

= Colin Hannah =

Air Marshal Sir Colin Thomas Hannah , KCMG , KCVO , KBE , CB (22 December 1914 ? 22 May 1978) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and a Governor of Queensland . Born in Western Australia , he was a member of the Militia before joining the RAAF in 1935 . After graduating as a pilot , Hannah served in Nos. 22 and 23 Squadrons from 1936 to 1939 . During the early years of World War II , he was the RAAF 's Deputy Director of Armament . He then saw action in the South West Pacific as commander of No. 6 Squadron and , later , No. 71 Wing , operating Bristol Beaufort bombers . By 1944 , he had risen to the rank of group captain , and at the end of the war was in charge of Western Area Command in Perth .

Hannah commanded RAAF Station Amberley , Queensland , in 1949 ? 50 , and saw service during the Malayan Emergency as senior air staff officer at RAF Far East Air Force Headquarters , Singapore , from 1956 to 1959 . His other post @-@ war appointments included Deputy Chief of the Air Staff from 1961 to 1965 , Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Operational Command from 1965 to 1967 , and AOC Support Command from 1968 to 1969 . In January 1970 , he was promoted to air marshal and became Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) , the RAAF 's senior position . Knighted in 1971 , Hannah concluded his three @-@ year appointment as CAS a year early , in March 1972 , to become Governor of Queensland . He attracted controversy in this role after making comments critical of the Federal government of the day , and the British government refused to agree to his term being extended . Hannah retired in March 1977 , and died the following year .

= = Early career = =

Born on 22 December 1914 in Menzies , Western Australia , Hannah was the son of Thomas Howard Hannah , a public servant who later became a magistrate in Perth , and his wife Johanna . Hannah attended the Hale School , leaving with a Junior Certificate in 1930 . He served with an Australian Militia unit , the 8th Field Artillery Brigade , from February 1933 , and became a clerk in the Crown Law Department of the State Public Service later that year .

Hannah joined the Royal Australian Air Force on 15 January 1935 as an air cadet at RAAF Station Point Cook , Victoria . After graduating from No. 1 Flying Training School (No. 1 FTS) , he obtained his commission as a pilot officer in July 1936 . His first posting was to No. 22 Squadron at RAAF Station Richmond , New South Wales . Promoted to flying officer , he was appointed adjutant with the newly formed No. 23 Squadron at RAAF Station Laverton , Victoria , in May 1937 . Hannah accompanied the squadron , which operated Hawker Demons and Avro Ansons , to its new location at the recently opened RAAF Station Pearce , Western Australia , in March 1938 . On 5 January 1939 , he married Patricia Gordon at Claremont ; the couple had a daughter . Having specialised as an instructor , he then served on the staff of No. 1 FTS , Point Cook .

= = World War II = =

Promoted to flight lieutenant , Hannah was posted to Britain in July 1939 to undertake a Royal Air Force armaments training course , which he had barely begun when war was declared on 3 September . He completed the course , and returned to Australia in March 1940 . After brief postings to No. 1 Armament School , Point Cook , and Station Headquarters Laverton , he was assigned to Air Force Headquarters , Melbourne , in May . He was made an acting squadron leader in September 1940 and became Deputy Director of Armament the next year . In April 1942 , Hannah was promoted to temporary wing commander . He undertook a general reconnaissance course the following May .

In November 1943 , Hannah was appointed commanding officer of No. 6 Squadron at Milne Bay , Papua , flying Bristol Beaufort light bombers . During a familiarisation flight he came under friendly fire from anti @-@ aircraft guns on Kiriwina Island , but avoided serious injury . He was raised to temporary group captain in December , and assumed command of No. 71 Wing the following month . The Beauforts of No. 6 Squadron and No. 71 Wing took part in a series of major attacks on Rabaul

, bombing and strafing airfields , infrastructure and shipping ; this continued until February 1944 , when the Japanese withdrew their aircraft from Rabaul . The same month , Hannah fell ill and had to be repatriated to Australia . After six weeks recuperation at Laverton , he returned to No. 6 Squadron , based on Goodenough Island . From March to August , the squadron was mainly involved in convoy escort and anti @-@ submarine duties . In September 1944 , Hannah was appointed senior air staff officer (SASO) at Headquarters Western Area Command , Perth . He took over control of the formation from Air Commodore Raymond Brownell in July 1945 , following Brownell 's departure to command No. 11 Group in the Dutch East Indies .

= = Post @-@ war RAAF career = =

= = = Rise to Chief of the Air Staff = = =

Hannah handed over command of Western Area in October 1946 , and was posted to Britain . Over the next two years , he undertook study at RAF Staff College , Andover , and served as SASO at RAAF Overseas Headquarters in London . Returning to Australia , in May 1949 he assumed command of RAAF Station Amberley , Queensland . From August 1950 , he also held temporary command of the base 's Avro Lincoln heavy bomber formation , No. 82 Wing . Promoted to substantive group captain in October 1950 , Hannah was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 1951 New Year Honours , in particular for his " exceptional ability " as SASO at RAAF Overseas Headquarters . In September that year , he was made Director of Personnel Services ; his position became Director @-@ General of Personnel in July 1952 . As aide @-@ de @-@ camp to Queen Elizabeth II , Hannah was heavily involved in planning the RAAF 's part in the 1954 Royal Tour of Australia . He was raised to Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen 's Birthday Honours that June .

In 1955 , Hannah attended the Imperial Defence College in London , and was promoted to air commodore . He was posted to Singapore as SASO , RAF Far East Air Force Headquarters , in January 1956 , handling counter @-@ insurgency operations during the Malayan Emergency . Hannah 's " distinguished service " during the conflict was recognised with his appointment as a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in June 1959 . As Director @-@ General of Plans and Policy from March 1959 , he was responsible for commencing the Department of Air 's relocation from Melbourne to Canberra . In December 1961 , Hannah was appointed Deputy Chief of the Air Staff , receiving promotion to acting air vice marshal in May 1962 ; the rank was made substantive in January 1963 . He was later described by his staff officer in this role as " brusque " and " impersonal " though not unsympathetic , his " uncommunicative " manner stemming from a preference to " do his own research , think out the substance of his project submissions , dictate to his stenographer , then amend to his own satisfaction " , rather than delegate . Hannah served as Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Operational Command (now Air Command) from February 1965 to December 1967 , during which time the RAAF 's fighter squadrons completed their conversion from the CAC Sabre to the supersonic Dassault Mirage III . His tenure also saw the deployment of the first Australian helicopters to Vietnam , eight UH @-@ 1 Iroquois of No. 9 Squadron that departed Sydney in May 1966 . Hannah 's next appointment was as AOC Support Command , responsible for training and maintenance in the Air Force . Throughout his career to this point he was noted for his energy and drive .

= = = Chief of the Air Staff = = =

Hannah was promoted to air marshal on 1 January 1970 , and succeeded Air Marshal Sir Alister Murdoch as Chief of the Air Staff . Murdoch had earlier recommended Hannah , known to be a strong advocate for Australian participation in the Vietnam War , for the position of Commander Australian Forces Vietnam when it came up for rotation at the end of 1969 ; the post went to an Army officer , and the Federal government ordered the withdrawal of the RAAF presence in Vietnam

during Hannah 's tour as CAS . In March 1970 , the Minister for Defence , Malcolm Fraser , commissioned a review of naval air power . Hannah fundamentally disagreed with any suggestion that the Royal Australian Navy should operate land @-@ based aircraft , claiming that he was arguing not from a partisan perspective but to ensure that Australia 's limited defence resources were not spread across three services . Confidential RAAF papers from the time declared that its goal was always to " avoid giving the Navy the opportunity to establish a land @-@ based air force " . Two years later , Hannah responded favourably to a recommendation from the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee , Admiral Sir Victor Smith , to use the soon @-@ to @-@ be @-@ delivered F @-@ 111 bomber for maritime support , among other roles .

In the 1971 New Year Honours , Hannah was raised to Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE) . His tour as CAS coincided with the RAAF 's Golden Jubilee , celebrated in March and April that year . He personally organised a fly @-@ past of two US Air Force F @-@ 111s at air shows marking the occasion , generating favourable coverage to counteract the poor publicity surrounding the type 's long @-@ delayed entry into Australian service . He was also involved in two controversial decisions the same year . Firstly , he was a member of the committee to choose an Air Force memorial to be located on ANZAC Parade , Canberra . The selected design was an abstract sculpture that , according to official RAAF historian Alan Stephens , reflected " the selection panel 's comprehensive failure to understand the nature of air force service " . Secondly , Hannah commissioned a replacement for the Air Force 's winter uniform , traditionally a shade " somewhere between royal and navy blue " that had been personally chosen by the RAAF 's first CAS , Wing Commander (later Air Marshal Sir) Richard Williams , to distinguish it from the lighter Royal Air Force colour . Hannah publicly debuted the uniform that he approved , an all @-@ purpose middle @-@ blue suit , at a Point Cook graduation parade on 8 December 1971 . It was the object of much adverse comment in the ensuing years ; personnel complained of being mistaken for bus , train and postal employees . One of Hannah 's successors as CAS , Air Marshal Errol McCormack , ordered that the uniform revert to Williams ' original colour and style commencing in 2000 .

= = Governor = =

Hannah 's planned three @-@ year term as Chief of the Air Staff was cut short by some ten months when he accepted an offer to serve as Governor of Queensland , becoming the first officer in the RAAF to receive a vice @-@ regal appointment . The announcement was made in January 1972 , and he took office on 21 March . He succeeded Sir Alan Mansfield . Hannah did not have a strong connection with Queensland at the time of his appointment , and had only lived in the state during his period as commander of RAAF Station Amberley between 1949 and 1951 . He claimed not to have actively sought the governorship , and was criticised for failing to consult with senior colleagues before making his decision to retire early from his position as head of the Air Force . He was replaced as CAS by his deputy , Air Vice Marshal (later Air Marshal Sir) Charles Read .

Described when he took office as " a man with the flexibility of mind and ability to mix with people , so necessary for a Governor " , Hannah was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) and a Knight and Deputy Prior of the Venerable Order of Saint John in September 1972 . His term as Governor was relatively uneventful until 1975 . In October that year , he created controversy at a Brisbane Chamber of Commerce luncheon by criticising the " fumbling ineptitude " of Prime Minister Gough Whitlam 's Federal Labor government for placing Australia in " its present economic state " . Vice @-@ regal appointees in Australia were expected to remain above politics , but Hannah declared that he would be " guilty of sheltering behind convention , of denying my heritage and failing in my regard for the people of Queensland " if he did not speak his mind . The incident occurred in the midst of a constitutional crisis and , according to military historian Chris Coulthard @-@ Clark , was " widely seen as a blatant intervention in the national political arena " . The Federal government responded by advising the Queen to revoke Hannah 's dormant commission to serve in place of the Governor @-@ General if required ; at the time Hannah was the second in line to serve as Governor @-@ General , after the Governor of New

South Wales . Following his succession in November 1975 , Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser attempted to have the dormant commission reinstated , but the British government refused to recommend this to the Queen , citing lack of impartiality on Hannah 's part . Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke @-@ Petersen made it known that he planned to extend the Governor 's term , but the British government also refused to agree to this . Bjelke @-@ Petersen was prepared to pursue the matter , but Hannah declined to let his name be put forward again .

On 9 October 1976 , Hannah dedicated a memorial at Cairns to commemorate the crews of RAAF Catalina flying boats who lost their lives in the South West Pacific during World War II . His vice @-@ regal appointment lapsed on 20 March 1977 , and he was succeeded the next month by Commodore Sir James Ramsay .

= = Retirement and death = =

Hannah retired following completion of his term as Governor of Queensland . He was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) in August 1977 (backdated to March) as part of Queen Elizabeth II 's Silver Jubilee visit to Australia . Hannah died of a heart attack on 22 May 1978 at his home in Surfers Paradise , Queensland . He was given a state funeral and cremated ; his wife and daughter survived him . Hannah Community Park , straddling the suburbs of Fadden and Gowrie in Canberra , was established in his honour in 2002 .