James Rowland (RAAF officer)

Air Marshal Sir James Anthony (Jim) Rowland , AC , KBE , DFC , AFC (1 November 1922 ? 27 May 1999) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) , serving as Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) from 1975 to 1979 . He later held office as Governor of New South Wales from 1981 to 1989 , and was Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 1990 to 1991 . Born in rural New South Wales , Rowland cut short his aeronautical engineering studies at the University of Sydney to join the RAAF in 1942 . He was posted to Britain and served as a bomber pilot with the Pathfinders in the air war over Europe , earning the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1944 . The following year he was forced to bail out over Germany following a collision with another Allied aircraft , and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner .

After repatriation and demobilisation , Rowland gained his engineering degree and rejoined the RAAF . He became a test pilot , serving with and later commanding the Aircraft Research and Development Unit in the 1950s , and also a senior engineering officer , being closely involved in preparations for delivery to Australia of the Dassault Mirage III supersonic fighter in the 1960s . In 1972 he was promoted to air vice marshal and became Air Member for Technical Services , holding this post until his elevation to air marshal and appointment as CAS in March 1975 . He was the first engineering officer to lead the RAAF , and the first man to personally command it in a legal sense , following abolition of the Australian Air Board in 1976 . Knighted in 1977 , Rowland retired from the Air Force in 1979 and became Governor of New South Wales in January 1981 . He was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia in 1987 . Retiring from the Governorship in 1989 , he held a place on several boards as well as the Chancellorship of the University of Sydney . He died in 1999 .

Early life and World War II

Rowland was born in Armidale , New South Wales , on 1 November 1922 . He was the son of Louis Rowland , a commander in the Royal Australian Navy , and his wife Elsie . He evinced a fascination with aviation from an early age , carving model aeroplanes out of wood . Growing up with his three brothers on the family 's 3 @,@ 000 @-@ acre (1 @,@ 200 ha) rural property , he was schooled via correspondence before completing his secondary education at Cranbrook , Sydney . At 17 , he entered the University of Sydney to study aeronautical engineering , but left in May 1942 to enlist in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) as a pilot under the Empire Air Training Scheme . He was commissioned as a pilot officer in July 1943 and posted to Britain , where he converted to Handley Page Halifax and Avro Lancaster heavy bombers .

Rowland was posted to the Pathfinder Force that marked targets for other aircraft on strategic bombing missions over Europe . Considered an exceptional pilot , he became a master bomber with No. 635 Squadron RAF in 1944 . As a master bomber , his role was to arrive ahead of the main Allied force , check that flares marking the target were in place , and warn his fellows if they were bombing inaccurately . No. 635 Squadron operated Lancasters , a type that , Rowland recalled , " would forgive sprog pilots doing the most outrageous things to it , and would even bring them home with quite large bits shot off it " .

Having been promoted to acting flight lieutenant , he was on a sortie to attack Düsseldorf in December 1944 when he lost one of his engines . He nevertheless continued on to the target where , owing to his lower @-@ than @-@ normal altitude , his aircraft was seriously damaged by anti @-@ aircraft fire before and after he dropped his bombs . Nursing his plane back to base , he was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) in recognition of his " great determination and devotion to duty " ; the award was promulgated in the London Gazette on 16 February 1945 . In January 1945 , Rowland 's Lancaster collided with a Canadian bomber over Frankfurt , and he had to bail out with his surviving crew . Captured and held by the Gestapo in solitary confinement , he was scheduled to be executed but was saved by two Luftwaffe officers who had learned of his situation . They took him to a prisoner @-@ of @-@ war camp , where he remained until being repatriated at the end of hostilities .

Post @-@ war RAAF career

Rowland 's commission was terminated in November 1945 . Returning to Australia , he resumed his studies at the University of Sydney and completed his degree , before rejoining the RAAF as a member of its newly formed Technical Branch in 1947 . He was posted to Britain in 1949 to attend the Empire Test Pilots ' School . In 1952 , he was appointed chief test pilot with the Aircraft Research and Development Unit (ARDU) at RAAF Base Laverton , Victoria . Rowland led trial programs that involved many of the Air Force 's early jets such as the Gloster Meteor , De Havilland Vampire , English Electric Canberra , and CAC Sabre . Promoted to squadron leader , he earned the Air Force Cross (AFC) for his test flying achievements ; the award was gazetted on 1 January 1955 . He married Faye Doughton on 20 April 1955 ; the couple had a daughter , Anni .

Rowland attended RAAF Staff College , Point Cook , in 1956 . Promoted to wing commander , he took charge of ARDU from November 1956 until June 1959 . In 1957 , he raised concerns that the supersonic Lockheed F @-@ 104 Starfighter , touted as a multi @-@ role replacement for the Sabre , was ill @-@ suited for any purpose except interception . Defence Minister Sir Philip McBride had reached a similar conclusion , and kept the Sabre in frontline service until a more suitable aircraft could be chosen , namely the Dassault Mirage III delta @-@ wing fighter . From 1961 to 1964 Rowland was based in Paris , as Technical Staff Officer on the RAAF team preparing for the Mirage 's acceptance into Australian service . In contrast to most of the team members , he displayed a talent for language and by his second year was chairing meetings with Dassault engineers in French . After returning to Australia , he was posted to the Directorate of Aircraft Engineering at the Department of Air , Canberra , responsible for ongoing technical oversight of the Mirage .

In December 1966 Rowland became commanding officer of No. 3 Aircraft Depot (No. 3 AD) at RAAF Base Amberley , Queensland , with the acting rank of group captain ; his promotion was made substantive in November 1967 . After completing his tenure at No. 3 AD in January 1969 , Rowland was appointed Senior Engineering Staff Officer at Headquarters Operational Command in Glenbrook , New South Wales . In 1971 he was posted to Britain to attend the Royal College of Defence Studies , London . Returning to Australia , he was Director @-@ General of Aircraft Engineering before being promoted to air vice marshal to serve as Air Member for Technical Services (AMTS) , the RAAF 's senior engineering position , in November 1972 . The AMTS occupied a seat on the Australian Air Board , the service 's controlling body that was chaired by the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) . In March 1975 Rowland was raised to air marshal and took over from Air Marshal Charles Read as CAS , becoming the first appointee to the position who had joined the RAAF after the commencement of World War II . He was also the first engineering officer to lead the RAAF , and was selected over a more senior air vice marshal through the personal influence of the Defence Secretary , Sir Arthur Tange . The CAS was nevertheless required to be a member of the Air Force 's aircrew stream so Rowland , still a qualified pilot , had to transfer from the Technical Branch to the General Duties Branch . Soon afterwards , the stipulation for the CAS to be a member of the General Duties Branch was removed .

In 1976 , Rowland became the first CAS to personally command the RAAF in a legal sense , following dissolution of the Air Board , a consequence of defence reorganisation in the wake of the 1973 " Tange report " that recommended departmental rationalisation . A new Chief of the Air Staff Advisory Committee (CASAC) was set up , but there was no requirement for the CAS to accept its advice . According to Air Force historian Alan Stephens , Rowland considered that the " collective wisdom " engendered by the Air Board had been generally beneficial to the RAAF , and believed the new arrangements led to " ' paralysis and arrogation of decision making ' , and empire building in the Public Service component " . Though known as a strong committee member who enjoyed a good argument , he " found that the sheer time involved in attending meetings made it very difficult for him to run the Air Force ' the way [he] wanted to ' " . To help facilitate the cross @-@ fertilisation of ideas on air power between senior officers , he inaugurated an annual CAS Symposium . During his period as CAS , Rowland reoriented the RAAF 's priorities in line with the Defence of Australia policy

, which had been adopted by the government in the early 1970s . As a result , he placed the strongest emphasis on protecting Australia from air attack , followed by conducting air strikes on targets in other countries , and supporting the Army and Navy .

On 11 June 1977 , Rowland was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the military division (KBE) . In July the same year , he was awarded the National Medal with First Clasp , given " for diligent long service to the community " . Rowland 's original three @-@ year term as CAS was extended by a year . He retired from the Air Force in March 1979 , and was succeeded by his deputy and former classmate at RAAF Staff College , Air Vice Marshal Neville McNamara .

= = Governorship and later life = =

After leaving the Air Force , Rowland continued to live in Canberra , consulting part @-@ time for French arms concern Ofema . In late 1980 he was recommended by the government of Premier Neville Wran to serve as the next Governor of New South Wales , replacing Sir Roden Cutler . Rowland admitted that he did not have " the faintest idea " why he was chosen , and thought that " there must be a lot of people who could do it a lot better than I could " . He saw the role as the monarch 's representative in New South Wales as helping to provide " a valuable link with an older part of the world " . Wran , for his part , was understood to have chosen Rowland largely on the basis of his engaging personality ; it was also said that the Premier preferred military men for vice @-@ regal office because " they knew how to take orders " . Rowland was duly appointed by Queen Elizabeth II on 20 January 1981 . Upon taking office , he declared that he wished to be seen as a " man of the people " . To this end , he opened Government House to the public on a more frequent basis , and also extended invitations for official functions to a broader range of society than was previously the case .

As Governor of New South Wales and therefore the senior state governor , Rowland held a dormant commission to serve as Administrator of the Commonwealth and Commander @-@ in @-@ Chief of the Australian Defence Force during absences by the Governor General , and did so six times while in office . On one such occasion he was required to dismiss an old colleague , Air Vice Marshal James Flemming , from his position as director of the Australian War Memorial , Canberra , after the Government lost faith in Flemming 's ability to properly manage the Memorial . Rowland had served as one of Flemming 's referees when he applied to head the Memorial in 1982 . The journalist and public servant Evan Williams also credited Rowland with being " the first Viceregal whistleblower " for alerting the Wran government to an unusual number of early release requests for prisoners that he was being asked to sign by Corrective Services Minister Rex Jackson . The inquiries set in motion by Rowland 's queries revealed that Jackson was receiving money from criminals for misusing the early release scheme . Forced to resign , Jackson was later charged with corruption and imprisoned .

Rowland was awarded an honorary Doctorate in Engineering by the University of Sydney in 1983 , and also appointed a Knight of the Order of St John . On 26 January 1987 , he was invested as a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) for " service to the Crown and to the people of New South Wales " . At Sydney Town Hall on 3 October that year , he took the salute of Vietnam veterans during their official " Welcome Home March " . His governorship coincided with Australian Bicentenary celebrations in 1988 . A popular Governor , Rowland was considered by his Labor premiers to be " a safe pair of hands " . His original four @-@ year term was extended twice , each time for two years , by the Wran and Unsworth administrations . On 27 April 1988 , Rowland opened the Forty @-@ Ninth New South Wales Parliament with a new premier , Nick Greiner , whose Liberal Party had defeated Labor in the March elections . That November , he took a turn at flying one of the RAAF 's recently acquired F / A @-@ 18 Hornets piloted by Wing Commander (later Air Vice Marshal) John Kindler . He was succeeded on 20 January 1989 by Rear Admiral Sir David Martin . After retiring from the Governorship , Rowland served as President of the Royal Humane Society , Chancellor of the University of Sydney from 1990 to 1991 , and as a member of the Police Board from 1989 to 1992 . He was also a member of the boards of several private companies , including Angus & Coote and Thomson @-@ CSF Pacific Holdings , and Chairman of the

Aerospace Foundation of Australia from 1992 until his death in Sydney on 27 May 1999 . Sir James Rowland was survived by his wife and daughter , and accorded a state funeral .