

= Allan Walters =

Air Vice Marshal Allan Leslie Walters , CB , CBE , AFC (2 November 1905 ? 19 October 1968) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) . Born in Victoria and raised in Western Australia , he graduated from the Royal Military College , Duntroon , before transferring to the RAAF in 1928 . He was considered one of the service 's leading flying instructors and aerobatic pilots between the wars , and was appointed to his first squadron command in 1937 . Over the course of World War II , Walters led No. 1 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron in Singapore , No. 1 (Fighter) Wing in Darwin , Northern Territory , No. 72 Wing in Dutch New Guinea , and Northern Command in Papua New Guinea . He was decorated with the Air Force Cross in 1941 for his work with No. 1 Squadron , and mentioned in despatches in 1944 for his service with No. 72 Wing .

Walters was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1946 for his service with Northern Command . Already marked out for senior roles in the post @-@ war RAAF , his positions during the 1950s included Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Southern Area Command , AOC RAAF Overseas Headquarters in London , Head of the Australian Joint Services Staff in Washington , D.C. , AOC Home Command , Air Member for Personnel , and AOC Support Command . He was promoted acting air vice marshal in 1952 (substantive in 1954) , and appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1956 . Popularly known as " Wally " , he was twice a candidate for Chief of the Air Staff , and twice passed over . He retired from the RAAF in 1962 and made his home in Melbourne , where he died in 1968 at the age of sixty @-@ two .

= = Early career = =

Allan Leslie Walters was born on 2 November 1905 in Ascot Vale , Victoria , to schoolteacher Ferdinand Walters and his wife Edith . The family soon moved to Perth , Western Australia , and Allan completed his education at Perth Modern School , where he joined the cadets . After leaving school and spending eight months in the militia , he entered the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in February 1924 . At Duntroon he specialised in field artillery , and excelled at athletics . Graduating as a lieutenant in December 1927 , he transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on 1 February 1928 . Walters ' preferred career path in the military was engineering , and it was only when he failed to gain selection for this field after his graduation that he applied to transfer to the Air Force , which , having no cadet college of its own , had arranged with Duntroon to take one of its artillery specialists each year for secondment as a pilot . He commenced his course at RAAF Point Cook , Victoria , in mid @-@ 1928 , and graduated as a flying officer in March 1929 . Walters showed an aptitude for instruction , and after further training was graded an ' A1 ' flight instructor , a rare distinction . Posted to No. 3 Squadron at RAAF Station Richmond , New South Wales , operating Westland Wapitis , he also made a name for himself performing aerobatics at air shows throughout the country . Walters put this particular talent to use in pursuit of his wife @-@ to @-@ be , Jean Manning , stunt flying above All Saints Church , North Parramatta , where her father was rector . Reverend Manning married the couple there on 30 June 1930 ; their daughter Robin was born in Richmond .

Walters was granted a permanent commission in the Air Force in 1930 . On 5 January 1931 , by now promoted flight lieutenant , he won a trophy in an air obstacle race at the Cootamundra Air Pageant . In May the following year , he took out the NSW Air Derby and Evening News Cup . He temporarily commanded No. 3 Squadron during October 1933 , in the absence of Squadron Leader Bill Bostock . At the time , the commanding officer of No. 3 Squadron also held command of RAAF Station Richmond . Walters was posted to Britain in 1936 to attend the Royal Air Force Staff College , Andover , and was promoted to squadron leader in March 1937 , while still overseas . He also undertook a naval reconnaissance course at RAF Manston . Returning to Australia in May , he took command of No. 22 Squadron in June , flying Hawker Demons and Avro Ansons out of Richmond until February 1938 .

Between 6 and 23 February 1938 , Walters piloted the first overseas flight in an aeroplane designed and built in Australia when he flew the Chief of the Air Staff , Air Vice Marshal Richard Williams , to

Singapore in a Tugan Gannet . He returned to Richmond in May 1938 to lead No. 3 Squadron , operating Demons , and again took part in aerobatic displays . On 25 October 1938 , his Demon crashed in scrub at Tumbi Umbi , New South Wales , when the engine failed shortly after taking off for Richmond , but he was not injured . Completing his Richmond appointment in May 1939 , Walters transferred to Melbourne as Director of Staff Duties at RAAF Headquarters . Later that month , he joined Group Captain Henry Wrigley as an expert assessor on the panel of an inquiry into a recent series of three Anson accidents ; the full report handed down in October found human error the likely explanation for at least one crash and that training on the type followed the syllabus laid down , but that pilots needed more practical experience in dealing with potential in @-@ flight incidents .

= = World War II = =

Walters ' first operational appointment following the outbreak of World War II was as commanding officer of No. 1 (General Reconnaissance) Squadron , which he led to Sembawang , Singapore , in July 1940 . His promotion to temporary wing commander was announced the same month . He had earlier travelled incognito to Singapore on a Qantas Empire flying boat , which had been specifically requested to deviate from its normal flight path so that he could reconnoiter airfields in the Dutch East Indies . Deployed in response to fears of Japanese expansion in Malaya , No. 1 Squadron was the first Australian unit equipped with Lockheed Hudson light bombers , which were employed primarily for maritime patrol work . Walters was awarded the Air Force Cross for his " very active part in all operations " and for training his unit to " a particularly high standard " ; the honour was gazetted in the 1941 King 's Birthday Honours . He succeeded Frank Lukis as commanding officer of RAAF Station Laverton , Victoria , in May the same year , and was promoted acting group captain . In May 1942 , he joined Allied Air Forces Headquarters , South West Pacific Area (SWPA) , in Melbourne as Assistant Director of Operations . He was made a temporary group captain in September , and transferred to Headquarters RAAF Command as senior air staff officer .

On 7 October 1942 , Walters took command of a new formation , No. 1 (Fighter) Wing , at RAAF Station Richmond . Established to boost the air defence capability of Australia 's North @-@ Western Area , the wing comprised three Supermarine Spitfire squadrons that had been transferred from Europe : No. 54 Squadron RAF , No. 452 Squadron RAAF and No. 457 Squadron RAAF . With Wing Commander Clive Caldwell , Australia 's top @-@ scoring flying ace of the war , as his wing leader , Walters began deploying aircraft and men to Darwin , Northern Territory , in December , providing a filip for morale in the region . Proudly declaring himself Australia 's oldest fighter pilot , Walters was reported as taking every opportunity to join his men in the air . He flew as Caldwell 's wingman in No. 1 Wing 's first major action against the Japanese over Darwin on 2 May 1943 . Eight Spitfires crashed and several others made forced landings , for the destruction of one Japanese bomber and five fighters . Walters himself narrowly avoiding being shot down when he warned Caldwell of an attacking enemy fighter , to the detriment of his own safety . After they landed , Caldwell chided his commander , " You silly old so @-@ and @-@ so . You want to look after your own skin instead of worrying about someone else 's ! " On 20 June , Walters participated in the wing 's most successful combat against the Japanese to that time , personally accounting for one of fourteen raiders claimed by the Spitfires , for the loss of two of their own number . He posted out of Darwin a few days later , having earned the admiration of Caldwell and the rest of the wing 's personnel .

Walters assumed command of No. 5 Service Flying Training School in Uranquinty , New South Wales , on 30 June 1943 , but the next month was posted to Merauke in Dutch New Guinea to take over No. 72 Wing following reassignment of its original commander , Group Captain Charles Eaton . Comprising No. 84 Squadron (flying CAC Boomerang fighters) , No. 86 Squadron (Curtiss P @-@ 40 Kittyhawk fighters) , and No. 12 Squadron (Vultee A @-@ 31 Vengeance dive bombers) , No. 72 Wing came under the control of RAAF North @-@ Eastern Area Command , and undertook air defence and patrol tasks in and around western New Guinea . Group Captain Bill Hely assumed command of No. 72 Wing in May 1944 , and Walters was appointed Director of Staff Policy and

Plans at RAAF Headquarters . He was mentioned in despatches on 28 October 1944 for his " Gallant & distinguished service " in North @-@ Eastern Area , the award being promulgated on 9 March 1945 .

In February 1945 , Walters was promoted to acting air commodore and took over from Air Commodore Lukis as Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Northern Command , directing its operations in New Guinea , New Britain and Bougainville until the end of the war . Headquartered at Madang in Papua New Guinea , Northern Command had previously been a large mobile formation known as No. 9 (Operational) Group but had evolved into a garrison force , its mobile function supplanted by No. 10 (Operational) Group (later First Tactical Air Force) . Northern Command 's operational formations included No. 71 Wing in northern New Guinea , No. 74 Wing at Port Moresby , and No. 84 Wing on Bougainville . No. 71 Wing , commanded by Group Captain Val Hancock , supported the Australian 6th Division during the Aitape ? Wewak Campaign , despite ordnance deficiencies that at one stage led to its squadrons arming their Bristol Beauforts with captured Japanese bombs . No. 84 Wing suffered shortages in pilots and equipment during the Bougainville Campaign , and morale problems following the end of the war owing to inactivity and the uncertainties of demobilisation ; as a result , the wing 's commanding officer sent Northern Command headquarters a frank report , the tone of which earned a rebuke from Walters . In September , Walters represented the RAAF at the Japanese surrender ceremonies in Wewak .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Walters was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the King 's Birthday Honours on 25 June 1946 , for his " conspicuous service in operations against the Japanese " while leading Northern Command during the war . After completing his term as AOC Northern Command that year , Walters again became Director of Staff Plans and Policy at RAAF Headquarters . He attended the Imperial Defence College , London , in 1947 . Walters was among a small coterie of highly regarded operational commanders , including Air Commodores John McCauley , Fred Scherger and Val Hancock , earmarked by the Australian Air Board for senior leadership roles in the post @-@ war RAAF . In the short term , he remained a temporary air commodore ? with the substantive rank of group captain from May 1947 ? as the officer corps shrank drastically with demobilisation . He was selected as AOC Southern Area Command , hub of the RAAF 's training organisation , in March 1948 . The following month , he flew to Morotai to preside over a court @-@ martial for an RAAF airman accused of killing an officer of the Dutch merchant marine ; the airman was acquitted .

In January 1951 , Walters was appointed AOC RAAF Overseas Headquarters in London . That December , he was part of the Australian contingent at the Commonwealth Air Forces Conference , where an RAAF presence was sought in the Middle East ; this eventually resulted in No. 78 Wing being re @-@ formed and deployed to Malta in July 1952 . Although Walters was keen to use the opportunity to acquire the RAAF 's first North American F @-@ 86 Sabres , political realities led him to negotiate a deal whereby the wing was equipped with leased British de Havilland Vampire FB.9s. In October 1952 , Walters was promoted to acting air vice marshal and posted to Washington , D.C. , to head up the Australian Joint Services Staff as successor to Air Vice Marshal Scherger . Walters ' rank was made permanent in January 1954 , when he succeeded Air Vice Marshal McCauley to become AOC Home Command . Walters held this post , responsible for directing the RAAF 's combat units , for three years . His tenure witnessed the introduction of the CAC Sabre to operational service with the Air Force , when No. 3 Squadron took delivery of its first machine in March 1956 .

Walters was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in the 1956 New Year Honours . In March 1957 , he was one of three candidates , along with Air Vice Marshals Scherger and Hancock , touted as possible successors to Air Marshal Sir John McCauley as Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) , the RAAF 's senior position . Though Walters was considered to be very able , Scherger had long been regarded as outstanding and was " easily the best material on offer " according to a former CAS , Air Marshal Sir Donald Hardman . Scherger gained the appointment , and Walters

became Air Member for Personnel (AMP) on 21 October . As AMP he occupied a seat on the Air Board , the service 's controlling body that comprised its senior officers and was chaired by the CAS . In this role Walters endorsed the recommendations of a review by the AOC Training Command , Air Vice Marshal Ian McLachlan , that led to a policy of RAAF College cadets undertaking academic degrees , in line with similar institutions in the other armed services ; the college was subsequently renamed RAAF Academy . Walters served as AMP until August 1959 . The following month he was appointed AOC Support Command , a new organisation created by merging the RAAF 's former Training and Maintenance Commands . When Scherger 's term as CAS was due to complete in May 1961 , Walters and Hancock were once more put forward to the Minister for Air as potential replacements . " Walters was again unlucky " , in the words of Air Force historians Alan Stephens and Keith Isaacs , Hancock 's " professional ability , operational experience and personal qualities " being deemed more appropriate for the role .

= = Retirement = =

Walters left the RAAF on 16 May 1962 , after completing his posting at Headquarters Support Command . His pending retirement and succession by Air Vice Marshal Douglas Candy had been announced the previous November . Walters followed horse racing in private life . Survived by his wife and daughter , he died from cardiorenal failure in Heidelberg , Melbourne , on 19 October 1968 . He was accorded an Air Force funeral at The Scots Church , Melbourne , and cremated . His pall bearers included two former CASs , Air Marshals Sir Richard Williams and Sir George Jones , along with Air Vice Marshals Henry Wrigley , Joe Hewitt , Colin Hannah , and Douglas Candy .