

= John McCauley =

Air Marshal Sir John Patrick Joseph McCauley , KBE , CB (18 March 1899 ? 3 February 1989) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) . He served as Chief of the Air Staff from 1954 to 1957 . A Duntroon graduate , McCauley spent four years in the Australian Military Forces before transferring to the RAAF in 1924 . He was Director of Training from 1936 to 1938 , and commanded engineering and flying training schools for the first eighteen months of World War II . Having been promoted to group captain in 1940 , he was posted to Singapore in June 1941 to take charge of all RAAF units defending the area . He earned praise for his efforts in attacking invading Japanese forces before the fall of Singapore , and for his dedication in evacuating his men . After serving as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff in 1942 ? 44 , he was appointed to a senior operational role with the Royal Air Force 's 2nd Tactical Air Force in Europe , where he saw out the rest of the war .

Following the end of hostilities , McCauley again became Deputy Chief of the Air Staff . In 1947 he was promoted to air vice marshal and appointed Chief of Staff at British Commonwealth Occupation Force Headquarters in Japan . Returning to Australia in June 1949 , he served as the last Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Eastern Area and the inaugural AOC Home Command (now Air Command) . Raised to air marshal , he took up the position of Chief of the Air Staff in January 1954 , and was knighted a year later . During his tenure in the RAAF 's senior role , McCauley focused on potential deployments to Southeast Asia ? particularly Vietnam ? and threats from the north , commencing redevelopment of RAAF Base Darwin and recommending purchase of a light supersonic bomber to replace the Air Force 's English Electric Canberra . After retiring from military life in March 1957 , he chaired various community and welfare organisations , serving as Federal President of the Air Force Association for ten years . He died in Sydney in 1989 , aged 89 .

= = Early career = =

Born in Sydney on 18 March 1899 , McCauley went to school at St Joseph 's College , Hunters Hill , before entering the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in 1916 . He graduated as a lieutenant in 1919 , and spent the next four years in staff positions with the Permanent Military Forces , including a posting to Britain . In January 1924 , he transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force as a flying officer , undertaking the pilots ' course at RAAF Point Cook , Victoria . He was nicknamed " Black Jack " in tribute to his dark looks , but a " shaky reputation " as an aviator also earned him the epithet " Crasher " . On 10 November 1925 , he married Murielle Burke ; the couple had a son and two daughters . By 1926 , McCauley was back in Britain , studying at the Royal Navy College , Greenwich , and the RAF Armament and Gunnery School . He returned to Australia in 1928 , and was assigned to the staff of RAAF Headquarters , Melbourne .

Promoted to squadron leader , McCauley was posted a third time to Britain in 1933 , graduating from RAF Staff College , Andover , and qualifying as a flight instructor at Central Flying School , Wittering . The following year he was attached to the Air Ministry in London . Returning to Australia in 1935 , McCauley joined the RAAF 's Directorate of Training . That September , he initiated a requirement for all air bases to draw up plans for local defence . He also inaugurated operational @-@ level policy for the Air Force , ordering units to draft doctrine relevant to their combat roles , such as " Striking " for No. 1 Squadron and " Army Co @-@ operation " for No. 3 Squadron . Described as " a great leader , with a great deal of force " , McCauley took over as Director of Training in 1936 . He gained his Bachelor of Commerce degree at Melbourne University the same year , having studied part @-@ time since 1929 . His tertiary qualification was unusual for a general duties officer in the pre @-@ war Air Force , whose pilots generally " valued little beyond flying ability " . By 1939 he had been raised to wing commander and was commanding officer and chief flying instructor of the cadet wing at Point Cook .

= = World War II = =

McCauley 's seniority and instructional experience kept him in Australia on training assignments for

the first eighteen months of World War II . From March to October 1940 , he served as the inaugural commander of No. 1 Engineering School at Ascot Vale , Victoria . Promoted to group captain , he then took over No. 1 Service Flying Training School at Point Cook until July 1941 , when he handed over to Wing Commander Elwyn King . During McCauley 's tenure , the number of aircraft operated by the school doubled from its initial complement of 52 , and monthly flying hours increased from fewer than 1 @, @ 000 to more than 1 @, @ 800 .

During the Malayan Campaign in 1941 ? 42 , McCauley was in charge of RAAF units under Britain 's Far East Air Force (FEAF) . As station commander at RAF Sembawang in north @-@ east Singapore from August 1941 , he personally supervised the training and operations of Nos. 1 and 8 Squadrons , flying Lockheed Hudson light bombers . He also warned Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke @-@ Popham , the FEAF 's Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief , of the weaknesses of the Allied air defences . Deployed to forward bases on the Malay Peninsula , McCauley 's Hudsons were the first Allied aircraft to spot Japanese troop transports converging off Indochina on 6 December , and they attacked the fleet in the face of heavy defensive fire . By Christmas , as the Allies retreated from Malaya , Sembawang was " the busiest airfield on Singapore island " , with two Dutch Glenn Martin bomber squadrons in addition to the remnants of the Hudson units , along with Nos. 21 and 453 Squadrons (merged due to losses as No. 21 / 453 Squadron) , operating obsolescent Brewster Buffalos . On 29 January 1942 , McCauley took over airfield P.2 near Palembang in Sumatra , commanding all Commonwealth air operations emanating from the base . With his available aircraft augmented by Hawker Hurricanes and Bristol Blenheims , he conducted attacks on enemy convoys before evacuating the area on 15 February 1942 , the day that Singapore surrendered . After communications between himself and local RAF group headquarters were cut , McCauley was left to his own devices to make final arrangements for the demolition of equipment and departure of staff . He had earlier intervened to prevent RAF headquarters from dissolving No. 21 Squadron and using its personnel as a labour force on Sumatra , instead arranging their transport as a unit to Batavia , where they subsequently embarked for Australia . McCauley led the last party to depart Palembang , and was praised for organising the safe passage back to Australia of many Commonwealth air force personnel .

After his return to Australia late in February 1942 , McCauley briefly served as Senior Air Staff Officer at North @-@ Western Area Headquarters in Darwin , Northern Territory . He took up the position of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS) in May , and was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 1943 King 's Birthday Honours , promulgated on 2 June . The honour recognised the " courage , ability , and qualities of leadership " he displayed under " trying and difficult conditions during a period of service in the Far East " . The following month , he was promoted to temporary air commodore . During an inspection of No. 10 Group at Nadzab in March 1944 , McCauley learned that unless the Australian formation was able to increase its operational rate of effort , its units would be withdrawn from their forward airfields . As a result , RAAF Headquarters increased the supply of pilots and equipment to the group , which was then able to meet , and later exceed , the rate of effort achieved by comparable US Fifth Air Force units . At around this time , he also instigated a research program to determine a suitable formula for rotating and relieving ground staff , as well as aircrew , in the tropics .

Completing his term as DCAS , McCauley was posted to the European theatre in November 1944 , serving for the remainder of the war as Air Commodore (Operations) , 2nd Tactical Air Force RAF (2nd TAF) . The British had actively sought him for this particular appointment , which he commenced in December at the formation 's Brussels headquarters . The role involved him in the direction of over 70 Commonwealth and European squadrons in operations against Germany , and was " unique " for an RAAF officer during the war . He left 2nd TAF in July 1945 and returned to Australia later that year .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Among a small coterie of wartime RAAF commanders earmarked for further senior roles , McCauley retained his rank of air commodore following the cessation of hostilities . He served again

as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff in 1946 ? 47 . Promoted to air vice marshal , he was Chief of Staff to Lieutenant General Horace Robertson at British Commonwealth Occupation Force Headquarters in Japan from June 1947 to June 1949 . In this post he was preceded and succeeded by two other Duntroon graduates , Air Vice Marshals Frank Bladin and Alan Charlesworth respectively . Upon his return to Australia , McCauley was made Air Officer Commanding Eastern Area . During the Malayan Emergency , he formed RAAF aircraft assigned for deployment into No. 90 (Composite) Wing , as directed by Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal George Jones , to ensure that they would operate with a degree of autonomy rather than be dispersed throughout other Allied groups . He was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the 1951 Birthday Honours .

In January 1952 , Air Marshal Jones was succeeded by Air Marshal Sir Donald Hardman of the Royal Air Force . The decision by Prime Minister Robert Menzies to appoint a British officer as CAS caused controversy in Australia , compounded by his stated reason that there was " no RAAF officer of sufficient age , or operational experience , to take the post of Chief of the Air Staff " , which ignored the wartime records of figures like McCauley . Hardman changed the structure of the Air Force from one based on geographical area to one based on function , hence McCauley 's Eastern Area Command evolved into Home Command (now Air Command) in 1953 . Promoted to air marshal , McCauley took over from Hardman as Chief of the Air Staff when the latter 's two @-@ year appointment ended in January 1954 . According to official RAAF historian Alan Stephens , McCauley was " just as ready to become CAS in 1952 as he was in 1954 " , while a contemporary observer declared that " seldom has a better @-@ equipped officer led a branch of the Australian services " . He was the first of four former Duntroon cadets to successively head up the Air Force between 1954 and 1969 , followed by Air Marshals Frederick Scherger , Valston Hancock , and Alister Murdoch .

McCauley was raised to Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) in the 1955 New Year Honours . In October 1956 , he gave a presentation on air power concepts that was attended by Prime Minister Menzies , as well as the other Australian service chiefs . McCauley identified Malaya and Indochina , particularly Vietnam , as likely areas for future RAAF deployments , advocating a continued presence in Singapore in view of its strategic importance to the defence of Australia , as he had witnessed first @-@ hand during World War II . He also recommended that a supersonic light bomber replace the straight @-@ winged and obsolescent English Electric Canberra , primarily for interdiction in Southeast Asia . McCauley 's tenure as CAS saw the beginning of a trend for the RAAF to equip with US aircraft types in preference to British types , with recommendations being put forward for the F @-@ 104 Starfighter (though in the event the French Dassault Mirage III was purchased) and C @-@ 130 Hercules . This stemmed partly from his inspection of Allied air force units during the Korean War , when he observed that those employing American hardware were far better served with spare parts and replacement aircraft than those with British equipment . Some of his senior commanders had urged replacing the Canberra with Avro Vulcan heavy bombers , but McCauley did not pursue this option , preferring to concentrate in the short term on new fighter technology . He also made a point of supporting the Australian aircraft industry wherever feasible .

McCauley instigated the redevelopment of RAAF Base Darwin in the Northern Territory as the first stage of a forward defence strategy . He aimed to make Darwin the " main Australian base for war " and a launching point for deployments to Southeast Asia , rather than simply a transit station . Over the next ten years , No. 5 Airfield Construction Squadron transformed the base 's runways , buildings and other infrastructure into a modern facility capable of handling major operations . This concept was taken another step by McCauley 's successor as CAS , Air Marshal Scherger , who conceived a series of front @-@ line " bare bases " across Northern Australia , beginning with plans for RAAF Base Tindal in 1959 . Alan Stephens later described McCauley and Scherger as " among the RAAF 's better chiefs " .

= = Later life = =

After his retirement from the RAAF on 18 March 1957 , McCauley became active in community

welfare organisations , chairing campaigns for the National Heart Foundation , Freedom From Hunger , the Royal Humane Society , and the Cancer Council in the late 1950s and early 1960s . From 1964 until 1974 , he served as Federal President of the Air Force Association . In this role he endorsed the initial proposal , featuring monumental statues of airmen and ground crew , for the Royal Australian Air Force Memorial to be located on ANZAC Parade , Canberra . The design ultimately approved by the final selection panel , however , was an abstract sculpture that was subsequently described as reflecting a " comprehensive failure to understand the nature of air force service " . McCauley visited RAAF units in Vietnam in October 1966 . In 1970 , he played a leading role in organising the Australian Services Council (later the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council) to co-ordinate lobbying efforts for various veterans ' groups , and became its first chairman . He was also President of the Good Neighbour Council of New South Wales from 1966 to 1975 . Aged 89 , McCauley died in Sydney 's St Vincent 's Hospital on 3 February 1989 , following a stroke . He was survived by his three children ; his wife had died two years earlier .