

= Frederick Scherger =

Air Chief Marshal Sir Frederick Rudolph William Scherger , KBE , CB , DSO , AFC (18 May 1904 ? 16 January 1984) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) . He served as Chief of the Air Staff , the RAAF 's highest @-@ ranking position , from 1957 until 1961 , and as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee , forerunner of the role of Australia 's Chief of the Defence Force , from 1961 until 1966 . He was the first RAAF officer to hold the rank of air chief marshal .

Born in Victoria of German origins , Scherger graduated from the Royal Military College , Duntroon , before transferring to the Air Force in 1925 . He was considered one of the top aviators between the wars , serving as a fighter pilot , test pilot , and flying instructor . He held senior training posts in the late 1930s and the early years of World War II , earning the Air Force Cross in June 1940 . Promoted to group captain , Scherger was acting commander of North @-@ Western Area when Darwin suffered its first air raid in February 1942 . Praised for his actions in the aftermath of the attack , he went on to lead the RAAF 's major mobile strike force in the South West Pacific , No. 10 Operational Group (later the Australian First Tactical Air Force) , and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in September 1944 for his actions during the assaults on Aitape and Noemfoor in Western New Guinea .

After the war , Scherger served in senior posts , including Deputy Chief of the Air Staff , Head of the Australian Joint Services Staff in Washington , D.C. , and commander of Commonwealth air forces during the Malayan Emergency . In 1957 , he was promoted to air marshal and became Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) , presiding over a significant modernisation of RAAF equipment . Completing his term as CAS in 1961 , he was the Air Force 's first appointee to the position of Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) . As Chairman of COSC , Scherger became Australia 's first air chief marshal in 1965 , and played a leading role in the commitment of troops to the Vietnam War . Leaving the military the following year , he was appointed chairman of the Australian National Airlines Commission and , from 1968 , of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation . Popularly known as " Scherg " , he retired in 1975 and lived in Melbourne until his death in 1984 at the age of seventy @-@ nine .

= = Early career = =

= = = 1920s : Duntroon to Point Cook = = =

Born in Ararat , Victoria , the grandson of German immigrants , Fred Scherger was educated to junior certificate level at his local high school . His ancestry and surname made him the object of xenophobia in his childhood during World War I , which carried on into the early part of his military career and beyond ; as late as 1941 , an anonymous letter writer from RAAF Station Wagga would tell Prime Minister Robert Menzies that his " blood ran cold " at the notion of someone called " Scherger " commanding trainee Australian pilots . Scherger nevertheless entered the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in 1921 and graduated as a lieutenant in 1924 , winning the King 's Medal . Two days prior to graduation , he volunteered for an Air Force secondment , which was later made permanent . He commenced his flight training as a pilot officer (temporary flying officer) in 1925 at RAAF Point Cook , Victoria .

Scherger quickly took to the art of flying open @-@ cockpit biplanes and gained a reputation as a skilful if occasionally reckless pilot , being berated early in his career by his flight commander for " inverted and very low flying " . He was one of the Air Force 's first volunteers for parachute instruction , under the tutelage of Flying Officer Ellis Wackett at RAAF Station Richmond , New South Wales , and made the first public freefall descent in Australia , at Essendon , Victoria on 21 August 1926 . In February 1927 , he was asked by the commanding officer of No. 1 Flying Training School (No. 1 FTS) , Wing Commander Adrian " King " Cole , to drop a message to a woman at Port Melbourne before she departed on a steamer . After doing so , Scherger illegally flew his S.E.5

fighter between ship and wharf before heading back to Point Cook , only to be hauled into Cole 's office the next morning to find the CO brandishing a photograph taken by a member of the public , catching the young pilot in the act . Sent for a dressing down to the Air Member for Personnel , Group Captain Jimmy Goble , Scherger was forced to admit it was not the first time he had engaged in such stunts . Goble responded , " Good , I 'm glad to see we 've still got a few in the Air Force with spirit . "

= = = 1930s : Flying instructor to Director of Training = = =

By the 1930s , as a flight instructor and test pilot , Scherger was considered " perhaps the RAAF 's outstanding aviator " . He married Thelma Harrick on 1 June 1929 , and they had a daughter named Jill . Promoted to flight lieutenant , Scherger became chief flying instructor (CFI) at Point Cook that August . He also flew with Fighter Squadron , a unit of No. 1 FTS operating Bristol Bulldogs . As one of the leading pilots of the Bulldog , then regarded as the peak of military technology , and in what was generally thought of as the RAAF 's elite formation , he gained popular exposure that helped his later rise to senior leadership . In October 1931 , he won an Aero Club derby at Adelaide in a Bulldog , clocking a top speed of 160 @. @ 98 mph (259 @. @ 07 km / h) .

Raised to squadron leader , Scherger was posted to England in August 1934 to study at RAF Staff College , Andover . Just prior to departing , he was involved in a notorious incident at RAAF Station Laverton . A fellow squadron leader arrived home early from a mess function to find his wife sleeping with another officer , who escaped by crashing through the bedroom window . The squadron leader then pursued his wife with a loaded revolver , the pair eventually arriving at Scherger 's quarters . Faced with the frightened woman and the enraged husband crying that he would " shoot the bitch " , Scherger knocked the man down with a poker . The unconscious husband was placed in the guardhouse , and the woman given shelter off the base ; the officer she had slept with promptly resigned his commission .

Scherger graduated from Andover in December 1935 and over the next year completed courses at the RAF 's School of Air Navigation and Central Flying School . Returning to Australia , he resumed his position as CFI at Point Cook in May 1937 . At the direction of the Federal government , he was responsible for training the Treasurer , Richard Casey , to fly ; the use of Air Force facilities for his own benefit by an elected official led to adverse publicity when it was revealed by the media . In September 1937 , Scherger test flew the North American NA @-@ 16 at Laverton ; the evaluation program led to the design being adapted as the CAC Wirraway the following year . He was appointed Director of Training at RAAF Headquarters , Melbourne , in January 1938 , and promoted to wing commander in March 1939 .

= = World War II = =

= = = 1939 ? 42 : Outbreak of war to raid on Darwin = = =

As Director of Training at the outbreak of World War II , Scherger 's main challenge was to expand the RAAF 's pool of flying instructors . Central Flying School , Australia 's first military aviation unit , was re @-@ formed for this purpose in April 1940 . Awarded the Air Force Cross in June 1940 for his " outstanding ability " as a pilot and instructor , he took charge of No. 2 Service Flying Training School near Wagga the following month , and was promoted to group captain in September . In October 1941 , he was made commanding officer of RAAF Station Darwin , Northern Territory . Described by Major General Lewis H. Brereton , commander of the US Far East Air Force , as " energetic , efficient and very impatient " , Scherger started improving the operational readiness of the base and its surrounds without waiting for specific orders from RAAF Headquarters . The following January , he was appointed senior air staff officer , North @-@ Western Area (NWA) , which administered the RAAF Station and its satellite airfields .

In Air Commodore Douglas Wilson 's absence at ABDA Command Headquarters in Java , Scherger

was acting Air Officer Commanding (AOC) NWA on 19 February 1942 when Darwin suffered its first aerial attacks by the Japanese . Driving into town to meet Air Marshal Richard Williams , who was in transit on his way to England , Scherger first became aware of the assault after he heard anti @-@ aircraft fire and counted twenty @-@ seven enemy aircraft in the distance . He arrived at the civil airfield to witness a Curtiss P @-@ 40 crash land on the runway , before his car was strafed by fighters . In a lull after the initial attack that day , he made contact with Williams before the two men were forced to take shelter in a makeshift trench that was straddled by falling bombs as a second raid got under way . Afterwards , Scherger began to restore order and launched a Hudson light bomber on a reconnaissance mission , though there was no further contact with Japanese forces .

As well as the loss of civil and military infrastructure , twenty @-@ three aircraft and ten ships , and the death of some 250 people , 278 RAAF personnel had deserted Darwin in an exodus that became known as the " Adelaide River Stakes " . " There was " , in Scherger 's words , " an awful panic and a lot of men simply went bush " . Praised for his " great courage and energy " , he was one of the few senior Air Force officers in the region to emerge from Commissioner Charles Lowe 's inquiry into the debacle with his long @-@ term career prospects undamaged . In the immediate aftermath , however , his outspoken criticism of the RAAF 's state of preparedness alienated members of the Air Board , the service 's controlling body that consisted of its most senior officers and which was chaired by the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) . He was relieved of his position at NWA by the CAS , Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett , and shunted through a series of postings for the remainder of the year , including commanding officer at RAAF Station Richmond , supernumerary at RAAF Headquarters , Director of Defence at Allied Air Forces Headquarters , South West Pacific Area , and Director of Training at RAAF Headquarters . Seeking restitution , he boldly went over the heads of the Air Board and successfully appealed to the Minister for Air , Arthur Drakeford , supported by Commissioner Lowe .

= = = 1943 ? 45 : No. 10 Operational Group and First Tactical Air Force = = =

Scherger served as Officer Commanding No. 2 Training Group at RAAF Station Wagga from July 1943 until he was appointed AOC of the newly formed No. 10 Operational Group (No. 10 OG) in November . The Air Force 's main mobile strike force , No. 10 OG at its formation consisted of No. 77 Wing , operating A @-@ 31 Vengeance dive bombers , and No. 78 Wing , operating P @-@ 40 Kittyhawk fighters , as well as various ancillary units . Promoted to acting air commodore in January 1944 , Scherger established his headquarters at Nadzab , Papua New Guinea , in support of the US Fifth Air Force . Though able to launch No. 78 Wing 's first mission that same month , he had to deal with several organisational problems to bring all his squadrons to combat readiness , including lack of training in tropical conditions , and shortcomings in aircraft maintenance and staff rotation that resulted in the RAAF 's operational rate of effort being inferior to similar USAAF formations . These issues were overcome later in the year and No. 10 OG units began exceeding the rate of effort of their American counterparts .

By March 1944 , No. 77 Wing 's Vengeances had been withdrawn from operations due to their inferiority to newer equipment . Three squadrons from No. 9 Operational Group ? one each flying Bostons , Beaufighters , and Beauforts ? were assigned to the Wing as replacements , but No. 10 OG itself was moved from Nadzab to Cape Gloucester to permit USAAF units with longer @-@ ranged aircraft to occupy vital airfields on the Allied front line . The group 's disappointment with its withdrawal from Nadzab was tempered by news that it was to take part in the forthcoming attack on Aitape , New Guinea , codenamed Operation Reckless . Scherger was appointed air commander for the assault , leading US and Australian units . No. 78 Wing 's Kittyhawks shadowed the main task force while heavier aircraft from NWA conducted bombing and mining sorties to indirectly support the operation . The landings on 22 April 1944 met little opposition , credited in part to the Allied bombardment in the days leading up to it . With elements of No. 10 OG going ashore on the first day , Aitape airfield was repaired and No. 78 Wing was operating from it within three days . In June , Scherger was named commander of Australian and US air forces for the attack on Noemfoor Island . Over the course of the battle that commenced on 2 July , he controlled Nos. 71 , 77 , 78 and 81

Wings RAAF , as well as the USAAF 's 58th and 348th Fighter Groups and 307th and 417th Bombardment Groups . He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his actions at Aitape and Noemfoor , the citation noting that he " operated his air forces with great skill and success " and praising the way he placed himself " in the forefront of the landing of the ground troops " , where " his personal courage and leadership proved an inspiration to all personnel " .

A jeep accident in August left Scherger with a fractured pelvis , necessitating his evacuation to Australia for rehabilitation . In his absence , Air Commodore Harry Cobby took command of No. 10 OG ; two months later the formation was redesignated the Australian First Tactical Air Force (No. 1 TAF) . Still recuperating , Scherger acted in the role of Air Member for Personnel at RAAF Headquarters , Melbourne , from January to May 1945 . On 10 May , he was posted back to the Pacific to resume control of No. 1 TAF following Cobby 's dismissal in the wake of the " Morotai Mutiny " . He returned as Operation Oboe One , the Battle of Tarakan , was under way ; No. 1 TAF 's airfield construction teams had been tasked with opening the runway on Tarakan Island within a week of Allied landings but extensive pre @-@ invasion damage and adverse environmental conditions delayed this until the end of June . He then led No. 1 TAF in Operation Oboe Six , the invasion of Labuan , going ashore on the afternoon of the landings on 10 June to establish his command post . By July , when the final Allied offensive of the Borneo Campaign took place as Operation Oboe Two in Balikpapan , No. 1 TAF had reached a strength of some 25 @,@ 000 personnel ; by the end of hostilities on 14 August this figure had been reduced with the transfer of units to the recently formed No. 11 Group .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

= = = 1946 ? 57 : Rise to Chief of the Air Staff = = =

In October 1945 , Scherger led a survey team to Japan to review airfields and other facilities being considered for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force , determining that substantial work was needed to bring them up to the required capacity . The following year , he attended the Imperial Defence College , London . From July 1947 to July 1951 , he served as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS) , gaining promotion to temporary air vice marshal in May 1950 . He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the King 's Birthday Honours the same year . As DCAS , Scherger reported to Air Marshal George Jones , whose ten @-@ year term as CAS would be the longest of any incumbent in the position . The pair enjoyed a cordial working relationship , and Jones earmarked the younger officer as a leader of the future . However Scherger could not persuade his conservative chief to revamp the Air Force from its wartime area command structure into a more modern service organised along functional lines ; this radical change would await Jones ' successor , Air Marshal Sir Donald Hardman .

After completing his tour as DCAS , Scherger was posted to Washington , D.C. , to head up the Australian Joint Services Staff . Promoted to substantive air vice marshal , he became AOC of RAF Air Headquarters Malaya in January 1953 . In this role , he commanded all Commonwealth air forces in the region and was responsible for operations against communist guerrillas during the emergency . Scherger deliberately sited his headquarters , which had been based in Singapore when he took over , next to the offices of the Director of Operations in Kuala Lumpur , to more closely align air tasking with overall military planning . He expanded the use of helicopters for troop delivery and casualty evacuation , and presided over a change in tactics that saw an earlier policy of indiscriminate saturation bombing of jungle areas replaced by one of precision strike against enemy camps . He also pioneered psychological warfare in the form of " voice " aircraft broadcasting propaganda , close cooperation between light aircraft spotters and ground forces to aid bombing missions , and defoliation to clear jungle cover .

Appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath on 30 April 1954 for his service in Malaya , Scherger joined the Air Board as Air Member for Personnel in March 1955 . During his term he commissioned a review into the effectiveness of the syllabus at RAAF College for meeting the future

needs of the Air Force in an age of missiles and nuclear weaponry . This led to a policy of cadets undertaking academic degrees , in line with similar institutions in the other armed services ; the College was subsequently renamed RAAF Academy . Promoted air marshal , he became Chief of the Air Staff in March 1957 , succeeding Air Marshal Sir John McCauley . Long identified as a strong contender for the RAAF 's senior role , Scherger was described by Air Marshal Hardman as " easily the best material on offer " . He declared that as an administrator he was " not going to allow myself to be bogged down with minor matters of detail ... Broad policy comes from the top . These decisions have to be implemented in the commands ? and that 's the way it 's going to be . "

= = = 1957 ? 61 : Chief of the Air Staff = = =

As CAS , one of Scherger 's first tasks was investigating the feasibility of a nuclear arsenal for the Air Force . During visits to Britain and the US he explored the possibility of weapons being delivered by the RAAF 's Sabre fighters or its Canberra bombers . In 1958 , he held discussions with the Chief of Staff of the USAF , General Thomas D. White , about storing nuclear weapons in Australia under USAF control . In 1959 and 1960 , Scherger had information sent out , including manuals and maintenance instructions , regarding equipping the Canberras with Mark 7 nuclear bombs , the same type that the British Canberras used . For a time , Scherger championed the purchase of a force of British @-@ built Vulcan heavy bombers but excessive cost and a governmental determination to remain " under the shelter of the American nuclear umbrella " put paid to the proposal . Instead , in 1963 , the decision was taken to purchase the General Dynamics F @-@ 111 swing @-@ wing bomber " on the understanding that it could carry nuclear weapons " .

Turning to fighters , Scherger succeeded in reversing a publicly announced decision to purchase the F @-@ 104 Starfighter as a replacement for the Sabre , in favour of the Dassault Mirage III , a type better suited for Australia 's requirements . During trials he had taken the controls of a Starfighter , reportedly becoming the first Australian to fly at twice the speed of sound . He was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) in the 1958 Queen 's Birthday Honours .

An advocate of helicopters since his experience in Malaya , Scherger influenced purchase of the UH @-@ 1 Iroquois for Australia . He also played a key role in the acquisition of the C @-@ 130 Hercules transport in 1958 , over the Federal treasury 's " bureaucratic hand @-@ wringing " ; the type soon proved itself vital to defence force activity in the region , being described as second only to the F @-@ 111 as " the most significant aircraft the RAAF has ever operated " . The following year , harking back to his experience in 1942 , Scherger proposed a second airfield in the Darwin area , which led eventually to the establishment of RAAF Base Tindal near Katherine . He transferred funding already in place for extension of the runway at Laverton to effect this , signalling a fundamental shift in the Air Force 's " centre of gravity " to the north of Australia . The first edition of RAAF News (now Air Force News) , which had been sponsored by Scherger , appeared in January 1960 and carried a message from the CAS concerning current defence policy , as well as announcing that Sidewinder air @-@ to @-@ air missiles would begin equipping the Air Force 's Sabres . Scherger also oversaw introduction of Bloodhound surface @-@ to @-@ air missiles to the RAAF 's arsenal . Towards the end of his term as CAS , he expressed interest in Britain 's supersonic BAC TSR @-@ 2 as a replacement for the Canberra , but noted that it was " many years " from production .

= = = 1961 ? 66 : Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee = = =

Scherger became Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) , the senior Australian military position at the time , in May 1961 , taking over from Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling . Keen as ever to see a supersonic bomber replace the Canberra , he visited Britain in April 1963 to investigate progress of the TSR @-@ 2 . Using back @-@ channel sources of information , he satisfied himself that the RAF 's pronouncements on the bomber 's development were overly optimistic , and later that year began supporting selection of the F @-@ 111 as the aircraft best suited to supplant the

Canberra .

During the Indonesia ? Malaysia Konfrontasi , Scherger acted as military liaison between the British and Australian governments . Openly sceptical about the cease @-@ fire announced by President Sukarno on 25 January 1964 , he supported British requests for Australian combat forces in Borneo but was in the short term " overruled by ' political cross @-@ currents ' " . Towards the end of the year , he advocated bombing Indonesian air bases using RAAF Canberras in Malaya , but in this instance the British held back . Although Australia eventually deployed battalions of the Royal Australian Regiment from March 1965 , Scherger 's earlier optimistic estimation of the speed and level of his government 's readiness to commit troops was said to have confused the British .

The latter part of Scherger 's tour as Chairman COSC coincided with the beginning of large @-@ scale Australian involvement in the Vietnam War . By mid @-@ 1964 , the Commonwealth had already sent a small team of military advisors , plus a detachment of newly acquired DHC @-@ 4 Caribou transports , to the region at the request of the South Vietnamese government . At a joint US , Australian and New Zealand conference from 30 March to 1 April 1965 , and with instructions only to ascertain America 's objectives in the conflict , Scherger indicated that Australia would be prepared to commit a sizeable ground force , of around battalion size . Within a week , Prime Minister Robert Menzies ' Federal cabinet had ratified the proposal , which was formally announced on 19 April . The 1st Battalion , Royal Australian Regiment deployed to Vietnam in May 1965 , and two squadrons of the RAAF were committed by mid @-@ 1966 . With the formation of Australian Forces Vietnam (AFV) at this time , Scherger recommended that Air Force units effectively serve under Army control " to convey an image of all Australian forces fighting together , as one unit " . The Minister for Air , Peter Howson , felt that this made Scherger and the Army guilty of " exaggerated national pride " .

Promoted to air chief marshal in March 1965 , Scherger became not only the first RAAF officer to attain four @-@ star rank , but also the first Duntroon graduate to do so . Already considered " a particularly assertive Chairman " of COSC , his role was further strengthened by the promotion as he now out @-@ ranked the three service heads . His predecessors in the position had not advanced beyond three @-@ star rank . Scherger remained as chairman until retiring from military life on 18 May 1966 , having twice had his term extended by unanimous vote of Federal cabinet .

= = Later life = =

After leaving the military , Scherger became chairman of the Australian National Airlines Commission (ACAC) , the controlling body of the Federal government 's domestic carrier Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) , on 1 July 1966 . Considered as bringing to TAA " the dash and leadership the new air age demanded " , he presided over delivery of its first Douglas DC @-@ 9 twin @-@ jet transport in 1967 . The government 's Two Airlines Policy , designed to ensure even competition between TAA and Australia 's private domestic carrier , Ansett , meant that the decision of which airline would land the first DC @-@ 9 in the country came down to the toss of a coin , which Scherger won . He augmented his role at ACAC with chairmanship of the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation (CAC) from 1968 , and joined an Australian defence industries mission to the US the following year .

Scherger continued to lead ACAC and CAC until retiring to live in Melbourne in 1975 . He also served as director on the boards of other firms including electronics companies Plessey Pacific and International Computers (Australia) Limited . His wife Thelma died in a car accident in 1974 . On 3 March 1975 , at the age of seventy , he married Joy Robertson , a widow he had known three months . At the time , he was quoted as saying , " In the Air Force you have to move quickly or someone else will shoot you down " . In retirement he attracted some controversy by continuing to advocate for the Australian military to acquire a nuclear capability . Sir Frederick Scherger died in Melbourne on 16 January 1984 , having been ill following a stroke the previous year .

= = Legacy = =

Described by Air Force historian Alan Stephens as one of " the outstanding officers of the post @-@ war era " and " among the RAAF 's better chiefs " , Scherger is credited with helping to shift Australia 's defence posture to the north by developing the concept of a series of front @-@ line air bases in the continent 's top end , beginning with plans for RAAF Tindal in 1959 . From the time of his command of No. 10 Operational Group , he had an easy rapport ? and worked to foster relations ? with the US military , presaging closer defence ties with the Americans that he pursued as CAS . Among other things this manifested itself in the purchase of more and more US equipment for the Air Force , and far less from the United Kingdom . Once elevated to the position of Chairman of COSC , he further severed ties with Britain by removing senior Royal Australian Navy officers from the Royal Navy List , and dropping the words " ... and Chief of the Australian Section of the Imperial General Staff " from the title of Chief of the General Staff in the Australian Army List .

As Chairman of COSC , Scherger played a leading role in the large @-@ scale commitment of Australian forces to Vietnam . In an address at the Australian War Memorial in 2005 , journalist Paul Kelly referred to him as " Australia 's most prominent military hawk " at the time , who " exceeded his brief " by promising a battalion to the Americans before a formal request had been made . Historians Peter Edwards and Gregory Pemberton have written that " no official could have done more to press Australia into a military commitment in Vietnam than its most highly ranked serviceman , Air Chief Marshal Scherger " . Reflecting later on Australia 's involvement in the war , Scherger said " If you want allies , you 've got to support allies ... It was never conceivable to us that America could lose ? no way . "

Along with Athol Townley , Minister for Defence from 1958 to 1963 , Scherger urged the establishment of an Australian Joint Services Staff College (JSSC) , to further inter @-@ service knowledge and cooperation against an indigenous background instead of sending officers to overseas colleges ; the JSSC opened in 1970 as the Joint Services Wing of a proposed Australian Services Staff College , later being subsumed by the Australian Defence College . Scherger was also an early advocate for " one Australian Defence Force " comprising three branches , under one Minister for Defence , rather than three competing services , each with its own minister . According to his biographer , Harry Rayner , he bequeathed to his successor as Chairman of COSC , Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton , a position much invigorated and respected by the service chiefs and the government , and contributing to a more cohesive Australian defence organisation . In 1973 , the single @-@ service ministries were abolished in favour of an all @-@ encompassing Department of Defence ; by 1984 , the Chairman COSC position had evolved to become the Chief of the Defence Force , directly commanding all three armed services through their respective chiefs .

Rayner described Scherger as " the most quoted and best known of contemporary military leaders " in Australia from 1957 to 1966 , recognised and admired by civilian and soldier alike . Detractors accused him of cunning and excessive politicking , Air Marshal Williams declaring that Scherger favoured his friends in the service and later in TAA and CAC , and Prime Minister John Gorton famously calling him " a politician in uniform " . Scherger was also labelled a self @-@ publicist , but argued " ... you can 't sell your ideas unless you can sell yourself , and if you can sell yourself you 're half way to selling the ideas that you 've got " . The newest of the northern air bases he proposed while CAS , near Weipa in Cape York , was opened in 1998 and named RAAF Base Scherger in his honour . His name is also borne by Sir Frederick Scherger Drive in North Turramurra , New South Wales .