinery for the higher direction of the RAAF to meet the future position now in view and to conform to the principles laid down by the Defence Committee' at its meeting held on 6th March 1945. [*See Chapter 19*].

(See Documents: War Cabinet Minute No (4217A) - Machinery for the Higher Direction of the Services – Army and RAAF, dated 28th May 1945)

Comment

It should have been clear well before May 1945 that the higher command arrangements were badly in need of review. MacArthur's focus was clearly on the path to Japan. The logical move would have been to detach the Australian mainland and New Guinea from the South-West Pacific Area, or, alternatively, to make it a sub-Area, with an Australian operational commander responsible direct to MacArthur. Along with this would have been a need to reallocate Australia's combat forces, some to the force directly under MacArthur, namely those earmarked for the Borneo campaign, and the remainder to the Australia/New Guinea Sub-Area.

Unfortunately, logic tended to run foul of the ambitions of the various military commanders, in particular, MacArthur, Blamey, Jones and Bostock.

In many ways the arrangement as outlined above is in close accord with that proposed by Jones to Drakeford and on to the Government in February 1945. [See Chapter 19]

Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command

The controversy between Air Vice-Marshals Jones and Bostock lasted, without abating, right to the end of the war. The final chapter in this unseemly dispute was over General Kenney's appointment of Bostock as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command. This particular dispute is set out in detail in Air Board Paper No 676/1945.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945)

ALLIED AIR FORCES GENERAL ORDER NO 2

Allied Air Forces General Order No 2 of 25th April 1945 designated 'Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command, AAHQ, SWPA as from 25th April.' On 26th April Bostock advised all subordinate commanders in RAAF Command, and RAAF Headquarters, of the Order.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945, Attachment A)

JONES REACTS

However, it was not for another four weeks, until 22nd May, that there was any reaction from Air Vice-Marshal Jones at RAAF Headquarters, when, in response to a query concerning Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's title from Pacific Echelon, he sent the following signal to Bostock:

Changes in titles of appointments of commanders RAAF formations require approval of the Commonwealth Government and cannot be made without such approval. The proposed designation of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief' is not approved.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945, Attachments B and C)

Then, on 24th May, Jones sent the following signal to RAAF Command and Area Headquarters:

The ultimate authority which decides titles of appointments in RAAF is the Commonwealth Government. The approved title of the officer commanding RAAF Command is quote Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command unquote. No variation of this title to be used throughout the RAAF until approved by the Government and promulgated by RAAF HQ.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945, Attachment D)

BOSTOCK IS DEFIANT

On 25th May Air Vice-Marshal Bostock responded with the following defiant message:

For direction of Air Officers Commanding Formations of RAAF Command, Allied Air Forces SWPA, RAAF Command is a formation designated by the Commander Allied Air Forces and not by RAAF Headquarters. The previous title of 'Air Officer Commanding' was designated by the Commander Allied Air Forces in Headquarters Allied Air Forces General Orders Number 47 and 53 of 5 and 21 Sep 1942 respectively. [See Chapter 13] The appointment was not made by RAAF Headquarters. By Headquarters Allied Air Forces General Order Number 2 of 1945 the Commander Allied Air Forces has changed the designation of the officer who commands RAAF Command Allied Air Forces to 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief'. The appointment of the officer who commands RAAF Command Allied Air Forces, his titles and responsibilities, are not matters which concern RAAF Headquarters. The title 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief' is therefore to be used in all references to the officer who commands RAAF Command Allied Air Forces until such time as a change in that title is authorised by the Commander Allied Air Forces through Headquarters Allied Air Forces General Orders. The Chief of the Air Staff has no authority to countermand the orders of the Commanding General Allied Air Forces.

(See Documents: Air Board Paper 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945, Attachment E)

AIR BOARD ACTION

On 26th May the Air Board met and approved the following minute to the Minister for Air setting out all of the arguments why the matter of the title of the head of RAAF Command was a matter for determination by Australian authorities and not by the Commander, Allied Air Forces:

The Chief of the Air Staff placed before the Board a series of signals, copies of which are at Attachments A, B, C, D and E to this Minute [*See above*], relating to the use by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock of the title, 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command, AAHQ, SWPA.

For the following reasons, the Board considers that the issues raised by these signals involve fundamental questions affecting the constitution of the RAAF, 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.

By Minute 2127 dated 28th April, 1942,¹ War Cabinet interpreted the above Assignment as vesting in the Commander of the Allied Air Forces operational control of RAAF Service squadrons and the necessary operational headquarters, but affirmed that the Australian Chief of the Air Staff would be responsible for all matters associated with RAAF personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings and training. War Cabinet directed that those functions were not assigned to the Commander-in-Chief.

By Air Force Regulation 26, it is provided that the Air Board shall, subject to such regulations and to the policy laid down by the Minister, be charged with the control and administration of the Air Force.

The powers of the Minister and the Air Board over the control and administration of the RAAF and its personnel remain, therefore, unaffected except to the extent provided in the Assignment to the Commander-in-Chief as interpreted in the abovementioned War Cabinet Minute whereby his directions, within the terms of the directive, would be treated as directions of the Commonwealth Government. The letter from the Minister for Defence to the Commander-in-Chief dated 17th April, 1942, refers in this regard.

The Board also desires to refer to the document entitled 'Changes in Machinery for Higher Direction of War' issued by the Minister for Defence in which it is directed that questions of higher Australian

¹ For the detail of War Cabinet Minute No (2127) see Documents: Chapter 10.

Defence Policy and important subjects, such as the strength and organisation of the Forces and appointments to higher posts are to be submitted to War Cabinet through the Minister for Defence.

The statement contained in RAAF Command Signal A915 dated 25th May at Attachment E [*See above*] that 'RAAF Command is a formation designated by the Commander Allied Air Forces and not by RAAF Headquarters', and that 'the previous title of 'Air Officer Commanding' was designated by the Commander Allied Air Forces in Headquarters Allied Air Forces General Order Numbers 47 and 53 of 5th and 21st September, 1942, respectively [*See Chapter 13*]. The appointment was not made by RAAF Headquarters', are the Board considers constitutionally and factually incorrect. By Air Force Confidential Order A44/43 [*See Chapter 15*], the Air Board, pursuant to powers conferred by the abovementioned Air Force Regulations, constituted Headquarters RAAF Command as a separate air force unit to be administered directly by Air Force Headquarters, and subsequently posted Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to fill the appointment of Air Officer Commanding that unit.

In view of the foregoing, the Board considers that the change of title of the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, which is an independent RAAF unit directly administered by Air Force Headquarters, is a matter which falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Minister for Defence, the Minister for Air and the Air Board. It is considered to be a pure matter of organisation and administration, and not to fall within the proper definition of 'operational control' within the meaning of the Commander-in-Chief's directive. The latter term is defined in 'Joint Organization and Maintenance (United States)', American Confidential Publication No SD 348, issued by Air Ministry in February 1942, as meaning 'the functions of prescribing initially and continuously the details of tactical missions and operations to be carried out by Forces and by any and all elements of those Forces, together with modifications thereof, without the responsibility or authority for controlling matters of administration, discipline or statutory authority or responsibility for such matters as promotion, transfer, relief and assignment of personnel.' This view is confirmed by the Commander-in-Chief's letter to the Prime Minister dated 4th September, 1942 [*See Chapter 13*], in which he states, *inter alia*, in connection with the formation of the Fifth American Air Force and the operation of RAAF units therewith, 'It will be noted in this organisation that no essential change is contemplated. It is not proposed to request that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be named to command RAAF units. Command will rest, as at present, with the Chief of the Air Staff. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock will merely exercise operational control of certain US and RAAF units assigned to the Allied Air Forces which are performing a special function. He will remain at Headquarters, Allied Air Forces, utilising the operations, intelligence and communications facilities now existing,

thus avoiding duplication and increase in overhead. Eventually, upon withdrawal of the Fifth Air Force the RAAF elements in the Coastal Defence Command (now RAAF Command) and in Allied Air Force Headquarters will remain as operational headquarters, thus avoiding even temporary dislocation of RAAF functions. Its disposition will, of course, then rest with the RAAF.

The Board, therefore, considers that any such change in title is entirely a matter for the appropriate Australian authorities, namely the Air Board, the Minister for Air and the Minister for Defence, and that the action of the Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, in issuing the signals at Attachments A and E [*See above*] is unauthorised and unconstitutional. 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 therefore.

In view of the foregoing circumstances, the Board has decided to direct Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to cancel the signals at Attachments A and E forthwith upon receipt by him of the Board's direction in this regard.

At Attachment F [*See below*] hereto is a copy of the direction the Board proposes to issue to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock which is submitted for the prior approval of the Minister.

The Minister for Air subsequently approved the following message from the Secretary to the Air Board, which was handed to Bostock in Brisbane on 29th May:

I am directed by the Air Board to refer to RAAF Command Signals A286 dated 26th April, 1945, and A915 dated 25th May, 1945, respectively.

I am to advise that the Air Board directs you to despatch to each of the addresses of the abovementioned signals in the following terms, namely, 'Secret. My signals A286 April 26 and A915 May 25 are hereby cancelled and no further action is to be taken thereon. Title AOC RAAF Command remains as promulgated in paragraph 5 AFCO A44 of 1943.

I am also advised that the Air Board directs you to despatch the abovementioned signal forthwith upon receipt of this letter, and to acknowledge receipt of this letter immediately after the despatch of such signals by letter addressed to Air Force Headquarters and containing the reference number and date of such signal.

BOSTOCK REMAINS DEFIANT

On 30th May Bostock replied: '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, SWPA.' He defiantly signed the signal: 'W D Bostock, Air Vice-Marshal, Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, RAAF Command, AAF, SWPA'.

AIR BOARD REACTION

In the face of Bostock's defiance, the Air Board met again on 31st May and drafted yet another minute to the Minister for Air. After detailing the text of the latest messages between Bostock and the Board, the minute went on:

4. The grounds upon which such refusal is based are twofold, viz – that his appointment as a subordinate commander was made by the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and that in such capacity he is unable to countermand the orders of the Commanding General of the Allied Air Forces, SWPA. Both those grounds are completely baseless in as much as his appointment was made by the Air Board pursuant to its powers under AFRs and the direction was not the countermanding of any orders issued by the Commanding General, Allied Air Forces, SWPA, but to cancel two signals issued by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to RAAF commands.

5. Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's action in refusing to comply with the terms of the abovementioned direction constitutes 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.

6. Such action may take one of two forms, viz:
(a.) disciplinary action in accordance with normal procedure based on the refusal to comply with the Air Board's direction, or
(b.) administrative action, likewise based on such refusal.

7. Disciplinary action would, on account of the rank and seniority of the officer concerned, present serious practical difficulties in the way of bringing him to the jurisdiction of a court martial, placing him under arrest should he persist in refusing to comply with lawfully authorised directions, and in obtaining officers of rank and seniority appropriate to compose a court for the trial of an officer holding the substantive rank of Air Vice-Marshal. It is to be appreciated that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock is the senior of the RAAF in Australia in rank and seniority and that such status causes serious practical difficulties both in administering orders to him and enforcing compliance therewith. Although such difficulties could be overcome, the Board considers that the desired result could be achieved more expeditiously and expediently by resorting to administrative action.

8. The Air Board may, subject only to the approval of the Minister and the Minister for Defence in the case of certain senior officers at any time remove an officer from his command. Furthermore, under AFR 72 an officer holds his appointment during the pleasure of the Governor-General and such appointment may be terminated for cause after he has been notified in writing of any complaint made against him and he has been given an opportunity of showing cause against such action.

9. 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 AOC, Headquarters, RAAF Command. The Board considers that conduct of such a nature by an officer of such rank and holding such an appointment in accordance with the provisions of AFR 72 unless when called upon to show cause against such action he can establish facts or circumstances in mitigation of his conduct which would justify the withholding of such action.

10. After full consideration of all the facts, the Board considers that it is essential in the Service interests and to maintain the authority of lawfully constituted higher authority, which has been seriously undermined throughout the Service by the signals issued by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock, that he should be immediately removed from the appointment of AOC, Headquarters, RAAF Command, and called upon, in accordance with the provisions of AFR 72 to show cause why his appointment as an officer of the RAAF should not be terminated.

11. The Board accordingly submits the action proposed in the preceding paragraph of this minute for the approval of the Minister.

12. Following upon the approval of the Minister to the course proposed by the Board it will become necessary to give effect thereto through normal Service channels which is the appropriate means of giving effect to Ministerial or Governmental direction insofar as they may affect a particular officer.

Comment

It is of interest to note at this point the reference in the above Air Board minute to Bostock as 'AOC, Headquarters, RAAF Command'. Even at this stage Jones was still unwilling to recognise RAAF Command as a formation within the RAAF, or Bostock as other than the commander of a headquarters. As far as Jones was concerned Headquarters RAAF Command was a headquarters without subordinate formations and units, somewhat akin to Overseas Headquarters, which also had no subordinate formations and units.

FURTHER DIRECTION FROM THE MINISTER

Mr Drakeford, after discussing the matter with the Acting Minister for Defence, Mr Beasley, and Secretary, Department of Defence, Sir Frederick Shedden, declined to take the action against Air Vice-Marshal Bostock that had been urged upon him by the Air Board, and instead directed that Bostock be ordered 'to comply forthwith with the directions contained in Air Board memorandum dated 29.5.45, No SAS 4296.' In response, the Secretary to the Air Board handed the following message to Bostock on 1st June:

I am directed to advise that the direction contained in Air Board Memorandum dated 29th May 1945, No SAS 4296 concerning RAAF Command signals A286 dated 26th April and A915 dated 25th May 1945 respectively and your reply vide your memorandum dated 30th May 1945 have been discussed with the Minister for Air who has directed the Air Board to direct you to comply forthwith with the directions contained in Air Board memorandum under reference above.

In pursuance of such Ministerial directions, the Air Board now directs you to take action accordingly.

I am to request that you acknowledge receipt of this memorandum immediately. While you are in Melbourne the necessary facilities will be available to you to comply with the direction contained in this memorandum.

In response, Bostock immediately sent the following message to all subordinate formations:

From AOC RAAF Command. By direction of the Minister for Air my signals A286 26 Apr and A915 23 May are hereby cancelled and no further action is to be taken thereon. Title AOC RAAF Command remains as promulgated paragraph 5 AFCO A44 of 1943.

Bostock's reply did not, however, satisfy Jones who, that same evening, convened a further meeting of the Air Board. Flowing from that meeting yet another message was sent to Bostock:

For AOC from Secretary, Air Board. The signal C427 despatched by you today pursuant to Air Board Memorandum SAS 4422 dated 1st June 1945 does not repeat not comply with Air Board's direction contained therein as your signal includes the words quote by direction of Minister for Air unquote. The Air Board therefore directs you to despatch forthwith to all addressees a signal worded as follows quote Secret by direction of the Air Board my signals A286 April 26 and A915 May 25 are hereby cancelled and no further action is to be taken thereon. Title AOC RAAF Command remains as promulgated in paragraph 5 AFCO A44 of 1943. This cancels my C427 dated 1 June unquote.

REQUEST TO MACARTHUR

Also on 1st June Mr Drakeford wrote formally to Mr Beasley as Acting Minister for Defence, setting out the facts of the case and asking him to write to General MacArthur pointing out that the act of appointing Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief' was outside his authority and to ask that AAHQ General Order No 2 be withdrawn.

(See Documents: Letter from the Minister for Air to the Acting Minister for Defence, dated 1st June 1945)

On 20th June Mr Beasley advised Mr Drakeford that a letter as requested had been sent by him to General MacArthur. There is, however, no record of any reply or of any action taken to cancel AAHQ General Order No 2.

BOSTOCK APPEALS TO THE MINISTER

On 2nd June, following receipt of this latest message from the Air Board, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock sought to appeal to the Minister for Defence with the following message to the Minister for Air:

I wish to appeal to the Minister for Defence against the instruction contained in Air Board signal C428 1 June on the grounds that:

- (a.) my signal C 427 1 June complies fully with instructions given to me by Minister for Air personally and is in accordance with the instructions contained in Air Board letter SAS 4422 of 1 June, and
- (b.) the direction contained in 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.

On 5th June, Bostock sent a further message to the Minister for Air:

Further to my signal [of] 2 June. Lack of guidance and direction from you is forcing me into a difficult and unfair position. Request you reply to the following questions: (a) Has my appeal been placed before the Minister for Defence. (b) Do you direct me to comply with the instructions contained in Air Board signal C 428 June 1.

AIR BOARD ALSO APPEALS TO THE MINISTER

In the meantime, the Air Board had met on 4th June and had made its own appeal to the Minister for Air. After detailing the latest messages, the Board's minute went on:

Summarised, therefore, the position is that following upon discussions by the Chief of the Air Staff with the Acting Minister for Defence and the Minister for Air, Air Board memorandum No SAS 4422 dated 1st June, 1945, was delivered to Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to give him a final chance of complying with the Board's directions.

The signal despatched by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock after delivery to him of such memorandum:

- (a.) did not comply with the Board's direction as is obvious from a comparison of the terms of such signal with that he was directed to despatch; and
- (b.) aggravates his prior attitude of denying his responsibility to the Air Board in that the insertion by him of the words 'by direction of the Minister for Air' was clearly designed to reiterate to the Air Force commanders to whom it was addressed that his responsibility was not to the Air Board even if it was to the Minister for Air.

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's failure to take advantage of the further opportunity given him of acknowledging his responsibility to the lawfully constituted authority can be regarded in no other light than persistence in his former attitude. This action and persistence which are now widely known throughout Air Force Commands by virtue of the signals of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock places the Air Board in an intolerable position from a disciplinary point of view. The Board is therefore left with no alternative – particularly having regard to his failure to comply with its last direction – other than to endorse the submission made in paragraph 10 of its minute of 31st May, 1945, namely, that he be relieved of his appointment of Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command, and called upon to show cause why his appointment as an officer of the RAAF should not be terminated.

The Board further recommends that Air Commodore F M Bladin, CBE, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, be appointed Air Officer Commanding RAAF Command temporarily, and that approval be given urgently to his appointment to enable him to take over from Air Vice-Marshal Bostock at the earliest practicable date so as to ensure the smooth conduct of pending operations.

In order to ensure compliance by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock with Service directions which it will become necessary to issue following upon the Minister's approval of the recommendations contained in this minute, the Board also recommends that the acting rank of Air Marshal be granted to the Chief of the Air Staff. The Board considers such action essential to ensure that the Government's decision and the Board's direction issued in implementation thereof will be carried out. Unless this action is taken, a further insistence by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock upon his former 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 RAAF in Australia.

DIRECTION FROM THE MINISTER

After further discussion with his political colleagues, and the Secretary, Department of Defence, Mr Drakeford declined to accept the Air Board's advice that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be dismissed from his post as AOC, RAAF Command. In lieu he sent a strongly worded message to Bostock on 5th June advising him that he had 'no right of appeal to the Minister for Defence' and that his request for an interview was not agreed. He also told Bostock: 'It is your duty to comply with the orders of the Air Board which is your superior authority and you should report to it immediately you have taken action strictly in accordance with' the Air Board message of 1st June [*See above*].

FURTHER APPEAL FROM THE AIR BOARD

The following day, 6th June, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock complied with the Minister for Air's directive and sent out the signal worded precisely as required by the Air Board. This, however, was not enough for the Board, who on 8th June, after advising the Minister of Bostock's compliance went on:

Notwithstanding Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's belated compliance with the Air Board's direction, his earlier persistently maintained attitude of disobedience and defiance, which was communicated by him to all RAAF area commanders, renders his prompt removal from his present appointment essential in the opinion of the Air Board for the smooth and efficient functioning of the RAAF.

In the view of the Board, such action is necessary:

- (a.) To nullify the hostility which has inevitably developed in Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's Headquarters towards the superior authority, namely, Air Board, and which can only be dispelled by the installation of a new commander with a proper appreciation of his responsibilities to higher authority. Such hostility, which has long been evident to Air Force Headquarters and the subject of open discussion throughout the Service, cannot fail to be heightened by the present unfortunate controversy.
- (b.) To safeguard the smooth conduct of operations which could be seriously prejudiced by disaffection and disloyalty to higher authority resulting from the continuance of such hostility.
- (c.) To counteract the loss of confidence and respect which area commanders must have experienced in Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's judgment and direction as a result of his conduct.
- (d.) To preserve the authority of, and respect for, the Air Board by demonstrating to the Service its determination to enforce discipline impartially and irrespective of the rank of the offender.

For the foregoing reasons, the Board submits its former recommendation that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock be relieved of his appointment of AOC Headquarters RAAF Command and that Air Commodore Bladin, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, be appointed to succeed him.

THE MINISTER AGAIN DECLINES TO ACT

In answer to the Air Board's latest recommendation that Bostock be relieved as AOC, RAAF Command, Mr Drakeford again declined to act. In a minute to the Board dated 19th June he said, *inter alia*:

I have discussed with the Acting Prime Minister and Acting Minister for Defence the latest developments, when it was decided that, as Air Vice-Marshal Bostock did finally give effect to Air Board instructions *vide* signal C428 1/6, no further action should be taken at this stage.

Comment

The 'AOC-in-C, RAAF Command' incident took the Jones/Bostock controversy to the heights of the ridiculous. It is no wonder that Drakeford declined to accept the Air Board's very strong recommendation that Bostock be relieved of his command and his commission because of his defiant attitude over what was, in effect, a somewhat trivial issue. To have taken such an action would have made the RAAF a laughing stock, especially as it would no doubt have brought certainly Kenney, and possibly MacArthur, publicly to Bostock's aid. The subsequent reaction of the Australian public to such an imbroglio can only be imagined.

Clearly, Bostock was wrong in taking on the title of AOC-in-C in the first place without the nod of approval of the Australian Government. That he had to make an embarrassing backdown was entirely his own fault. On the other hand, suggestions of court martial and/or dismissal were quite unwarranted, and had more to do with Jones' by then paranoid dislike of Bostock. Likewise, Jones' action in forcing Bostock to grovel before the rest of the Air Force was an act of pure spite.

CONFERENCE WITH AIR AND OTHER OFFICERS COMMANDING

At a conference with Air and other Officers Commanding held in Melbourne on 8th June 1945, the Chief of the Air Staff addressed the conference on 'Authority for exercising higher control and command of the RAAF'.²

In view of a recent misunderstanding regarding the authority and responsibility of the Air Board in regard to the control of those elements of the RAAF assigned to the Supreme Commander, SWPA, CAS directed the attention of air and other officers commanding to the importance of a proper understanding of the position.

² National Archives of Australia, AA1969/100, Item 337/1C, 5B, Notes of CAS Conference of AOCs at Victoria Barracks on Friday 8th June 1945, sub-paragraph 1(f).

It should be clearly understood that by statutory authority the Air Board was in all respects the highest authority in regard to the command and control of the whole of the RAAF.

The operational control delegated to the Supreme Commander, SWPA (and through him to subordinate Allied authorities) was defined at paragraph 3, section 1 of SD 348 in the following terms which applied to the RAAF:

The term operational control is understood and employed to mean the functions of prescribing initially and continuously, the details of tactical missions and operations carried out by forces and by any and all elements of those forces, together with modifications thereof, without the responsibility or authority for controlling matters of administration, discipline or statutory authority or responsibility for such matters as promotion, transfer, relief and assignment of personnel.

The orders issued by the Supreme Commander, SWPA, (and the subordinate Allied authorities) for the purpose of exercising operational control were deemed to be accepted by the RAAF Commands concerned as proceeding from the Commonwealth Government through the Air Board. Where a conflict in orders occurred the orders of the Air Board would prevail.

Comment

Once again Jones' claim that the Air Board was 'in all respects the highest authority' for the control of the RAAF ignored the superior authority of the Minister and the Government.

The definition of 'operational control' as quoted by Jones, while it may have been the official authorised definition in place at that time, is not a very good definition of MacArthur's authority. Clearly, he was responsible for more than 'tactical missions and operations'. Also, while he had no authority in relation to the particular administrative matters mentioned in the official definition, he did exert considerable influence on a range of administrative matters, including the posting of senior personnel within the Allied command structure.

It should also be kept in mind that at the time of the initial assignment of forces to MacArthur, there was no agreed definition of 'operational control'. Indeed, had the definition quoted above been in place, it is doubtful that it would have been used to describe what was originally intended in the assignment of forces to MacArthur.

It is a feature of MacArthur's tenure as C-in-C, SWPA, that he pushed the boundaries of 'operational control' to meet what he saw as necessary for the prosecution of his campaign. On the other hand, Jones strove continually to limit 'operational control' and to define its boundaries as narrowly as he could get away with.

Finally, it is of interest to note that Bostock did not attend this particular conference, and was possibly not invited, but he was sent a copy of its proceedings. However, at the time both he and the AOC First Tactical Air Force, who also did not attend, were rather busy with operations in Borneo.



Air Vice-Marshal George Jones, Chief of the Air Staff (left) and General George Kenney, Commander, Allied Air Forces, Manila, July 1945

[RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

NO 11 GROUP

The last major change to the higher organisation of the RAAF during the Second World War came on 30th July 1945 with the formation of No 11 Group at Morotai. The Group was commanded by Air Commodore R J Brownell and had the task of garrison operations within its quite extensive area of responsibility. It was thus able to free First Tactical Air Force of much of its administrative tail. Unlike its two predecessors, it did not carry the designation '(Operational)'.

Comment

The formation of No 11 Group was a logical, if somewhat belated, move. It was, as its title indicated, a static not a mobile formation. Ideally, it should have been formed at the same time as the separation of First Tactical Air Force, or No 10 Group as it then was, from Northern Command. Quite clearly, with no line of communication organisation to support it, First Tactical Air Force would inevitably acquire static units, which would in turn reduce its mobility, as happened, and as had happened earlier with No 9 Group. Unfortunately, the dispute, and divided control, between Jones and Bostock blocked any chance of coming up with an effective organisational plan.

END OF THE WAR

With the formal end of the war on 2nd September 1945 came the disbandment of General MacArthur's South-West Pacific Area Command and the return of Australian forces to full national command. On 30th August, the Advisory War Council recommended that:

Following on the termination, as from 2nd September, 1945, of the existence of the South-West Pacific Command, as notified by General MacArthur in General Headquarters Order No 41 dated 28th August, control of the combat sections of the Australian Defence Forces which were assigned to the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area in April 1942, should revert to the following authorities as from 1200 hours on 2nd September, 1945.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Royal Australian Navy | to the Naval Board |
| Australian Military Forces | to the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces |
| Royal Australian Air Force | to the Air Board |

Joint Service matters will be dealt with through the Joint Service Machinery of the Department of Defence.

(See Documents: Advisory War Council Minute No (1611) Agenda No 39/1945 – Command of Australian Forces, dated 30th August 1945)

This recommendation was subsequently taken as the decision of the War Cabinet in Minute No (4399).

With this act the Air Board regained full control over RAAF Command and its commander, Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock. While in the war the Allies clearly defeated Japan, in the Jones/Bostock controversy both sides lost, and lost badly.

21

Postscript

Shortly after being compulsorily retired from the Royal Australian Air Force, along with several other senior officers, in June 1946, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock was employed by *The Herald* newspaper in Melbourne as its Special Aviation Correspondent.

Bostock 'opened his account' with *The Herald* with a series of four articles alleging gross maladministration in the wartime RAAF and attacking the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, for his part in it. He then called for a 'searching and independent inquiry into RAAF administrative weaknesses'.

Bostock's articles, which appeared between 22nd and 26th June, made the following points [*with comment in italics*]:

- An inquiry was needed into the 'muddled system of control which caused inefficiency and appalling waste of effort during the most critical stages of the recent war' before the Federal Cabinet made any decision on the 'size, composition and functions of Australia's permanent Air Force'.

[Linking the early post-war organisation and circumstances of the RAAF with the system which applied during the Pacific War, is at best questionable. Clearly, Bostock was more concerned with vindicating his own wartime exploits than he was with the set-up of the post-war RAAF.]

- The RAAF fought the Japanese in the South-West Pacific Area under a handicap unprecedented in military history. The organisation forced on the service by men completely out of touch with operational requirements was dangerous and impracticable. By dividing responsibility, the Minister and the Air Board caused problems which should never have existed.
- Although RAAF Headquarters had no operational responsibility, it retained administrative control. Lack of knowledge of field requirements led to confusion, arguments and delay. Frequently, it took Melbourne headquarters months to meet urgent requests, but the Minister always refused to give the operational commander adequate authority over administrative maintenance and supply organisations.
- The basic cause of most of the RAAF's difficulties in the Pacific War was a difference of interpretation between the Minister for Air, Mr Drakeford, and the then CAS, Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, of the War Cabinet direction on the assignment of RAAF units to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, Lieutenant General Brett. First came Sir Charles Burnett's interpretation:

It was agreed at War Cabinet on April 28, 1942 that the interpretation of 'assignment of the Australian Air Force' means that all operational units of the RAAF, **including the headquarters concerned with such units and the administration, maintenance and supply organisation to keep the operational units at their maximum efficiency**, should come under the direct control of the Commander, Allied Air Forces.

The training organisation, embracing the Empire Training Scheme, and the administration of all RAAF personnel and recruiting will remain the direct responsibility of the Chief of the Australian Air Force.

Then came Mr Drakeford's interpretation:

But Mr Drakeford put an entirely different construction on War Cabinet's ruling. He said that it meant the 'fullest cooperation' for Lieutenant General Brett, but **'retention by RAAF Headquarters of all matters such as personnel, provision and maintenance of aircraft, supply and equipment, works and buildings and training all the RAAF'**.

In both quotations: the words printed in black type are important because the interpretation of the Minister for Air, who knew nothing about the realities of war, differed essentially from that of an Air Chief Marshal of long experience in operational requirements. And that difference was the basic cause of most of the RAAF's difficulties in the Pacific War.

[Unfortunately, Bostock was either unaware of the full story or was quoting selectively to support his own case. The full story is set out in Chapter 10.]

- On the question of the appointment of Air Vice-Marshal Jones to succeed Sir Charles Burnett, Bostock had this to say:

About this time, Sir Charles Burnett's term as Chief of the Air Staff ended. Attempts were made to obtain another RAF officer to succeed him, but, with Britain heavily involved in Europe, negotiations failed.

Cabinet then decided that, as operational control of the RAAF was in General Brett's hands and major responsibility of RAAF Headquarters would be development of the Empire Air Training Scheme, it should appoint the Director of Training – Group Captain George Jones. I was senior to Jones on the RAAF list but the Prime Minister had already appointed me Chief of Staff to General Brett. In any case Jones's appointment to a job largely concerned with training was logical.

[Bostock's reference to Jones as a Group Captain, although technically correct, is a deliberate distortion of the situation at that time. Jones was then an acting Air Commodore, and had been so for some time. He had also moved from the post of Director of Training to that of Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment. The detail of the circumstances leading to Jones' appointment as CAS is set out in Chapter 11]

- When General Kenney succeeded General Brett in mid-1942; 'he grouped his American squadrons into one organisation - Fifth US Air Force - and proposed something similar for other units of my command, so that he could issue directions through only two commanders, responsible directly to him'.

The reaction of RAAF Headquarters, Melbourne, was surprising. Mr Drakeford and Air Vice-Marshal Jones approached General Kenney with a proposition that all RAAF personnel assigned to the Allied Air Forces during the most critical period should revert to RAAF headquarters control and that I should become Vice Chief of the Air Staff, responsible to that headquarters for administrative matters and to General Kenney for operations.

General Kenney regarded this as impracticable as I would have been responsible to two authorities thousands of miles apart. He rejected the proposal and announced that he intended grouping under one command all RAAF units made available to General MacArthur making me the Air Officer Commanding that organisation.'

[The detail of the reorganisation of the Allied Air Forces instituted by General Kenney is set out in Chapter 13.]

- After General Kenney established RAAF Command, in September 1942, 'Mr Curtin accepted this new arrangement, but both Mr Drakeford and Air Vice-Marshal Jones withheld recognition' and continued to do so for some time, thus 'causing confusion and bewilderment throughout the RAAF's combat units'.

Bostock asked 'for a clear definition of the functions of RAAF Command and the Air Board'. In reply Jones advised that: 'No administrative action has been taken by this headquarters to form RAAF Command as a RAAF formation because the decision was not concurred in by this headquarters or the Minister for Air'. In lieu 'it was intended to set up in Melbourne a RAAF Directorate of Operations, Communications and Intelligence virtually to supervise RAAF Command activities'.

This meant, in the last analysis, that a director of the RAAF in Melbourne would also have been commander in the field. General Kenney spurned the idea, but I had to tell him that I doubted whether I could carry on to his satisfaction under the highly unsatisfactory Air Board System which denied me essential functions.

[The detail of the struggle for the recognition of RAAF Command as an RAAF formation is set out in Chapters 14 and 15.]

- During the ensuing years RAAF headquarters tried consistently to take operational responsibilities which were never intended to be its concern and about which it had little first-hand information. And it worked hard on Mr Drakeford's interpretation of the division of responsibility - an amateurish ruling which meant

that operational command could not have efficient administration and must rely for administrative, maintenance and supply requirements on a commander with no operational responsibility.

- The following is a list of specific accusations of mismanagement by the Air Board that need to be answered:

1. Why was RAAF headquarters, Melbourne, allowed to modify equipment for newly-acquired Liberators (in spite of the clearest statement of requirements from my headquarters) with a result that the first three squadrons of this type were unable to perform to the best advantage the role allotted to them?

2. What was the reason for the slow and unsatisfactory training of units formed for the offensive of 1945?

3. Why was it that in March 1945 staff officers of my headquarters found that virtually nothing had been done in Melbourne about the formation of an Attack Wing required for the Borneo operations, although an urgent request for its establishment had been submitted six months before? And why was it that some directors at headquarters had not even been informed of the matter?

4. Why was an inadequate and inefficient fighter control organisation forced on RAAF Command in spite of urgent appeals to the Minister for Air?

5. Why was RAAF headquarters allowed to set up a Directorate of Operational Requirements - absorbing 27 highly trained officers, with comparable supporting staff - although that headquarters had no operational function?

6. Why did it take more than 12 months to provide air-strips at Higgins, Melville Bay, Gove, Truscott, Noonkanbah and other places?

7. Why did RAAF headquarters fail to prepare in time a fighter squadron strip in the north-west of Western Australia although it had been given four months' notice of the projected arrival date for the squadron, which was to protect an Allied submarine base?

- The following is a list of 'restrictions and obstructions' imposed on Bostock by the Air Board:

1. On March 15, 1943 the Chief of the Air Staff issued an order forbidding formations within my own command to communicate direct with me on matters regarding the state of supply, personnel, works, maintenance and organisation 'unless they relate to important administrative matters having immediate effect on operations.' (I requested cancellation of this order on the ground

that it was unnecessary and dangerous. The request was never met.)
[See Chapter 15]

2. On April 6, 1943 RAAF Headquarters made an attempt to remove me from my command, to which I had been appointed by the Allied Air Commander in the area and, originally, by Mr Curtin. Without reference previously to General Kenney, it was ordered that I should change places with one of my subordinate commanders, Air Commodore J Hewitt, and become subordinate to him. (The order was not effected after General Kenney had written: 'Such a drastic and important step should have been discussed with this headquarters before being put into effect. It is not properly a matter for unilateral action.') [*Strictly, Hewitt was not Bostock's subordinate at that time; Hewitt was AOC, No 9 Group, which was under the operational control of the Deputy Commander, Fifth Air Force. Also, it was not proposed that Bostock and Hewitt 'change places'. Bostock was to become AOC, North-Western Area. For the detail, see Chapter 15*]

3. In January 1944 RAAF Headquarters issued a manual on radar. This conflicted with one already issued in the zone of operations. My complaints about the secrecy of the Melbourne release was not acknowledged. It was sent back to me.

4. In January 1945 my subordinate formations included five officers with the title of Air Officer Commanding – the same as mine. To prevent confusion, General Kenney ordered that my title should be Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief. Formations were informed, but a month later the Chief of the Air Staff personally signalled all these formations insisting that the new title should not be used. An appeal to Mr Drakeford was ineffective; therefore I signalled all units stating that, by direction of the Minister, the C-in-C title was to be dropped. The Air Board promptly humiliated me by ordering withdrawal of words 'by direction of the Minister' and substitution of the words 'by direction of the Air Board'. [See Chapter 20]

(See Documents: Articles from the Melbourne Herald, dated 22nd, 24th, 25th and 26th June 1946)

At the time Bostock's articles appeared in the press, Mr Drakeford was overseas on business associated with his other portfolio of Civil Aviation. Thus it was not until 10th July that he was able to reply. However, in the meantime others joined the fray, including members of the Federal Opposition.

On 27th June *The Herald* carried a comment by Air Vice-Marshal A T Cole, also recently compulsorily retired, that: '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.' In the same article former Squadron Leader J H Sandford, DSO, DFC [*former CO of No 30 Beaufighter Squadron*] supported Bostock's call for a 'Royal Commission or independent inquiry'. He also supported Bostock's complaints about the Directorate of Operational

Requirements at RAAF Headquarters: 'I was posted to it when I returned from operations and did practically nothing for six months'.

In Federal Parliament the Deputy Leader of the Country Party and former Minister for Air, Mr J McEwen, said that:

Air Vice-Marshal Bostock's articles had simply revealed to the public the deep cleavage in the senior ranks of the RAAF which anybody with any association with the Air Force knew about during the Pacific War, but which suppression by the Government had kept from the people.

The Minister for Air [*Mr Drakeford*] and the Cabinet were well aware of the situation but had taken no steps to remedy it.

There would be no merit in holding a post-mortem now merely for the purpose of assigning blame. But the fact was that the RAAF had been a fighting ground for sections in its senior ranks not merely during the war, but for as long before as anyone could remember. This was a situation which, at all costs, should be eliminated in the peace-time reconstruction.

Former Group Captain T [*later Sir Thomas*] White, now returned to Parliament, supported the call for 'an inquiry by a royal commission or other competent body such as a Parliamentary Select Committee'.

General Blamey, now retired from the Army, also joined the call for an inquiry. *The Herald* of 27th June reported him as saying that: 'The future Air Force efficiency depends on an investigation of the unhappy conditions [*of divided control*] which handicapped and embarrassed operations in the field'. Other comments by Blamey were that: 'Detailed control from Melbourne of RAAF units operating in the islands led to many difficulties which affected land operations' and, that one of the reasons for the trouble was that: 'there was too much interference by politicians and civil staff in Melbourne which should have been excluded completely from any influence in operations'.

Statements by various representatives of ex-service organisations, numerous letters to the editor and editorial comment over the ensuing days all added to the call for an inquiry.

To the basic issue of the wartime administration of the RAAF was added the issues of dissatisfaction over honours and awards granted by the Federal Government for service during the war years and the compulsory early retirement of a large number of senior RAAF officers. In Federal Parliament on 28th June, the Leader of the Country Party, Mr Fadden, called on the Prime Minister, Mr Chifley, to: 'arrange for the inquiry [*into charges of bungling in the wartime administration of the RAAF*] to cover the grounds upon which a number of Air Force officers were retired recently, and the manner in which they were selected for retirement'. In reply Mr Chifley said, in part: 'Both these men [*General Blamey and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock*] feel somewhat aggrieved, and I treat statements from either of them with great caution'.

Understandably, both General Blamey and Air Vice-Marshal Bostock strongly rejected Mr Chifley's comment that their attacks on the wartime administration of the RAAF were motivated by personal grievance. On 3rd July, Bostock, in a further article in *The Herald*, challenged Mr Chifley to publish the transcript of evidence given to

the Barry Commission into the May 1945 troubles within the RAAF's First Tactical Air Force at Morotai.

Although Mr Drakeford was back in Parliament early in July, and subject to immediate questioning about Bostock's allegations, it was not until 10th July that he made a detailed statement to Parliament on the matter. After tabling Commissioner Barry's Report [*but not the transcript of evidence*] he sought 'leave to make a statement'.

In his statement Mr Drakeford made no attempt to answer any of the charges of maladministration made in the Bostock articles. Rather he concentrated on his assertion that he had not misinterpreted the vital War Cabinet decision of April 1942 on the division of responsibilities between the Commander, Allied Air Forces and RAAF Headquarters. On the contrary it was Sir Charles Burnett, and Bostock, who were mistaken. He then quoted the relevant War Cabinet Minute (No 2127 of 28th April 1942) and an extract from his minute to Sir Charles Burnett the following day, which was 'practically word for word' in accordance with the War Cabinet Minute.

The main thrust of Mr Drakeford's argument is set out in the following quote:

As I have already stated, the spearhead of his whole attack is his accusation that the interpretation placed by me on this War Cabinet decision was - I again quote his words - 'The basic cause of most of the Royal Australian Air Force's difficulties in the Pacific war'. It is most unfortunate that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock still obviously accepts Sir Charles Burnett's 'interpretation' of that vitally important War Cabinet decision as the basis of the most vicious phases of his attacks, and disregards the actual official decision which itself is the complete answer to that particular, and his principal, charge. Apart from that fact, his apparent non-acceptance and disregard of the War Cabinet decision shows quite conclusively that Air Vice-Marshal Bostock has, since 1942, been labouring under a definite misconception, which he appears to have fostered to the point of obsession, of the real functions of his command, and that misconception was, to a large extent, responsible for the difficulties that arose between him and the Air Board. I am fully convinced that if Air Vice-Marshal Bostock had observed and given the cooperation involved, whatever difficulties were experienced would have been considerably minimized. The organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, of which he is so critical, has proved efficient in some other services of the Empire, which is a clear indication that the disabilities of the Air Force which are the subject of his attack can, in large measure, be truly attributed to the matter of personalities. His irresponsible and unjust criticisms of others holding high appointments and carrying big responsibilities confirm this.

[The detail of War Cabinet Minute No 2127 and its subsequent interpretation is set out in Chapter 10. Clearly, Drakeford's account of the facts is more accurate than Bostock's and his turning of the point about misunderstanding the War Cabinet's decision against Bostock is quite valid. What is unfortunate is that both Drakeford and Burnett were wrong as to the most suitable division of responsibility in the circumstances. Drakeford was wrong then, and for the remainder of the war, in not allowing the operational commander some control over the more immediate

administrative support of the combat units. At the same time, Burnett was wrong in wanting to pass over all of 'the administration, supply and maintenance organisation' to General Brett.]

Also in his statement, Mr Drakeford tried to turn the Barry Commission finding that: 'the immediate cause of the (troubles) was dissatisfaction with the operational activities of the First Tactical Air Force' against Air Vice-Marshal Bostock by pointing out that RAAF Headquarters was not responsible for operational activities, thus implying that the troubles were all Bostock's fault.

Finally, Drakeford tried to turn against Bostock a claim made by him, in a letter to the Minister in February 1946, that as from the time that he was appointed as Chief of Staff to General Brett, he was responsible only to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, and not to any Australian authority. This Drakeford thought was an indication of a lack of loyalty to Australia and its Government.

[See Documents: Extract from Hansard (for the House of Representatives), dated 10th July 1946]

On 12th July, Air Vice-Marshal Bostock replied, in *The Herald*, refuting the points made by Mr Drakeford in his statement to Parliament and repeating his charges of 'muddling, meddling and inefficiency' in the wartime administration of the RAAF. Also, Mr McEwen in Parliament said that: 'Mr Drakeford had failed completely to answer the specific charges made by Air Vice-Marshal Bostock.'

Bostock answered many of the charges made against him in Drakeford's statement. He countered the point about responsibility for the troubles in the First Tactical Air Force by pointing out that he had only assumed responsibility for that formation 'two or three weeks before' and had shortly thereafter reported the 'dangerously low level to which morale had fallen in First TAF.' Responsibility for this state of affairs rested squarely with the commander (of First TAF) who had been appointed by the Air Board 'in spite of the strongest representations from General Kenney, who was advised by me.'

He also pointed out that, while Drakeford had tabled the Barry Commission report, he had not tabled the transcript of evidence, which, Bostock claimed, amply supported his claims of maladministration.

As to the charge that he had claimed to be responsible to General Kenney, and not any Australian authority, Bostock agreed, but added:

If he [*Drakeford*] had been fair he would have add the words '**for the very good reason that no Australian authority would delegate a tittle of authority to me.**' [*Which was, of course, the very essence of his difficulties as Air Officer Commanding, RAAF Command.*]

[See Documents: Article from the Melbourne Herald, dated 12th July 1946]

Also on 12th July General Kenney, then Commander of the US Pacific Air Command, flew into Brisbane from Guam. He told the press that he found Air Vice-Marshal Bostock to be a 'loyal and courageous colleague.' He added that: 'Whatever departmental fights went on were no concern of mine. All I know is that Bostock and his men gave me absolutely loyal and courageous service'.

After making his statement to Parliament on 10th July Mr Drakeford avoided further comment, notwithstanding further articles in the press criticising the Government's 'dodging of the issue'. One article, in *The Herald* on 9th August speaks about Mr Drakeford's 'side-slipping tactics'.

By mid-August it would seem that the press, the public, and the Parliament alike, had lost interest in the matter. Thereafter, while Bostock continued to write for *The Herald*, his articles were focused on the peacetime development of the RAAF, with only occasional reference to wartime maladministration. The inquiry for which he, and others, called was never held.

Comment on the Bostock Articles

During the period that Bostock's articles were appearing in *The Herald*, Douglas Gillison, the author of Volume One of the official RAAF history of the Second World War, was working as Press Officer to Mr Drakeford. In a set of notes written in 1950 he said that before Mr Drakeford made his statement to Parliament, refuting the Bostock articles, the Secretary of the Department of Air, Mr Langslow, had suggested to him that his statement should include a passage expressing the Government's 'complete confidence' in the Air Board. With some reluctance the Minister agreed.

Later, however, Drakeford told Gillison that he really didn't have confidence in the Air Board. 'They are weak and have done some foolish things' he said. He then went on to give as an example their attempt, in April 1943, to replace Bostock as AOC RAAF Command and post him to Darwin. [See Chapter 15]

Gillison, in his notes, also revealed that, according to Drakeford, there was no meeting of the War Cabinet on 28th April 1942 and that Shedden had produced the minutes in order to give authority to discussions held that day with the Prime Minister. It was the 28th April War Cabinet Meeting that that supposedly approved the detail of the assignment of operational control to the Commander, Allied Air Forces. [See Chapter 10]

(See Documents: Notes by Douglas Gillison, dated 31st March)

Comment

While this series of exchanges contains little that is new, they do summarise the essence of Bostock's case. They also bring to light a new perspective on the controversy between Jones and Bostock: the prominent part played by Drakeford.

Bostock's 1946 attack was directed principally not against Jones, but against Drakeford. Even the Air Board, and RAAF Headquarters, appear to attract more flak than Jones. Certainly, Drakeford was opposed to Bostock well before Jones was appointed as Chief of the Air Staff, in lieu of Bostock. It was Drakeford who thwarted Burnett's scheme for an amalgamation of the RAAF and USAAF (in which Bostock had a strong vested interest) and who stood so strongly against Bostock being appointed as CAS. Thereafter he consistently opposed any grant of authority to Bostock. Even his strong support for Jones, and the Air Board, over Bostock could be seen as being motivated by his strong dislike of Bostock, rather than as support for Jones, per se. Maybe the Jones/Bostock dispute should be re-titled: 'the Drakeford/Bostock dispute.'

Section Four

Conclusion

The Jones/Bostock controversy was long and tedious, both in reality and in its telling. It would rate as a farce were it not for its tragic consequences for the performance and reputation of the Royal Australian Air Force during the war in the South-West Pacific Area. This should have been the RAAF's finest hour, operating as it was in the direct defence of its homeland. As it turned out, the RAAF was left to take a poor second place to the United States Army Air Forces which, under the dynamic leadership of General George Kenney, became the vanguard of General MacArthur's offensive against the Japanese invader, driving the enemy away from Australia's shores, out of New Guinea and on to the Philippines and victory.

In the Overview which concludes this book such judgments as can be made on the rights and the wrongs of the Jones/Bostock controversy are set out for the benefit of the reader. Suffice it to say here that the rights were few and the wrongs were many.

The controversy started in May 1942 with the appointment of then Air Commodore Jones as Chief of the Air Staff and of Air Vice-Marshal Bostock as Chief of Staff to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, Lieutenant General Brett. However, as with most such disputes, it had strands reaching back to the origins of the RAAF itself in its own sea of controversy. To a large extent, the first three Sections are a prelude to Section Four.

For the first four months the controversy lay simmering below the surface. Then came General Kenney with his division of the Allied Air Forces on national lines, and his unilateral formation of RAAF Command and appointment of Bostock as its commander. While this added greatly to Bostock's stature, at the same time it gave Jones the power to frustrate Bostock's endeavours by first denying formal recognition of RAAF Command, then by denying Bostock any say in the administrative support of RAAF Command's operational activities.

With Jones being supported by Drakeford and Bostock by Kenney the controversy raged right up to the end of the war, with the level of acrimony increasing all the time. From time to time both the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, and the Commander-in-Chief, General MacArthur, became involved with poor, harassed Mr Curtin receiving conflicting advice, from his Minister for Air and his military advisers on the one hand and General MacArthur on the other.

The finale came with Bostock's virtual self proclamation as 'Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief'. This in turn led to a serious proposal from the Air Board that he be relieved of his command and that his commission in the RAAF be terminated. Fortunately, reason prevailed at the political level and this outlandish proposal was dropped.

With the end of the Second World War on 2nd September 1945 and the return of full control of the RAAF to the Air Board the controversy came to an abrupt end. However, the war of words continued for a time, erupting into public gaze in mid-1946. Fortunately this episode was brief. Thereafter, the Jones/Bostock controversy became a matter of history.

Overview

INTRODUCTION

The first, and greatest, shortcoming of the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War was the poor quality of its senior leadership. When the war in the Pacific brought Australia into direct contact with the enemy, there was no one available to give the inspired leadership needed to take the RAAF into, and to sustain it, in battle.

The second most significant shortcoming, and one that was related in many ways to the first, was the inappropriateness of the higher organisation of the RAAF to deal with active operations in the conditions of cooperative effort with a major partner, in this case the United States of America.

Having started the Pacific War, as it were, on the wrong foot, the RAAF never recovered, and indeed, many would say, it went even further downhill. The fact that the organisation was wrong was well recognised; unfortunately the senior leadership, both political and military, appeared to have had neither the wit nor the will to correct the situation.

Issues from the Pre-Pacific War Era

CRITICAL DECISIONS

The critical decisions that led to the sorry state of the RAAF as it developed in the South-West Pacific Area were made, not in the early fateful days of the Pacific War, in March and April 1942 when the alliance with the United States Army Air Force was being forged, but in the early days of the war in Europe, between September 1939 and March 1940.

Three critical decisions, all taken by the Government of the day, were:

- a. the cancellation of the Air Expeditionary Force;
- b. the acceptance of Air Vice-Marshal Goble's resignation and the appointment of Air Chief Marshal Burnett of the Royal Air Force as Chief of the Air Staff; and,
- c. the rejection of Goble's proposal for a functionally based higher organisation for the RAAF and the acceptance of Burnett's geographically based higher organisation.

Before explaining why these three decisions were so critical, it is necessary to make a few observations on the Empire Air Training Scheme, which was accepted by the Government in December 1939. The original intention of the Scheme was that Australia would provide partially and fully trained aircrew (pilots, observers and wireless air gunners) for service with the Royal Air Force, in either Europe or the Middle East. These aircrew were to serve where possible in 'Australian squadrons' (the so called Article XV squadrons), but with the RAF providing the aircraft and

supporting services. The early intention was that Australia would supply the necessary ground staff, when they became available. It was also an early hope, only ever realised to a very limited extent, that Australia would also supply the senior officers to command these squadrons and the higher 'Australian' formations that it was hoped would be formed.

Goble's proposal for a six squadron air expeditionary force, which he put to the Government in September 1939 and which, after initial acceptance, was finally rejected in late October 1939, had some features similar to that of the Empire Air Training Scheme. In both cases Australia was to provide aircrew, ground staff and senior commanders, while the RAF was to supply the aircraft and supporting services. While the Air Expeditionary Force was supposedly cancelled so that the RAAF could concentrate on the Empire Air Training Scheme, the two schemes were complementary.

Had the Air Expeditionary Force gone ahead, it could have very readily absorbed the subsequent output of the Empire Air Training Scheme, expanding in size and scope with the ever increasing flow of trained aircrew out of the Scheme. In this way, not only would the Australian identity of its EATS graduates been more readily preserved, its senior officers would have had an increasing opportunity to gain operational command experience.

Also, had the Air Expeditionary Force gone ahead, the RAF would have received its first aircrew from Australia almost twelve months earlier. It was not until the end of April 1940 that the EATS got underway, and not until late December 1940 that the first aircrew arrived in England. Under the Air Expeditionary Force proposal the first squadrons could have arrived in England, or the Middle East, early in 1940.

Whether the RAAF, in late 1939/early 1940, could have supported three major commitments; viz, the Air Expeditionary Force, the Empire Air Training Scheme and the development of the Home Defence Force is a matter of conjecture. For his part Goble believed it could; the Government were not so sure; and, the RAF were lukewarm about the proposed Air Expeditionary Force, preferring that priority be given to 'their' Scheme.

Judging by the subsequent development of the RAAF, which included the dispatch overseas of five squadrons by August 1940, four with aircraft supplied by the RAAF, and with the development of the EATS and the Home Defence Force well on schedule, Goble's judgment on the ability of the RAAF to meet all of its commitments was substantially correct. The major impediment to the development of the RAAF, both then and later, was its inability to acquire the necessary aircraft, and not any inability to obtain and train suitable personnel.

What the Air Expeditionary Force would have provided for the RAAF, and what the Empire Air Training Scheme promised but failed to deliver, was operational command experience for a number of the RAAF's middle rank and senior officers. Such experience was vital for the RAAF on two counts. The first was active experience of modern air fighting that could later be transferred into the preparation of the RAAF in Australia for war. The second was the very nature of such experience as a sure means of rapidly developing war fighting leaders. While the more senior ranks of the RAAF were somewhat lacking, there was at the middle level a significant pool of talent that operational experience could have developed in preparation for rapid advancement. In this way, the RAAF may have been able to break out of the straightjacket of promotion by seniority. Even amongst the senior ranks there may well have been those who could have developed in the crucible of active air operations.

IMPACT OF BURNETT'S APPOINTMENT

It has been generally acknowledged that Air Chief Marshal Burnett was 'an Empire man' who put the interests of the Empire, which for him meant the Royal Air Force, ahead of those of the RAAF. Burnett actively blocked the dispatch of senior RAAF officers overseas to gain operational experience and would not even allow Permanent Air Force officers serving overseas with No 3 Squadron in the Middle East or No 10 Squadron in the United Kingdom to transfer to command positions in Australian EATS squadrons. Had Goble remained as CAS it is certain that he would have pressed the Government and the RAF to allow RAAF officers to command 'Australian' EATS squadrons, and to be given a share of the higher operational appointments.

FUNCTIONAL V GEOGRAPHICALLY BASED COMMANDS

Goble's proposal for the establishment of three functionally-based commands was clearly far preferable to the area system introduced by Burnett. Included in Goble's scheme was an operational command, into which all Home Defence squadrons would have been placed, together with the necessary supporting units. Such a command, had it been in place and functioning in early 1942, would have been an obvious formation to transfer to the operational control of the Allied Air Forces, leaving the training and maintenance commands under direct RAAF control. While the Area system may have been adequate for the needs of 1940 and 1941, and even after December 1941 for local defence, it was not suitable for the overall control of air operations, or for the conduct of offensive operations.

When General Kenney took over command of the Allied Air Forces in August 1942 he immediately took his USAAF forces out of the unwieldy RAAF Area system and placed them into a functional command, whose focus was offensive air operations in New Guinea. The RAAF at the time were supposed to set up a similar organisation to that of the Fifth Air Force, but did not do so. What the RAAF clearly required was an operational command along the lines proposed by Air Vice-Marshal Goble in January 1940.

Furthermore, a single operational command would have enabled attention to be more clearly focused on preparations for the air defence of Australia. With such a focus the RAAF may not have suffered so much as a result of having done 'too little too late' as happened in so many areas. More attention may also have been given to the organisation for operations at the level below the operational command. Thus, for example, as the Japanese threat developed, the logic of separating the direct defence of the country, and its territories, in the north from the defence of trade (mainly around the east, southern and south-western coasts) may well have become obvious.

The strength of the area command set-up within the RAAF at that time can be seen by the unsuccessful attempts to revert to a full area command system, first in October 1943, then again in August 1944. On the other hand, Jones' proposal, in February 1945, for an all inclusive operational command covering the RAAF forces in the islands north of the Australian mainland was an admission of the advantages of a functional command system.

As a postscript on the issue of functional versus geographic commands, it is of interest to note that the early post-war organisation of the RAAF was on functional lines with three commands: Home Command, Training Command and Maintenance Command.

AN OVERSEAS COMMAND

Included in Goble's January 1940 reorganisation proposal was an overseas command headquarters and support base. Such an organisation, along the lines proposed, would certainly have helped to raise the profile of the RAAF's considerable contribution to the war in Europe and the Middle East. In the event it was not until December 1941 that an Overseas Headquarters was established. By then it was too late; the practice of absorption of the RAAF aircrew into the RAF was too well established.

GOBLE V BURNETT

Quite clearly, Goble had his limitations as a Chief of the Air Staff. His handling of his own resignation displayed a lamentable lack of political judgment and the internal fortitude needed to operate in such a post. Nevertheless, his judgment in air matters was sound. It is of interest to note that when Burnett took over as CAS the plans for the implementation of the Empire Air Training Scheme were well in place and were not subsequently altered by Burnett. Furthermore, the 32 Squadron Scheme that took the place of the original 19 Squadron Scheme in June 1940 for the development of the RAAF's Home Defence Force had been developed under Goble's direction and had first been put to Government by him in September 1939.

Two policies that Burnett did introduce were the Area Command system and the virtual blocking of any opportunity for RAAF senior officers to gain operational command experience in other than Nos 3 or 10 Squadrons. Both of these policies were to the detriment of the RAAF. Another innovation introduced by Burnett, that is the Air Board position of Air Member for Organisation and Equipment, was dropped almost immediately after his departure for the eminently more suitable Air Board positions of Maintenance and Engineering, and Supply and Equipment. Indeed, about the only really positive contribution that Burnett made was the introduction of the women's service, which he did against strong political opposition.

On the basis of personal qualities Burnett was probably superior to Goble; but on the basis of the quality of their ideas in relation to the interests of the RAAF, Goble would have won hands down. The great pity is that the Government of the day could not see the need for an Australian focus on the development of the RAAF.

GOBLE V WILLIAMS

The final item in this segment is to consider the relative merits of Goble and Williams. Here the comparison of relative value is much more difficult to make. For his part Williams appears to have been less flexible in his ideas. He seems to have sided with Burnett in his preference for the Area system of commands over the functional, but would have been equally strong as Goble in stressing to both the Government and the RAF the need to retain an Australian identity within the EATS and to obtain operational command experience for senior RAAF officers. On the negative side Williams appears to have been more wedded to the disastrous promotion by seniority system.

RETENTION OF GOBLE

On balance, my view is that Goble could, with a modicum of support by the Government for his views, have successfully held the post of CAS well into the war. While he may not have been the inspirational leader needed to take the RAAF into battle in the South-West Pacific Area, he was as good as any of the Australian alternatives. As mentioned, it was on the basis set by him that Burnett led the Force

during 1940 and 1941, with few changes, most of which were adverse. Even sending Goble overseas to the unimportant post of air liaison officer in Ottawa was a mistake. The RAAF needed every ounce of talent it could get at home, with the only exception being the overriding need for operational command experience. The difficulty in Goble's case would have been in finding him a suitable job. The most obvious would have been as Air Member for Personnel (in lieu of Air Commodore Anderson), even though such an appointment would have made for interesting times at meetings of an Air Board composed of one Chief and two former Chiefs of the Air Staff!

Issues from the Pacific War Era

INTRODUCTION TO THE JONES/BOSTOCK CONTROVERSY

Quite clearly the issue that dominated the Pacific War era was the Jones/Bostock controversy. However, it would be wrong to view this issue as merely a dispute between two otherwise capable, yet stubborn and small-minded men. There were more issues at stake in the controversy than the ambitions of Jones and Bostock, and more players who were closely involved.

DIVIDED CONTROL

One of the elements in the controversy was the division of the control of the RAAF between the CAS and the AOC, RAAF Command. Some have claimed that the structure of the organisation was only a minor irritant and that two men of goodwill could have made it work. Herein, however, lies the problem: how to find two men of goodwill who have at the same time climbed the ladder of success within the military. Goodwill and ambition are not likely bedfellows. Consider, by way of illustration, a few of the available alternatives. Would any problems have arisen had Williams been reinstated as CAS in May 1942? Williams and Bostock had long been on poor terms and may very well have engendered a dispute far more fiery than that which developed between Jones and Bostock. Then again how would the old rivals Goble and Williams have fared, especially with Goble as CAS and Williams as AOC, RAAF Command? Another possibility may have been Hewitt, in combination with any of the above. Here too the likelihood of conflict tends to dominate over the possibility of harmonious cooperation.

The division of the organisation was not merely a division between operations and administration, it also involved a division of loyalties, between the RAAF and the Allied Air Forces; and, between Kenney and his 'no nonsense' approach, and the RAAF's more formal and bureaucratic ways of doing business. On many an occasion Bostock found himself at loggerheads with Jones by trying to do things Kenney's way in order to meet Kenney's expectations of him.

OTHER PLAYERS

A second element in the controversy was the other players in the drama, each of whom had their own agenda to follow. In the Jones camp was the Minister for Air, Arthur Drakeford, and in the Bostock camp Generals Kenney and MacArthur. Somewhat on the side, but by no means a minor player was the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin. Finally, behind the scenes was the Secretary, Department of Defence, Sir Frederick Shedden.

Jones and Drakeford. It is a little difficult to be sure whether it was Jones or Drakeford who led the opposition against Bostock. Drakeford's dislike of Bostock was of longer standing than that of Jones. It was also Drakeford who opposed the handover of administrative control of the RAAF to Brett in April 1942 and who retained a vested interest in elevating the authority and status of the CAS vis a vis both Bostock and 'the Americans'.

Drakeford and Curtin. Maybe because Drakeford had played an important role in Curtin's appointment to the leadership of the Labor Party and had generally supported him within the Party, Curtin paid him a degree of deference, notwithstanding Curtin's superior position as Minister for Defence. Thus, while Curtin may not have always agreed with Drakeford's proposals, particularly where they ran counter to the wishes of General MacArthur, he was unwilling to cross Drakeford over his opposition to Bostock being appointed as CAS. Then again he was equally unwilling to accede to Drakeford's frequent requests that Jones be promoted to supersede Bostock.

Curtin and MacArthur. Perhaps the most important relationship for Australia during the Second World War was that between the Prime Minister, Mr Curtin, and General MacArthur. The two men established a close rapport during the early days of their relationship in April 1942, and maintained it until Curtin's death in July 1945. Opinion is divided as to the nature of the relationship, with many historians claiming that Curtin paid MacArthur undue deference. My own view, based on an admittedly brief study of the times, is that Curtin, being an astute politician, quickly came to the realisation that friendship with MacArthur gave Australia its best hope of obtaining from the United States the support it so desperately needed for its own defence, and, later, that it needed to play a meaningful role in the defeat of Japan. He no doubt also saw that MacArthur would have been a devastating foe if crossed. Thus it became vitally important to keep MacArthur on side, even if that meant having to upset the sensitivities of one or other of his colleagues and to have to at times ignore his own advisers.

It was no doubt because of the necessary deference that he had to pay to MacArthur's view that Curtin was unable to play a more decisive role in the Jones/Bostock controversy. Thus, even though he believed that the only way to resolve the dispute was by appointing an RAF officer as AOC, RAAF, he twice acceded to MacArthur's view not to proceed with such an appointment. In each case, not only did he have an understanding with MacArthur to consult about senior Allied military appointments, he also no doubt realised that an AOC, RAAF, no matter how capable, would have been quite ineffective in the face of MacArthur's opposition. In short, MacArthur held all the aces!

One issue on which Curtin did not accede to MacArthur's wishes was over the organisation of the RAAF. On several occasions MacArthur urged that Bostock be given full command of RAAF Command as a means of solving the RAAF's internal problems. Curtin refused, preferring to put his faith, alternatively, in consultation between the parties concerned, and the appointment of an RAF officer as AOC, RAAF.

MacArthur and Kenney. When Kenney took over as Allied Air Commander from Brett he pledged his loyalty and support to MacArthur, and subsequently kept to that pledge. Indeed, Kenney and MacArthur formed a close and effective partnership based on mutual respect. Kenney soon became MacArthur's prime adviser on the

employment of air power, and in the process converted MacArthur to its use as the main plank in his advance to the Philippines. MacArthur's support for Bostock no doubt came via Kenney rather than from any direct contact with Bostock. While some of the views expressed by MacArthur during the controversy were his own, others were undoubtedly derived from Kenney.

Kenney and Bostock. Kenney's support for Bostock against Jones was no doubt due to the fact that Bostock was trying to carry out Kenney's wishes in the conduct of the air war against the Japanese. Kenney had little real concern for the sensitivities and concerns of the RAAF; he had a war to win and that took precedence over all else. He was more than willing to have the RAAF 'on side', as long as they did things his way. For his part Bostock no doubt saw that his only hope of achieving the success that he craved was to support Kenney to the full. As with MacArthur, Kenney too held all the aces!

Shedden. It is extremely difficult to assess the role of the powerful Secretary of Defence in the Jones/Bostock controversy. There is little doubt that Shedden exerted a great deal of influence at the higher levels of Defence. What is less clear is the role he played in the Jones/Bostock controversy. He strongly supported the Prime Minister in his relations with MacArthur and may have been responsible for some of the stances taken by Curtin during the course of the dispute. However, the precise nature and extent of this influence is unclear. Certainly, he did not appear to side with either of the prime protagonists.

THE RANK PROBLEM

In one particular aspect Curtin consistently supported Bostock, and that was in insisting that he not be superseded in rank by Jones, as was proposed on several occasions by Drakeford. This in turn put a cap on rank in the senior levels of the RAAF. It also limited the rank of the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Vice-Marshal, one rank below the Chief of the General Staff and two ranks below the Chief of the Naval Staff, who incidentally headed a Service a quarter the size of the RAAF. One way around this anomaly would have been to promote both Jones and Bostock to the rank of Air Marshal; certainly their responsibilities warranted such a rank. However, such was Drakeford's dislike of Bostock that such a course probably did not even occur to him. Nor would it have been suggested to him by Jones who believed the solution to all his problems was for him to outrank Bostock. A promotion at the top would have permitted some overdue promotion at the next level.

LAYING THE BLAME

Who, if anyone, was to blame for the Jones/Bostock controversy and its continuation for three long years? Drakeford could be blamed for forcing the divided control on the RAAF, and, through his continuing opposition to Bostock, of taking sides rather than seeking some form of conciliation. Then, Bostock could be blamed for starting the controversy by his failure to accept being passed over as CAS. Then again Kenney could be blamed for the way he went about setting up RAAF Command and appointing Bostock as its commander. For his part, Jones is hardly blameless with his stubborn refusal to vest in Bostock the authority he needed to carry out the duties allotted him by the Government. Curtin, who supposedly had the ultimate authority within the Australian Government could well be blamed for his continuing failure to act.

Clearly, no one person was to blame. However, Drakeford and Jones were in a better position than anyone else to have done something about the controversy. They had the authority to constitute RAAF Command as a RAAF formation and to grant Bostock full command. While doing so may not have healed the rift between Jones and Bostock, it would certainly have turned down much of the heat that led to the escalation of the controversy. For his part Bostock, once having started the squabble, was then locked in, and, in any case, had no power to change the arrangements. Finally, for his part Curtin was left with few options. The range of talent within the RAAF left him with no viable alternative to Jones and Bostock, and in any case he had to keep MacArthur's wishes in mind.

THE EVER-CHANGING ORGANISATION

In order to clarify the many changes to the organisation of the RAAF in 1942-43, as well as the various alternative proposals, Figures O-1 to O-5 have been included here as a ready reference.

Figure O-1 shows the organisation of the RAAF as it was in early 1942, shortly before the formation of the Allied Air Forces.

Figure O-2 shows the organisation of the Allied Air Forces as it was in mid 1942, shortly after its formation. This Figure also reflects the changes to the Air Board, and the formation of Eastern Area and No 5 (Maintenance) Group.

Figure O-3 shows the organisation of the Allied Air Forces as it was in early 1943, shortly after the formation of the Fifth Air Force and RAAF Command. This Figure also reflects the formation of No 9 (Operational) Group and No 4 (Maintenance) Group. What it does not show is the ill-defined responsibilities of the AOC, RAAF Command to the Commander, Allied Air Forces for the operational performance of No 9 (Operational) Group.

Figure O-4 shows one possibility as to how the organisation may have been structured with an Air Officer Commanding, RAAF. What is shown here is the organisation with a minimum of change from that shown in the previous Figure. The Air Board has been deleted, but RAAF Headquarters retained with no change in function. Headquarters, RAAF Command has also been retained with no change in function, but with the title of the AOC changed to that of Chief of Staff, responsible direct to the AOC, RAAF. The AOC, RAAF is shown as having a dual responsibility, to the Commander, Allied Air Forces for operational control of RAAF operational forces and to the Minister for Air for the administration of the RAAF.

The final diagram, Figure O-5, shows one possibility as to how the organisation may have been structured had the AOC, RAAF Command been given full command over his subordinate formations and units.

Lessons

What then are the lessons to be learnt from the history of the higher organisation of the RAAF during the Second World War?

- a. Careful attention needs to be given to the structure of the higher organisation of the defence force to ensure:
 - that it will be able to meet the challenge, and if necessary adapt, to the particular circumstances of warlike conflict as they unfold;

- that the structure is sound of itself and does not have to rely on 'men of goodwill' to make it work;
 - that the personal ambitions of senior military leaders should not be permitted to influence the structures adopted; and
 - that the control of operations in the field is separated from the task of raising and supplying the forces within the home base; in other words, the Service Chiefs at national level should not also try to control the conduct of operations.
- b. Coalition warfare often presents unique difficulties that need careful attention. In general, the degree of integration of the forces of more than one nation should be as little as possible, consistent with the dictates of effectiveness and economy in the conduct of military operations. The maintenance of national pride and sovereignty is generally incompatible with handing over control of a nation's armed forces, in whole or in part, to a commander from another nation, even in a formal alliance situation. Cooperative arrangements are normally preferable to command arrangements, notwithstanding a general preference within the military for the latter.
- c. Promotion by merit is a far superior means of developing an effective organisation than is promotion by seniority.
- d. Political acceptability as a criteria for promotion at senior levels in the military in wartime needs to be applied with constraint, especially in a situation where the range of talent available is limited, which it normally is at such times.
- e. The peacetime development of the Services must needs keep in mind wartime circumstances, such as:
- expansion, which is likely to lead to rapid promotion at all levels;
 - a demand for skills, such as the conduct of air operations, which cannot be practised in peacetime;
 - having a form of organisation that permits of ready adaptation to the needs of war.

Conclusion

The performance of the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War was adversely affected by the way that it was run from the top. The senior personnel were, by and large, not up to the task, and the structure of the organisation, particularly during the Pacific War period, was quite inappropriate. While the personnel in the squadrons and units fought bravely and well against the enemy, their top leaders fought each other.

The best thing to come out of the story of the higher command of the RAAF during the Second World War is the vivid lesson it provides of how not to run an Air Force!

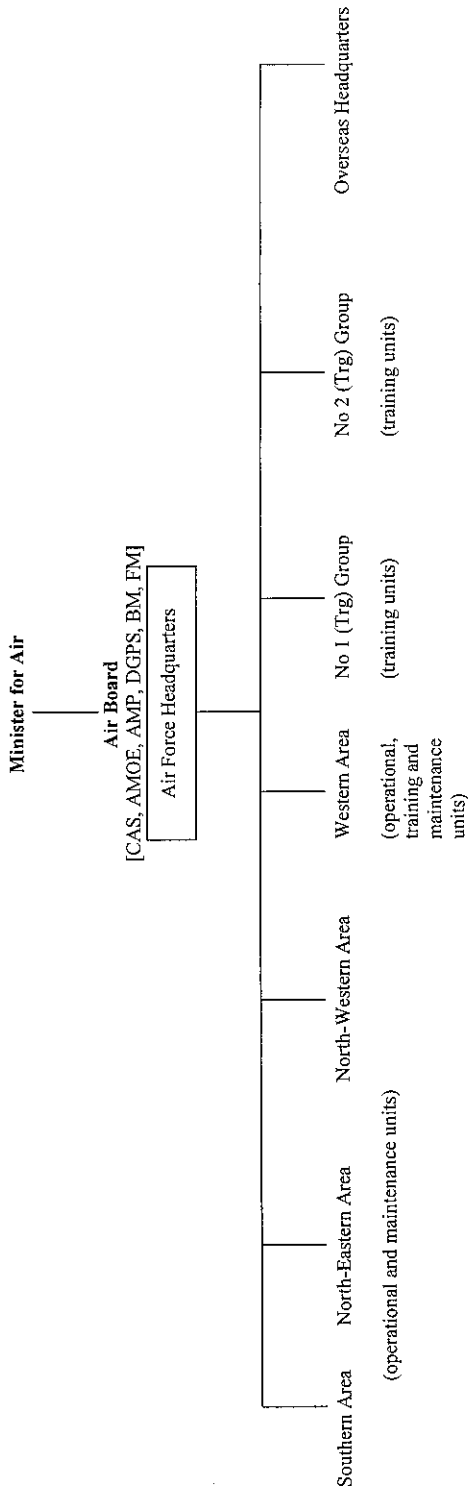


Figure O-1: Simplified Organisation of Royal Australian Air Force, Early 1942

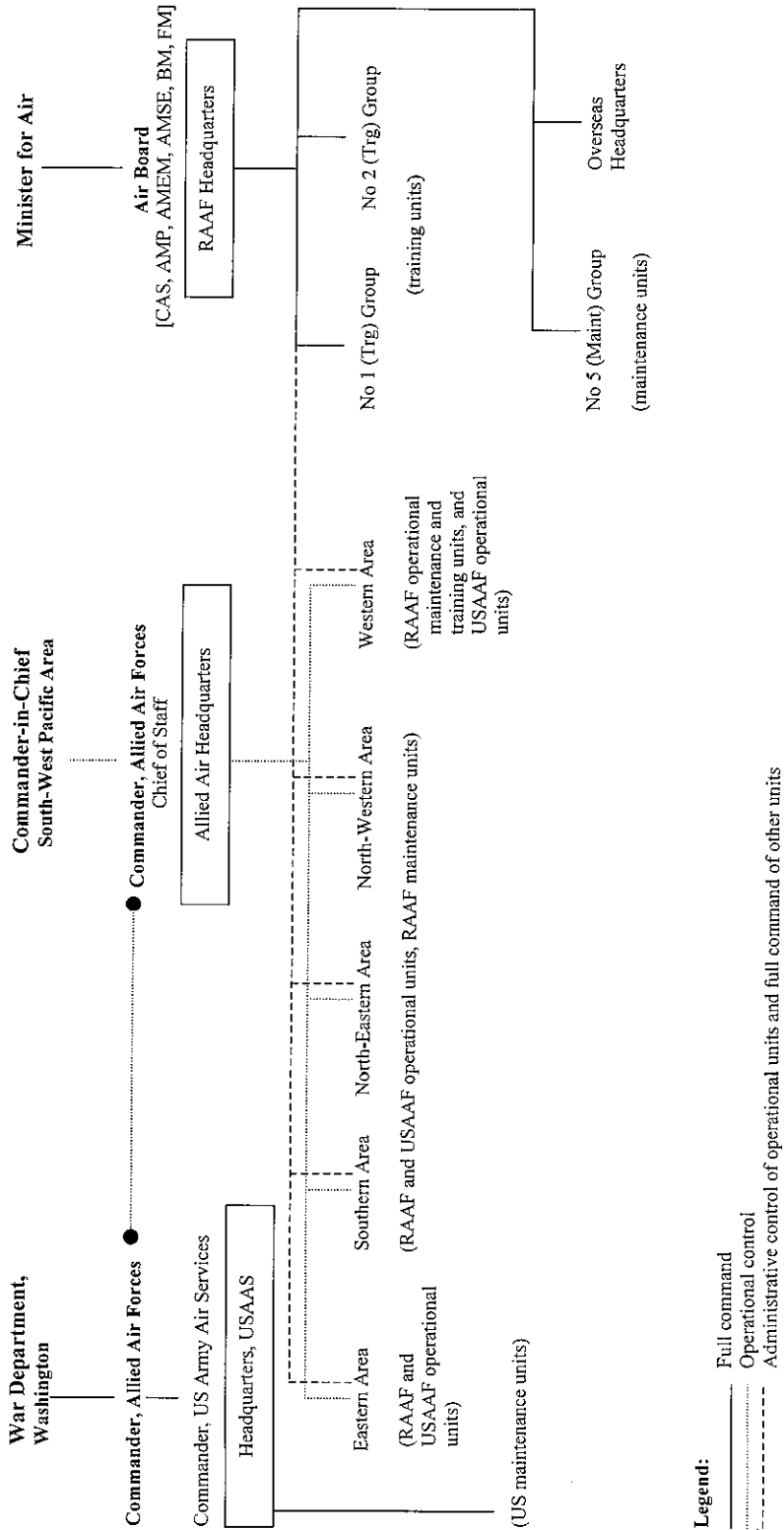


Figure O-2: Simplified Organisation of Allied Air Forces, Mid 1942

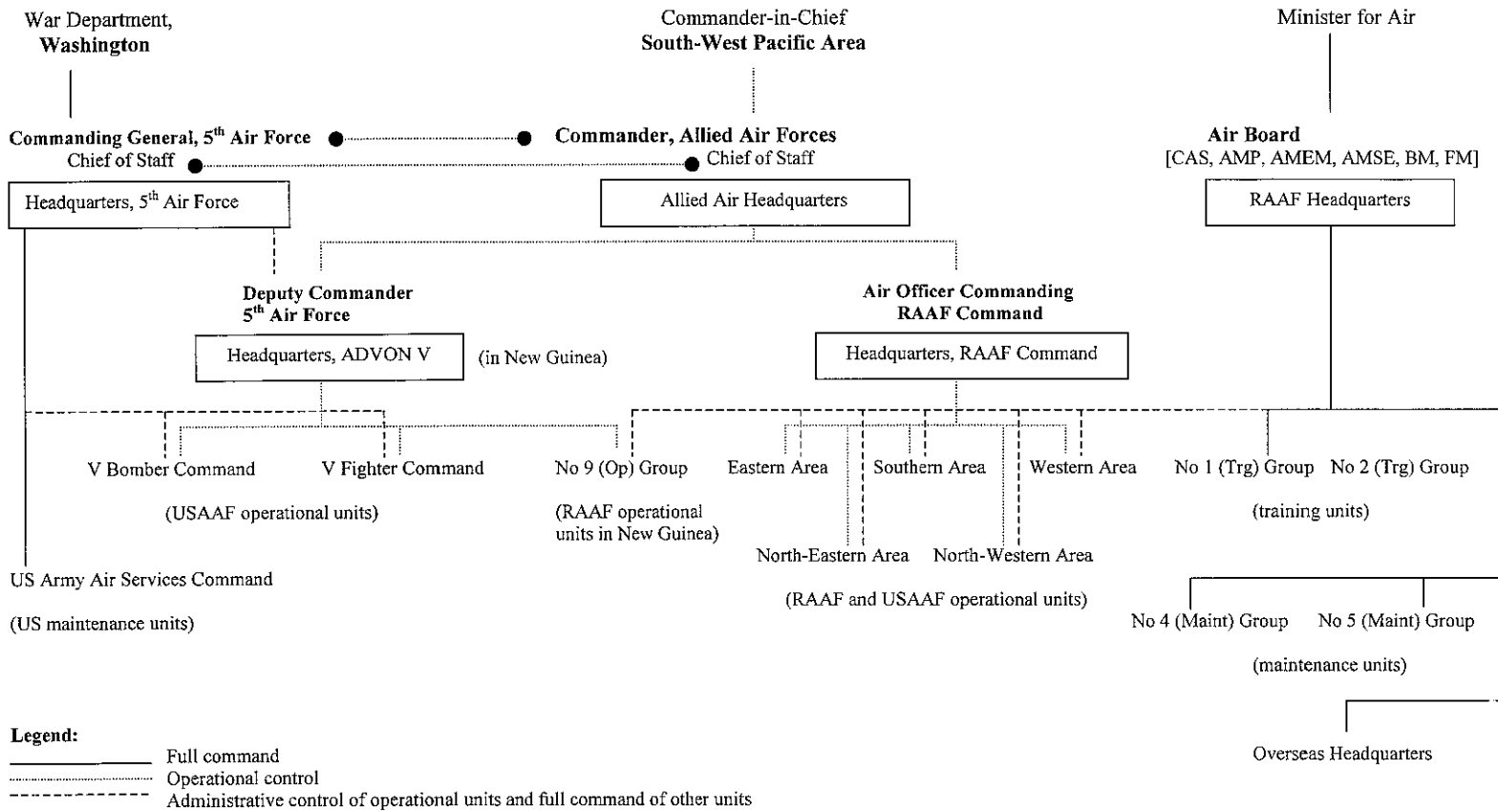


Figure O-3: Simplified Organisation of Allied Air Forces, Early 1943

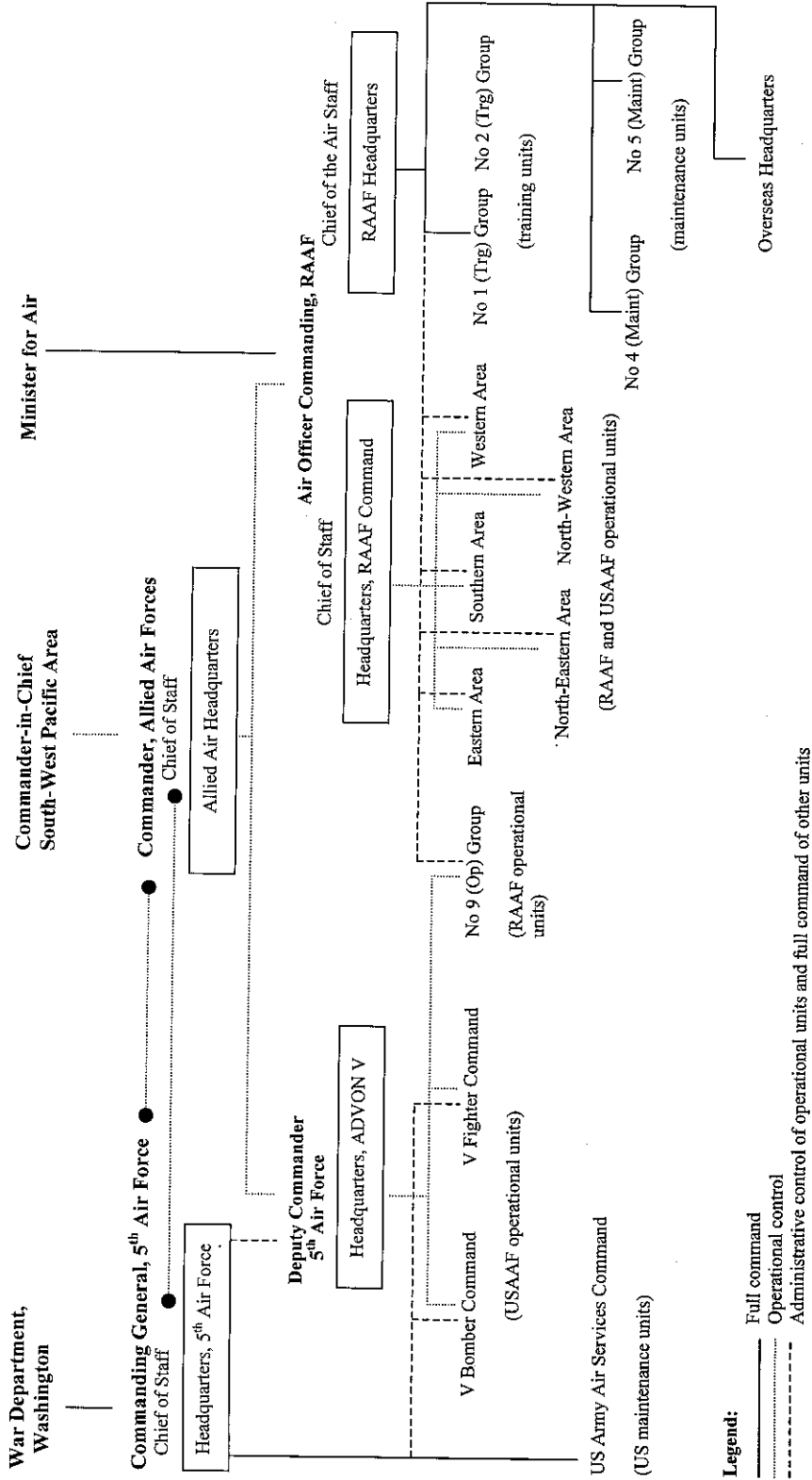


Figure O-4: Possible Organisation of Allied Air Forces With AOC, RAAF

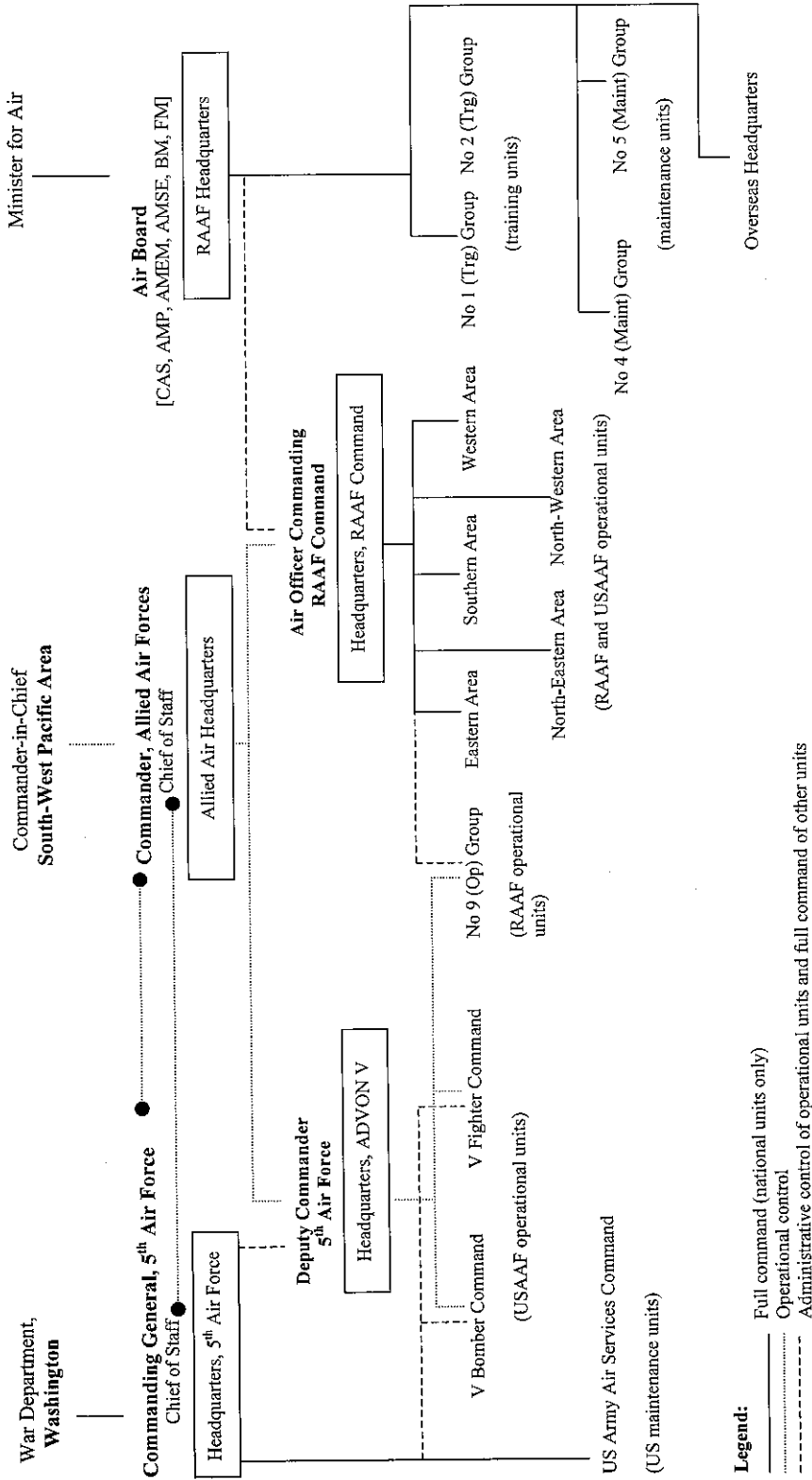


Figure O-5: Possible Alternative Organisation of Allied Air Forces, 1943

Appendix A

Senior Officers of the RAAF
September 1939 – September 1945

Air Force List, August 1939

General Duties Branch Graduation List (to Wing Commander)

Air Vice-Marshal

Williams, Richard, CB, CBE, DSO, idc, psa 1.1.35

Air Commodore

Goble, Stanley James (Temporary Air Vice-Marshal 28.2.39)
CBE, DSO, DSC, idc, psa 1.1.35

Anderson, William Hopton, CBE, DFC, idc, psa 1.1.38

Russell, John Cannan, DSO, psa, RAF 1.1.39

Group Captain

Cole, Adrian Trevor, CBE, MC, DFC, idc, psa 1.1.35

Harrison, Eric 1.1.35

McNamara, Frank Herbert, VC, CBE, idc 1.1.37

Wrigley, Henry Neilson, DFC, AFC, psa 1.1.37

De La Rue, Hippolyte Ferdinand, DFC 1.1.37

Lukis, Francis William Fellows, OBE, psa, ADC 1.7.38

Bostock, William Dowling, OBE, psa 1.9.38

Wing Commander

Jones, George, DFC, psa, ADC 1.1.36

Brownell, Raymond James, MC, MM 1.4.36

Murphy, Arthur William, DFC, AFC 1.11.36

Summers, John Hamilton, OBE 1.1.38

Hewitt, Joseph Eric, psa 1.1.38

Bladin, Francis Masson, psa 1.1.38

Wilson, Douglas Ernest Lancelot, psa, ADC 1.1.38

Ewart, Ulex Edward, psa 1.1.38

Wackett, Ellis Charles, psa 1.1.38

Swinbourne, Thomas Anthony, OBE, psa 1.1.38

McCauley, John Patrick Joseph, psa 1.7.38

Charlesworth, Alan Morehouse, AFC 1.3.39

Eaton, Charles, AFC 1.3.39

Wiggins, Carn Scarlet 1.3.39

Scherger, Frederick Rudolph William, psa 1.3.39

Waters, John, psa 1.3.39

Knox-Knight, Ernest Gipps 1.3.39

Lachal, Leon Victor 1.7.39

Equipment Branch Graduation List (to Wing Commander)**Wing Commander**

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| Marsden, Thomas Roy, DSO | 1.7.33 |
| Christie, Robert, DSO | 1.2.35 |
| Mackinolty, George John William, OBE | 1.2.38 |

Air Force List, February 1942**General Duties Branch Graduation List (to Wing Commander in August 1939)****Air Marshal**

| | |
|---|---------|
| Burnett, Sir Charles Stuart (Acting Air Chief Marshal) <i>KCB, CBE, DSO, RAF</i> | 1.1.36 |
| Williams, Richard, CB, CBE, DSO, idc, psa (t) | 11.3.40 |

Air Vice-Marshal

| | |
|---|---------|
| Goble, Stanley James, CBE, DSO, DSC, idc, psa | 28.2.39 |
| Bostock, William Dowling, CB, OBE, psa | 1.10.41 |

Air Commodore

| | |
|---|---------|
| Anderson, William Hopton (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 10.9.41) CBE, DFC, idc, psa | 1.1.38 |
| Cole, Adrian Trevor, CBE, MC, DFC, idc, psa (t) | 1.12.39 |
| McNamara, Frank Herbert, VC, CBE, idc (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Wrigley, Henry Neilson (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 1.4.41) CBE, DFC, AFC, psa (t) | .12.39 |
| De La Rue, Hippolyte Ferdinand, DFC, AFC (t) | 1.7.41 |

Group Captain

| | |
|---|---------|
| Lukis, Francis William Fellows (Acting Air Commodore 8.5.41) OBE, psa | 1.7.38 |
| Jones, George (Acting Air Commodore 21.2.41) CBE, DFC, psa (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Brownell, Raymond James (Acting Air Commodore 18.8.41) MC, MM (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Summers, John Hamilton, OBE, ADC (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Hewitt, Joseph Eric (Acting Air Commodore 29.9.41), OBE, psa, ADC (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Murphy, Arthur William, DFC, AFC (t) | 1.6.40 |
| Bladin, Francis Masson (Acting Air Commodore 10.9.41), psa (t) | 1.6.40 |
| Wilson, Douglas Ernest Lancelot (Acting Air Commodore 11.8.41) psa (t) | 1.6.40 |
| Ewart, Ulex Edward, psa (t) | 1.6.40 |
| Wackett, Ellis Charles, OBE, psa (t) (Tech) | 1.6.40 |
| McCauley, John Patrick Joseph, psa (t) | 1.6.40 |
| Cobby, Arthur Henry, DSO, DFC, psa (t) | 1.8.40 |
| Charlesworth, Alan Morehouse, AFC (t) | 1.9.40 |
| Eaton, Charles, OBE, AFC (t) | 1.9.40 |

| | |
|---|--------|
| Scherger, Frederick Rudolph William, AFC, psa | 1.9.40 |
| Wiggins, Carn Scarlet (t) (Tech) | 1.9.40 |

Wing Commander

| | |
|---|--------|
| Waters, John, psa | 1.3.39 |
| Knox-Knight, Ernest Gipps, OBE | 1.3.39 |
| Lachal, Leon Victor (Acting Group Captain 1.7.41) | 1.7.39 |

Air Force List, May 1945**General Duties Branch Graduation List (to Air Commodore)****Air Marshal**

| | |
|---|---------|
| Williams, Richard, CB, CBE, DSO, idc, psa (t) | 11.3.40 |
|---|---------|

Air Vice-Marshal

| | |
|---|---------|
| Goble, Stanley James, CBE, DSO, DSC, idc, psa | 28.2.39 |
| Bostock, William Dowling, CB, OBE, psa | 1.10.41 |
| Jones, George, CB, CBE, DFC, psa | 5.5.42 |

Air Commodore

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Anderson, William Hopton, (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 10.9.41) CBE, DFC, idc, psa | 1.1.38 |
| Cole, Adrian Trevor, (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 15.10.42) CBE, DSO, MC, DFC, idc, psa (t) | 1.12.39 |
| McNamara, Frank Herbert, (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 24.1.42) VC, CB, CBE, idc (t) | 1.12.39 |
| Wrigley, Henry Neilson, (Acting Air Vice-Marshal 1.4.41) CBE, DFC, AFC, psa (t) | 1.12.39 |
| De La Rue, Hippolyte Ferdinand, CBE, DFC, ADC Lukis, Francis William Fellows, CBE, psa (t) | 1.7.41 1.1.42 |
| Brownell, Raymond James, CBE, MC, MM (t) | 1.4.42 |
| Summers, John Hamilton, OBE, ADC | 1.4.42 |
| Hewitt, Joseph Eric, OBE, psa, ADC (t) | 1.4.42 |
| Bladin, Francis Masson, CBE, psa (t) | 1.4.42 |
| McCauley, John Patrick Joseph, CBE, psa (t) | 1.7.43 |
| Cobby, Arthur Henry, CBE, DSO, DFC, GM, psa (t) | 1.7.43 |
| Ewart, Ulex Edward, psa (t) | 1.8.44 |
| Charlesworth, Alan Morehouse, AFC (t) | 1.8.44 |
| Scherger, Frederick Rudolph William, DSO, AFC, psa (t) | 1.8.44 |
| Knox-Knight, Ernest Gipps, OBE, ws (t) | 1.8.44 |

Technical List, Engineer – General Graduation List (to Air Commodore)

| | |
|---|--------|
| Wackett, Ellis Charles, OBE, psa (t) (GD) | 1.5.43 |
| Murphy, Arthur William, DFC, AFC (t) (GD) | 1.7.43 |

Equipment Branch Graduation List (to Air Commodore)

| | |
|--|--------|
| Mackinolty, George John William, OBE (t) | 1.5.43 |
|--|--------|

Notes on those senior prewar officers missing from the above list:

Russell – returned to UK February 1940

Harrison – retired April 1940

Swinbourne – died September 1940

Wilson – temporary Group Captain, 1.6.40

Eaton – temporary Group Captain, 1.9.40, OBE

Wiggins – temporary Group Captain, 1.9.40 (Technical List – Signals), CBE

Waters – temporary Group Captain, 1.12.42

Lachal – temporary Group Captain, 1.4.42

Marsden – retired February 1945

Christie – temporary Group Captain, 1.7.40, acting Air Commodore, 19.7.44

Biographical Notes of Selected Key Officers

Anderson, William Hopton

Born – Victoria, 1891

Service in First World War – AIF, AFC, CO No 3 Squadron - DFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC, March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 47

Service During Second World War –

April 1936 - March 1940 – Air Member for Supply (Air Cdre, Jan 38)

January 1940 – February 1940 – Acting Chief of the Air Staff

March 1940 – November 1940 – Air Member for Personnel

December 1940 – August 1941 – AOC, Central Area

September 1941 – May 42 – Air Member for Organisation and Equipment (A/AVM, Sep 41)

May 1942 – July 1943 – AOC, Eastern Area

July 1943 – November 1943 - Commandant, RAAF Staff School

December 1943 – September 1944 - Air Member for Personnel

September 1944 – September 1945 - Commandant, RAAF Staff School

Post War – retired 1946

Bostock, William Dowling (Bill)

Born – New South Wales, 1892

Service in First World War – AIF, RFC

Joined RAAF – August 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 47

Service During Second World War –

August 1938 – September 1939 – Director of Operations and Intelligence, Air Force Headquarters (Gp Capt Sep 38)

September 1939 – April 1942 – Deputy Chief of the Air Staff

(T/Air Cdre Jun 40, AVM Oct 41) (CB)

May 1942 – September 1942 – Chief of Staff, Allied Air Headquarters

September 1942 – September 1945 – AOC, RAAF Command

Post War – retired 1946

Cobby, Arthur Henry

Born – Victoria, 1894

Service in First World War – AMF, AFC, CO No 4 Squadron - DSO, DFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921, resigned April 1936 (Wg Cdr May 33)

Age on the outbreak of War - 45

Service During Second World War –

Transferred to the Active List in July 1940 with rank of Wing Commander

July 1940 – August 1942 - Director of Recruiting, Air Force Headquarters

(T/Gp Capt Aug 40)

August 1942 – November 1943 – AOC North-Eastern Area (T/Air Cdre Jul 43) (GM)

December 1943 – August 1944 - Commandant, RAAF Staff School

August 1944 - May 1945 – AOC, No 10 Group/First Tactical Air Force

Post War – retired August 1946

Cole, Adrian Trevor (King)

Born – Victoria, 1895

Service in First World War – AIF, AFC - MC, DFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 44

Service During Second World War –

February 1939 - November 1939 – CO, RAAF Station Laverton (Gp Capt Jan 35)

November 1939 – November 1940 – AOC, No 2 Group/Central Area

(T/Air Cdre Dec 39)

November 1940 – September 1941 – AOC, Southern Area

October 1941 – October 1942 - OC, No 235 Wing, RAF

October 1942 – May 1943 - AOC, RAF Northern Ireland (A/AVM Oct 42)

July 1943 – September 1944 – AOC, North-Western Area (DSO)

September 1944 – December 1944 - Air Member for Personnel

January 1945 – October 1945 - RAAF Liaison Officer, South East Asia Command

Post War – retired April 1946

De La Rue, Hippolyte Ferdinand (Kanga)

Born – Victoria, 1891

Service in First World War – RNAS - DFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 48

Service During Second World War –

February 1938 – September 1940 – CO, RAAF Station Richmond

(Gp Capt Jan 37)

January 1941 – December 1942 – AOC, Western Area

(A/Air Cdre Jan 41, T/Air Cdre Jul 41)

January 1943 – September 1945 – Inspector of Administration

Post War – retired 1946

Goble, Stanley James

Born – Victoria, 1891

Service in First World War – RNAS, CO No 5 Squadron, RNAS - DSO, DSC

Joined RAAF – from RAN March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 48

Service During Second World War –

February 1939 – January 1940 – Chief of the Air Staff (T/AVM Feb 39)

January 1940 – July 1940 – special leave

August 1940 - September 1945 – RAAF Liaison Officer, Ottawa (AVM Feb 39)

Post War – retired 1946

Hewitt, Joseph Eric (Joe)

Born – Victoria, 1901

Service in First World War – nil

Joined RAAF – 1923 on secondment from RAN (ex RANC)

Age on the outbreak of War - 38

Service During Second World War –

August 1939 – November 1939 – CO, RAAF Station Rathmines (Wg Cdr Jan 38)

November 1939 – July 1940 – Senior Administrative Staff Officer/Senior Air Staff

Officer, HQ No 1 Group/Southern Area (T/Gp Capt Dec 39)

July 1940 – October 1941 – Director of Personal Services, Air Force Headquarters
 (A/Air Cdre Sep 41)
 October 1941 – December 1941 – Acting Deputy Chief of the Air Staff
 January 1942 – February 1942 – Air staff officer, HQ ABDA Command (T/Gp Capt)
 March 1942 – April 1942 – Acting Director of Training/Assistant Chief of the Air Staff
 (A/Air Cdre Mar 42, T/Air Cdre Apr 42)
 May 1942 – January 1943 – Director of Air Intelligence, Allied Air Headquarters
 January 1943 – December 1943 – AOC, No 9 (Operational) Group
 January 1944 – February 1945 – Director of Air Intelligence, Allied Air Headquarters
 March 1945 – April 1945 – Assistant Commandant, RAAF Staff School
 April 1945 – post war – Air Member for Personnel
Post War – AMP 1945-48, Defence Representative London 1948-51, AMSE 1951-56

Jones, George

Born – Victoria, 1896

Service in First World War – AIF, RFC - DFC

Joined RAAF – August 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 42

Service During Second World War –

July 1939 - February 1940 – Assistant Chief of the Air Staff, Air Force Headquarters
 (T/Gp Capt Dec 39)

March 1940 – March 1942 – Director of Training, Air Force Headquarters
 (A/Air Cdre Feb 41)

March 1942 – May 1942 – Deputy Air Member for Organisation and Equipment

May 1942 – post war - Chief of the Air Staff (AVM May 42)

Post War – Remained as CAS until January 1952

Lukis, Francis William Fellows

Born – Western Australia 1896

Service in First World War – AIF, AFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 43

Service During Second World War –

January 1938 – November 1939 – CO, No 1 Flying Training School
 (Gp Capt Jul 38)

December 1939 – May 1941 – CO, RAAF Station, Laverton

May 1941 – August 1942 – AOC, Northern Area/North-Eastern Area
 (A/Air Cdre May 41, T/Air Cdre Jan 42)

September 1942 – December 1943 – Air Member for Personnel

December 1943 – February 1945 – AOC, No 9 (Operational) Group/Northern Command

April 1945 – September 1945 – AOC, No 2 (Training) Group

Post War – retired 1946

Mackinolty, George John William

Born – Victoria, 1895

Service in First World War – AIF, AFC

Joined RAAF – 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 44

Service During Second World War –

April 1935- April 1940 - Director of Equipment, Air Force Headquarters
(Wg Cdr Feb 38)

April 1940 -June 1942 – Director of Supply, Air Force Headquarters
(T/Gp Capt Jun 40)

June 1942 – post war. - Air Member for Supply and Equipment
(A/Air Cdre Jun 42, T/Air Cdre May 43)

Post War – Remained as AMSE until 1950. Died February 1951

McNamara, Frank Hubert (Dilb)

Born – Victoria, 1894

Service in First World War – AFC - VC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 45

Service During Second World War –

January 1938 – November 1941 – Liaison Officer, London (Gp Capt Jan 37, T/Air
Cdre Dec 39)

December 1941 – January 1942 - Deputy AOC, Overseas Headquarters

January 1942 – September 1942 - AOC, Overseas Headquarters (A/AVM Jan 42)

January 1943 - March 1945 – AOC, RAF Aden

Post War – retired 1946

Scherger, Frederick Rudolph William (Scherg)

Born – Victoria, 1904

Service in First World War – nil

Joined RAAF – 1925 on secondment from Army (ex RMC)

Age on the outbreak of War - 35

Service During Second World War –

February 1938 – March 1940 - Director of Training, Air Force Headquarters
(Wg Cdr Mar 39)

July 1940 – September 1941 – CO, No 2 Service Flying Training School (T/Gp Capt
Sep 40) (AFC)

October 1941 – January 1942 – CO, RAAF Station Darwin

January 1942 – April 1942 - Senior Air Staff Officer, HQ North-Western Area

April 1942 – May 1942 – CO, RAAF Station Richmond

May 1942 – November 1942 - Director of Defence, Allied Air Headquarters

November 1942 – July 1943 – Director of Training, Air Force Headquarters

July 1943 – November 1943 – OC, No 2 (Training) Group

November 1943 – August 1944 – OC, No 10 (Operational) Group
(T/Air Cdre Aug 44)

August 1944 – December 1944 – No 6 RAAF Hospital (non-effective)

January 1945 - May 1945 – Acting Air Member for Personnel

May 1945 – September 1945 – AOC, First Tactical Air Force (DSO)

Post War – AMP 1955-57, CAS 1957-61, CCOS 1961-66

Wackett, Ellis Charles (Wack)

Born – Queensland, 1901

Service in First World War – nil

Joined RAAF – 1923 on transfer from RAN

Age on the outbreak of War - 38

Service During Second World War –

May 1935 – June 1942 – Director of Technical Services, Air Force Headquarters
(Wg Cdr Jan 38, T/Gp Capt Jun 40, A/Air Cdre Apr 42)

June 1942 – September 1945 – Air Member for Engineering and Equipment
(T/Air Cdre May 43)

Post War – AMEM to 1948, AMTS 1948-59

Williams, Richard (Dickey)

Born – South Australia, 1890

Service in First World War – AMF, AFC, CO No 1 Squadron, CO No 41 Wing -
DSO

Joined RAAF – From AAC

Age on the outbreak of War - 49

Service During Second World War –

February 1939 – January 1940 – Air Officer-in-charge Administration, HQ Coastal
Command, RAF (AVM Jan 35)

March 1940 – August 1941 – Air Member for Organisation and Equipment
(A/AM Jan 40, T/AM Mar 40)

December 1941 – February 1942 – AOC, Overseas Headquarters

February 1942 – June 1942 – Air Force Headquarters (supernumerary)

July 1942 - September 1945 – RAAF Representative, Australian Military Mission,
Washington

Post War – retired 1946

Wrigley, Henry Neilson

Born – Victoria, 1892

Service in First World War – AFC, CO No 3 Squadron - DFC

Joined RAAF – From AAC March 1921

Age on the outbreak of War - 47

Service During Second World War –

November 1939 – November 1940 – AOC No 1 Group/Southern Area
(Gp Capt Jan 37, T/Air Cdre Dec 39)

November 1940 – August 1942 – Air Member for Personnel (A/AVM Apr 41)

September 1942 – September 1945 – AOC, Overseas Headquarters

Post War – retired 1946

APPENDIX B

RAAF Air Order of Battle

30th April 1942

SOUTHERN AREA

AOC - Air Commodore G H Boyce, AFC, RAF
 RAAF Station Laverton
 No 5 (Army Cooperation) Squadron
 No 36 (Transport) Squadron
 General Reconnaissance School, Cressy
 No 7 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron, Bairnsdale
 No 7 Fighter Sector Headquarters, Melbourne
 RAAF Station Richmond
 No 6 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron
 No 22 (General Purpose) Squadron
 No 30 (Long Range Fighter) Squadron
 No 100 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron
 RAAF Station Canberra
 No 4 (Army Cooperation) Squadron
 No 18 (Heavy Bomber) Squadron
 Survey Flight
 RAAF Station Rathmines
 No 9 (Fleet Cooperation) Squadron
 Seaplane Training Flight
 No 2 Fighter Sector Headquarters Newcastle

NORTH-EASTERN AREA

AOC - Air Commodore F W F Lukis, OBE
 RAAF Station Townsville
 No 24 (General Purpose) Squadron
 No 33 (Transport) Squadron
 No 76 (Interceptor Fighter) Squadron
 RAAF Station Amberley
 No 23 (General Purpose) Squadron
 RAAF Station Port Moresby
 No 11 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron
 No 20 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron
 No 32 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron
 No 75 (Interceptor Fighter) Squadron
 No 3 Fighter Sector Headquarters, Townsville
 No 4 Fighter Sector Headquarters, Port Moresby

NORTH-WESTERN AREA

AOC- Air Commodore F M Bladin

RAAF Station Batchelor

RAAF Station Daly Waters

RAAF Station Darwin

No 2 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron

No 12 (General Purpose) Squadron

No 13 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron

No 34 (Transport) Squadron

No 5 Fighter Sector Headquarters

WESTERN AREA

AOC - Air Commodore H F De La Rue, DFC

RAAF Station Pearce

No 14 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron

No 25 (General Purpose) Squadron

No 35 (Transport) Squadron

No 77 (Interceptor Fighter) Squadron

No 6 Fighter Sector Headquarters Perth

APPENDIX C

Senior Command and Staff Appointments September 1939 – September 1945

Air Board

CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| September 1939 – January 1940 | - Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble |
| January 1940 - February 1940 | - Air Commodore W H Anderson |
| February 1940 – May 1942 | - Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett, RAF |
| May 1942 – September 1945 | - Air Vice-Marshal G Jones |

AIR MEMBER FOR PERSONNEL

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| September 1939 - March 1940 | - Air Commodore J C Russell, RAF |
| March 1940 - November 1940 | - Air Commodore W H Anderson |
| November 1940 - August 1942 | - Air Vice-Marshal H N Wrigley |
| August 1942 – December 1943 | - Air Commodore F W F Lukis |
| December 1943 – September 1944 | - Air Vice-Marshal W H Anderson |
| September 1944 – December 1944 | - Air Vice-Marshal A T Cole |
| January 1945 – May 1945 | - Air Commodore F R W Scherger |
| May 1945 – September 1945 | - Air Commodore J E Hewitt |

AIR MEMBER FOR SUPPLY

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| September 1939 – March 1940 | - Air Commodore W H Anderson |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|

FINANCE MEMBER

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| September 1939 – June 1940 | - Mr M C Langslow |
| July 1940 – August 1941 | - Mr C V Kellway |
| August 1941 – September 1945 | - Mr H C Evins |

AIR MEMBER FOR ORGANISATION AND EQUIPMENT

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| March 1940 - August 1941 | - Air Marshal R Williams |
| August 1941 - May 1942 | - Air Vice-Marshal W H Anderson |
| May 1942 – June 1942 | - Air Vice-Marshal G Jones |

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SUPPLY AND PRODUCTION

| | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| March 1940 – June 1942 | - Mr R Lawson |
|------------------------|---------------|

BUSINESS MEMBER

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| December 1940 – January 1944 | - Mr W S Jones |
| February 1944 – September 1945 | - Mr R H Nesbitt |

AIR MEMBER FOR ENGINEERING AND MAINTENANCE

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| June 1942 - September 1945 | - Air Commodore E C Wackett |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|

AIR MEMBER FOR SUPPLY AND EQUIPMENT

June 1942 - September 1945 - Air Commodore G J W Mackinolty

SECRETARY TO THE AIR BOARD

September 1939 – November 1939 - Mr P E Coleman

November 1939 – September 1945 - Mr F J Mulrooney

SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF AIR

November 1939 - Mr P E Coleman

November 1939 – September 1945 - Mr M C Langslow

Allied Air Forces**COMMANDER**

April 1942 - August 1942

- Lieutenant General G H Brett, US Army

August 1942 - September 1945

- General G C Kenney, US Army

CHIEF OF STAFF

April 1942 - September 1942

- Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock

September 1942 -

- Brigadier General D Wilson, US Army

RAAF Command**AIR OFFICER COMMANDING**

September 1942 – September 1945 - Air Vice-Marshal W D Bostock

RAAF Areas and Groups**Commands in Southern Australia****NO 1 GROUP**

November 1939 - March 1940

- Group Captain H N Wrigley

SOUTHERN AREA

March 1940 - November 1940

- Air Commodore H N Wrigley

November 1940 - August 1941

- Air Commodore A T Cole

NO 1 (TRAINING) GROUP

August 1941 - December 1942

- Air Commodore R J Brownell

December 1942 - January 1943

- Group Captain D E L Wilson

January 1943 - October 1943

- Air Commodore G H Boyce, RAF

October 1943 – September 1945

- Air Commodore E D Barnes, RAF

SOUTHERN AREA

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| August 1941 | - Air Commodore A T Cole |
| September 1941 - December 1941 | - Air Commodore F M Bladin |
| December 1941 - January 1943 | - Air Commodore G H Boyce, RAF |
| January 1943 - November 1943 | - Group Captain C W Pearce |
| November 1943 - March 1944 | - Wing Commander J E Graham (t) |
| March 1944 - January 1945 | - Group Captain I D McLachlan |
| January 1945 - September 1945 | - Group Captain C Eaton |

NO 4 (MAINTENANCE) GROUP

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| September 1942 - September 1945 | - Air Commodore A W Murphy |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|

Commands in Eastern Australia**NO 2 GROUP**

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| November 1939 - March 1940 | - Group Captain A T Cole |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|

CENTRAL AREA

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| March 1940 - November 1940 | - Air Commodore A T Cole |
| December 1940 - August 1941 | - Air Commodore W H Anderson |

NO 2 (TRAINING) GROUP

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| August 1941 - January 1942 | - Air Commodore D E L Wilson |
| January 1942 - July 1943 | - Group Captain J H Summers |
| July 1943 - November 1943 | - Group Captain F R W Scherger |
| November 1943 - March 1945 | - Air Commodore E G Knox-Knight |
| March 1945 - April 1945 | - Group Captain H R Harding |
| April 1945 - September 1945 | - Air Commodore F W F Lukis |

EASTERN AREA

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| May 1942 - July 1943 | - Air Commodore W H Anderson |
| July 1943 - December 1943 | - Air Commodore J H Summers |
| December 1943 - January 1945 | - Air Commodore A M Charlesworth |
| January 1945 - September 1945 | - Air Commodore L V Lachal |

NO 5 (MAINTENANCE) GROUP

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| June 1942 - December 1942 | - Group Captain D E L Wilson |
| December 1942 - February 1944 | - Air Commodore T R Marsden |
| February 1944 - April 1944 | - Group Captain H B Seekamp (t) |
| April 1944 - April 1945 | - Air Commodore R Christie |
| April 1945 - September 1945 | - Group Captain H R Seekamp |

Commands in Northern Australia**NORTHERN AREA**

May 1941 - January 1942 - Air Commodore F W F Lukis

NORTH-EASTERN AREA

January 1942 - August 1942 - Air Commodore F W F Lukis

August 1942 - November 1943 - Air Commodore A H Cobby

November 1943 - September 1945 - Air Commodore J H Summers

NORTH-WESTERN AREA

January 1942 - March 1942 - Air Commodore D E L Wilson

March 1942 - July 1943 - Air Commodore F M Bladin

July 1943 - September 1944 - Air Vice-Marshal A T Cole

September 1944 - September 1945 - Air Commodore A M Charlesworth

Commands in Western Australia**WESTERN AREA**

January 1941 - December 1942 - Air Commodore H F De La Rue

December 1942 - July 1945 - Air Commodore R J Brownell

July 1945 - September 1945 - Group Captain C T Hannah

Operational Commands in New Guinea and the Islands**No 9 (OPERATIONAL) GROUP**

September 1942 – February 1943 - Group Captain W H Garing

February 1943 – December 1943 - Air Commodore J E Hewitt

December 1943 – April 1944 - Air Commodore F W F Lukis

NORTHERN COMMAND

April 1944 – April 1945 - Air Commodore F W F Lukis

April 1945 – September 1945 - Air Commodore A L Walters

No 10 (OPERATIONAL) GROUP

November 1943 – August 1944 - Group Captain F R W Scherger

August 1944 - October 1944 - Air Commodore A H Cobby

FIRST TACTICAL AIR FORCE

October 1944 – May 1945 - Air Commodore A H Cobby

May 1945 – September 1945 - Air Commodore F R W Scherger

No 11 GROUP

July 1945 – September 1945 - Air Commodore R.J. Brownell

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List of Documents in Volume Two

Chapter 1 – Prewar

[There are no documents supporting Chapter 1]

Chapter 2 – Early Developments

- Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, circa 12th October 1939 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/6]
- Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 13th October 1939 [AA: M102,2]
- Policy Paper – Government Machinery for Higher Direction in War, dated 30th October 1939 [AA: A5954, Item 1597/4]
- Telegram from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 14th December 1939 [AA: MP288/2, Item 14]
- Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Acting Minister for Air, dated 19th December 1939 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 13]
- Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Prime Minister, dated 19th December 1939 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 13]
- War Cabinet Minute No (94) - Resignation of Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble, dated 21st December 1939 [AA: A5954/50, Item 803/1]
- Letter from the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 21st December 1939 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 13]
- Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, dated 22nd December 1939 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 13]
- War Cabinet Minute No (103) - Resignation of Air Vice-Marshal S J Goble, Chief of the Air Staff, dated 22nd December 1939 [AA: A5954/50, Item 803/1]
- Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 25th December 1939 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/6]
- Letter from the UK High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for Dominions, dated 1st January 1940 [PRO: DO 35/1003/1]
- War Cabinet Agendum No 8/1940 - Selection of Royal Air Force Officer as Chief of the Air Staff, dated 4th January 1940 [AA: A2670/1, Item 8/1940]
- War Cabinet Minute No (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., dated 4th January 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 803/1]
- Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 20th March 1940 [AA: MP288/2, Item 13]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 21st March 1940 [AA: MP288/2, Item 13]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 27th March 1940 [AA: MP288/2, Item 13]

Chapter 3 – Reorganisation

- Air Board Agenda No 2657 – Outline Plan for the War Effort of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 2nd January 1940 [Air Force Historical Records]
- Cablegram to the High Commissioner, London, dated 10th January 1940 [AA: A5954, Item 240/4]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, dated 11th January 1940 [AA: A5954, Item 240/4]
- War Cabinet Agendum No 52/1940 – Re-organisation of the Air Board, dated 26th February 1940 [AA:A2671/1, Item 52/1940]
- War Cabinet Agendum No 53/1940 – The Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 27th February 1940 [AA: A2671/1, Item 53/1940]
- War Cabinet Minute No (191) - Agendum No 52/1940 - Reorganisation of the Air Board, dated 28th February 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 803/2]
- War Cabinet Minute No (192) – Agendum No 53/1940 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 28th February 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 803/2]

Chapter 4 – Functional Commands

- War Cabinet Minute No (392) - Extension of Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 3rd July 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 804/1]
- War Cabinet Agendum No 53/1940, Supplement No 1 – Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 4th July 1941 [AA: A2671/1, Item 53/1940]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Secretary of State for Air, dated 9th July 1940 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]
- War Cabinet Minute No (672) - Agendum No 272/1940 – Business Member, Air Board, dated 12th December 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 804/2]
- War Cabinet Minute No (1070) - Control of RAAF Personnel Serving in Units Formed Overseas under the Empire Air Training Scheme, dated 9th May 1941 [AA: A5954/50, Item 806/1]
- War Cabinet Minute No (1184) Agendum No 53/1940 – Supplement No 1 – Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated 10th July 1941 [AA: A5954/50, Item 806/1]
- Cablegram from the Minister for Air to the High Commissioner, London, dated 2nd August 1941 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 26th August 1941 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/6]
- Letter from the Secretary of State for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 27th August 1940 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 10th September 1941 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]
- Australian Air War Effort, 2nd Edition, Chapters X and XVI, dated 15th September 1941 [AWM 54, Item 81/9/49 Part 2]
- Letter from the Prime Minister to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 23rd September 1941 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]
- Cablegram from the Minister for Air to the High Commissioner, London, dated 23rd September 1941 [AA: MP 288/2, Item 14]

Chapter 5 – Higher Command of the War

- War Cabinet Minute No (1631) – Coordination of Allied Operations and Strategy in the Pacific, dated 30th December 1941 [AA: A5954/50, Item 807/1]

- Directive to the Supreme Commander, ABDA Area, dated 3rd January 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 578/1]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (652) - Australian Representation on Machinery for Higher Direction of the War, dated 6th January 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (801) - War Cabinet Agendum No 118/1942 – Supplements Nos 1 and 2 – Future Policy and Strategy for Conduct of the War in the Pacific, dated 28th February 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- Directive to the Supreme Commander in the South-West Pacific Area, dated 30th March 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 578/13]

Chapter 6 – A Marriage Proposal

- War Cabinet Minute No (601) - Agendum No 239/1940 – Command of Naval and Air Forces in the Pacific Ocean and the Far East, dated 31st October 1940 [AA: A5954/50, Item 804/2]
- War Cabinet Minute No (1399) Agendum No 334/1941 – Air Defence in Far East – United States Proposals, dated 15th October 1941 [AA: A5954/50, Item 806/2]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (642) - War Cabinet Agendum No 6/1942 – Australian-American Cooperation, dated 5th January 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 27th February 1942 [Taken from Williams, R. *These Are Facts*, pp 411- 412]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 5th March 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the combined Australian/US Chiefs of Staff, dated 9th March 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 1 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (821) - Unified Control of Air Forces in Australia, dated 11th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- War Cabinet Minute No (1988) - Unified Control of Air Forces in Australia, dated 11th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 2 to 4
Advisory War Council Minute No (838) - Unified Control of Air Forces in Australia, dated 18th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 5

Chapter 7 – Drawing Up the Contract

- Minute from the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination to the Prime Minister, dated 20th March 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 6 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]
- Letter from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister, dated 20th March 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
- Paper: Re-Organisation of the RAAF, dated 24th March 1942 [Williams' Papers at RAAF, Museum, Point Cook]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 7 to 8
Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 2nd April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]

Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, dated 4th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
 Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 9 Letter from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister, dated 6th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]

Chapter 8 – The Minister Objects

Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 10 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]
 Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 8th April 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
 Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 11
 Defence Committee Minute 55/1942, dated 13th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 Message from the Secretary, Department of Defence to the Prime Minister, dated 14th April 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
 Memorandum from the Commanding General, USAFIA, to the Prime Minister, dated 14th April 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
 Memorandum of Organisation of Allied Air Forces in Australia, dated 14th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 War Cabinet Minute No (2109) - Assignment of Forces to the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, dated 17th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
 Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 12 General Order No 1, General Headquarters, South-West Pacific Area, dated 18th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 Paper: Notes on the Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, circa April 1942 [Williams' Papers at RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
 First Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 20th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 13
 Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 20th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 Second Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 20th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
 Minute from the Minister for Air to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 20th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]

Chapter 9 - Search for a New Leader

Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence – Return of Air Marshal Williams to Australia, dated 30th December 1941 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/9]
 Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 30th December 1941 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/9]
 Advisory War Council Minute No (654) – Return of Air Marshal Williams, dated 6th January 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
 Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Prime Minister, dated 5th March 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
 War Cabinet Minute No (1985) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 9th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]

- Note by the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 12th March 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- Extract from the Defence Act 1903 – 1939 and Regulations and Orders for the Australian Military Forces and Senior Cadets (1927) [Williams' Papers at RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
- Paper – Notes on the History of the Appointment of Inspector-General in the British Armed Forces, circa March 1942 [Williams' Papers at RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
- War Cabinet Minute No (2003) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 16th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (851) - Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 18th March 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 813/2]
- Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 20th March 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 26th March 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 1st April 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence Coordination, dated 4th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 9th April 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (913) - Chief of the Air Staff, dated 16th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 814/1]
- War Cabinet Minute No (2099) - Chief of the Air Staff, dated 17th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
- Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Prime Minister, dated 17th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 17th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- Prime Minister's War Conference Minute – Melbourne 20th April 1942 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/4]
- First Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 24th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 238/4]
- Second Cablegram from the Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, London, dated 24th April 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]

Chapter 10 - A Divided Organisation

- First Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Second Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 25th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 14 to 16 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]
- Letter from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Prime Minister, dated 25th April 1942 [AA: A5954, Item 238/4]
- Letter from the Secretary, Department of Defence, to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 26th April 1942 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/216]
- Letter from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Prime Minister, dated 27th April 1942 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/216]

- Letter from the Secretary, Department of Defence to the Minister for Air, dated 27th April 1942 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/216]
- Advisory War Council Minutes Nos (916) - Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command, and (917) - Appointment of Chief of Air Staff and Air Force Organisation, dated 28th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 814/1]
- War Cabinet Minute No (2127) – Assignment of Australian Defence Forces to the Supreme Command, dated 28th April 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 17 to 18
- First Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Second Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Third Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 29th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 19 to 21
- Message from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Minister for Air, dated 29th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 30th April 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 238/4]
- Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 30th April 1942 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/216]
- Article in *The Argus*, dated 7th May 1942. “Allied Air Force Staff: RAAF and US Air Corps Linked” [AA: A816, Item 31/30/216]

Chapter 11 - Dual Leadership

- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, circa 30th April 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- Cablegram from the High Commissioner, London, to the Prime Minister, dated 1st May 1942 [AA: A5954/69, Item 239/15]
- War Cabinet Agendum No 222/1942 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 5th May 1942 [AA: A5954/62, Item 239/15]
- War Cabinet Minute No (2130) - Agendum No 222 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 5th May 1942 [AA: A5954/50, Item 808/1]
- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 22 to 23 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]
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Minute from the Chief of the Air Staff to the Secretary, Department of Defence(?), dated 12th October 1942 [AWM: 3DRL 3414, Jones Papers]

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- Air Force Confidential Order 374 – Higher Organisation of the RAAF, dated 2nd December 1942 [AA: AA1969/100, Item 320/5B2]
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- Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 50 to 51
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- War Cabinet Minute No (2782) - Agendum No 107/1943 and Supplement No 1 – Organisation of the RAAF, dated 15th April 1943 [AA: A5954/50, Item 809/1]
- Higher Direction of RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 57 to 64
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- Extracts from a Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 21st April 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
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- Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 23rd April 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
- Extracts from a Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Marshal Williams, dated 7th June 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]
- Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 2nd July 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Secretary, Department of Air, dated 29th July 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Letter from the Chief of the Air Staff to Air Marshal Williams, dated 16th August 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Letter from Air Marshal Williams to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 25th August 1943 [Williams' Papers, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Chapter 18 – The Controversy Drags On

Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 69 to 70 [AA: A816, Item 31/301/300A]

Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Commander, Allied Air Forces, dated 29th September 1943 [AA: AA1969/100, Item 320/5C2]

Extract from War Cabinet Agendum No 457/1943 - Data Relating to RAAF as Required by War Cabinet Vide Minute No (3065) (Review of the Nature, Extent and Balance of the War Effort in Light of the Manpower Position), dated 8th November 1943 [Air Board Agenda No 5325, RAAF Museum, Point Cook]

Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 71 to 78

Message from the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA to the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 5th February 1944 [AA: A5954, Item 238/1]

Letter from the Commander, Allied Air Forces, to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 15th February 1944 [AA: AA1969/100, Item 320/5C2, 53A]

Signal Message from Allied Air Headquarters to AHQ No 9 (Operational) Group and RAAF Headquarters, copy to RAAF Command, dated 16th February 1944 [AA: AA1969/100, Item 320/5C2, 54A]

Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraphs 79 to 82

Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 16th February 1944 [AA: A5954, Item 238/1]

Higher Direction of the RAAF, March 1942 to March 1944, Paragraph 83

Letter from the Prime Minister to the Minister for Air, dated 1st April 1944 [AA: A5954, Item 238/1]

Extracts from General Kenney's Notebooks, dated February 1944 to June 1945 [Kenney Notebooks]

War Cabinet Agendum No 396/1944 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 3rd August 1944 [AA: A2671, Item 396/1944]

Notes on War Cabinet Agendum No 396/1944, dated 4th August 1944 [AA: A2671, Item 396/1944]

War Cabinet Minute No (3693) - Agendum No 396/1944 – Appointment of Chief of the Air Staff, dated 4th August 1944 [AA: A5954/50, Item 810/2]

Memorandum on the Higher Organisation of the RAAF, dated 19th August 1944 [AA: AA1960/100, Item 320/5C2, 44A]

Notes on Discussions with the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area, dated 30th September 1944 [AA: A5954, Box 238]

Minute by the Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 4th November 1944 [AA: A5954, Box 238]

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Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Commander Allied Air Forces, dated 5th January 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]

- Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Acting Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 5th January 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Chief of the Air Staff, dated 12th January 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Acting Secretary, Department of Defence, dated 12th January 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Prime Minister, dated 7th February 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Minute from the Secretary, Department of Defence to the Prime Minister, dated 23rd February 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Letter from the Prime Minister to the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA, dated 27th February 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Letter from the AOC, RAAF Command, to the Chairman of the Defence Committee, dated 5th March 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]
- Defence Committee Meeting Minute No 76/1945 dated 6th March 1945 [AA: A5954/1, Item 238/3]

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- War Cabinet Minute No (4217) - Machinery for the Higher Direction of the Services – Future Commands and the Assignment of Australian Forces, dated 28th May 1945 [AA: A5954/50, Item 811/1]
- War Cabinet Minute No (4217A) - Machinery for the Higher Direction of the Services – Army and RAAF, dated 28th May 1945 [AA: A5954/50, Item 811/1]
- Air Board Paper No 676/45 - Higher Organisation of the Royal Australian Air Force, dated May/June 1945 [Air Force Historical Records]
- Letter from the Minister for Air to the Acting Minister for Defence, dated 1st June 1945 [AA: A5954, Item 238/3]
- Advisory War Council Minute No (1611) Agenda No 39/1945 – Command of Australian Forces, dated 30th August 1945 [AA: A5954/50, Item 815/2]

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- Article from the Melbourne *Herald*, dated 22nd June 1946
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- Article from the Melbourne *Herald*, dated 26th June 1946
- Extract from *Hansard* (for the House of Representatives), dated 10th July 1946
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