

= Ian Dougald McLachlan =

Air Vice Marshal Ian Dougald McLachlan , CB , CBE , DFC (23 July 1911 ? 14 July 1991) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) . Born in Melbourne , he was a cadet at the Royal Military College , Duntroon , before joining the Air Force in December 1930 . After serving in instructional and general flying roles , he took command of No. 3 Squadron in December 1939 , leading it into action in the Middle East less than a year later . Awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross , he returned to Australia in 1942 to command air bases in Canberra and Melbourne . The following year he was posted to the South West Pacific , where he led successively Nos. 71 and 73 Wings . Having been promoted to group captain , he took charge of Southern Area Command in 1944 , and No. 81 Wing in the Dutch East Indies the following year .

Raised to acting air commodore in 1946 , McLachlan served as senior air staff officer for the British Commonwealth Air Group in Japan until 1948 . After leading North @-@ Eastern Area Command in 1951 ? 53 , he was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire and posted to Britain , where he attended the Imperial Defence College . Promoted air vice marshal , he returned to Australia in 1957 as Air Officer Commanding Training Command ; in this role he carried out two major reviews focussing on the RAAF 's educational and command systems . He was Deputy Chief of the Air Staff from 1959 to 1961 , and then Head of the Australian Joint Services Staff in Washington , DC , until 1963 . Appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1966 , McLachlan 's final post before retiring in 1968 was as Air Member for Supply and Equipment . He was a consultant to Northrop after leaving the RAAF , and lived in Darling Point , Sydney , until his death in 1991 .

= = Early career = =

The son of Dugald and Bertha McLachlan , Ian McLachlan was born in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra , Victoria , on 23 July 1911 . Following education at Melbourne High School , he entered the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in 1928 . He was one of four cadets sponsored that year by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) , which did not at that stage have its own officer training college . Budgetary constraints imposed by the Great Depression necessitated the transfer of these cadets out of Duntroon midway through their four @-@ year course . Although offered positions in the Australian Public Service or nominations for short @-@ term commissions with the Royal Air Force , all were determined to serve with the RAAF , apparently " delighted " at the prospect of entering their chosen service early .

Enlisting in the Air Force on 10 December 1930 , McLachlan completed his flight training the following year . He was commissioned as a pilot in 1932 , and undertook various flight @-@ instruction and general duties roles over the next five years . In 1937 , he was a member of the RAAF contingent posted to Britain to celebrate the coronation of King George VI . Ranked flight lieutenant , he was given command of No. 3 (Army Cooperation) Squadron , operating Hawker Demon fighters out of RAAF Station Richmond , New South Wales , on 4 December 1939 . He was promoted to squadron leader on 1 February 1940 , and led his unit to the Middle East on 15 July .

= = Combat service = =

= = Middle East = =

Sailing via Bombay , India , No. 3 Squadron arrived at Suez , Egypt , in late August 1940 . In its original army cooperation role supporting the Australian 6th Division in the North African Campaign , the squadron was equipped with obsolescent Gloster Gladiator biplane fighters and Westland Lysander observation aircraft . As part of his unit 's work @-@ up for operations , McLachlan organised training exercises with the 6th Division , as well as written exams to test his men 's knowledge of army jargon and air @-@ to @-@ ground communications .

Described by historian Alan Stephens as " acerbic but capable " , McLachlan led No. 3 Squadron through the Battle of Sidi Barrani in December 1940 , followed by the Battle of Bardia and the capture of Tobruk in January 1941 . Prior to converting to Hawker Hurricanes that month , the unit was credited with destroying twelve Italian aircraft for the loss of five Gladiators and two pilots ; McLachlan shot down a Fiat CR.42 on 10 December 1940 , the same action in which fellow squadron member and future ace Gordon Steege claimed his first " kill " . Air Officer Commanding @-@ in @-@ Chief RAF Middle East , Air Marshal Sir Arthur Longmore , praised McLachlan and his squadron for their " high morale and adaptability to desert conditions " .

McLachlan was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for his " fine qualities as a fighter pilot " and " determined leadership " in the face of often " overwhelming numbers of enemy aircraft " ; the citation was promulgated in the London Gazette on 11 February 1941 under the name " Ian Duncan MacLachlan " . He was the first RAAF fighter pilot to be decorated in World War II . Promoted to wing commander , he took charge of the newly established RAF Benina , Benghazi , on 13 February , handing over No. 3 Squadron to Squadron Leader Peter Jeffrey . By May 1941 , McLachlan was acting as RAAF Liaison Officer for the new Air Officer Commanding @-@ in @-@ Chief , RAF Middle East , Air Marshal Arthur Tedder . The Air Board in Melbourne , headed by the Chief of the Air Staff , Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett , was not consulted over this change of role and took exception to the RAF 's " unilateral action " in appointing McLachlan , but eventually acquiesced and permitted him to remain at the post to coordinate facilities for RAAF personnel in the region until July , when he was recalled to Australia .

= = = South West Pacific = = =

In 1942 McLachlan took command of RAAF Station Canberra , and , later in the year , RAAF Station Laverton , Victoria . Posted for action in New Guinea , he became the inaugural commander of No. 71 Wing at Milne Bay in February 1943 . The wing consisted of No. 6 Squadron (flying Lockheed Hudsons) , No. 75 Squadron (P @-@ 40 Kittyhawks) , No. 77 Squadron (Kittyhawks) , and No. 100 Squadron (Bristol Beauforts) . It came under the control of No. 9 Operational Group , the RAAF 's " premier fighting unit " in the South West Pacific Area (SWPA) , whose purpose was to act as a mobile strike force in support of advancing Allied troops . In March the Beauforts took part in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea , " the decisive aerial engagement " in the SWPA according to General Douglas MacArthur , though they were unable to score any hits against Japanese ships .

By June 1943 , McLachlan had been promoted group captain and given command of No. 73 Wing . He established his headquarters at Goodenough Island , where he was responsible for organising the wing into a fighter formation consisting of No. 76 Squadron (Kittyhawks) , No. 77 Squadron (Kittyhawks) and No. 79 Squadron (Spitfires) . As well as providing local air defence , and fighter escort for Australian bombers , the Kittyhawks were armed with incendiary and general @-@ purpose bombs so that they could engage in ground attack missions , a practice that had already been employed by Commonwealth forces in the Middle Eastern theatre . In August , the wing transferred to Kiriwina , while No. 9 Group 's other combat formation , No. 71 Wing , took over responsibility for Goodenough . Appointed senior air staff officer (SASO) at No. 9 Group , McLachlan handed over command of No. 73 Wing to Wing Commander Gordon Steege in October 1943 . Towards the end of his posting to No. 9 Group , McLachlan told its former commander , Air Commodore Joe Hewitt , that the USAAF was " leaping ahead " of the RAAF , which was being left to " clean up the remnants " of Japanese resistance . He feared that Australian fighter pilots especially would be " increasingly restless if the Americans took all the fighting plums " . Barely a year later , morale among senior RAAF fighter pilots had dropped to such an extent that eight of them tried to resign their commissions in the so @-@ called " Morotai Mutiny " .

In March 1944 , McLachlan took charge of Southern Area Command , Melbourne , with responsibility for maritime patrol , convoy escort and anti @-@ submarine warfare in southern Australian waters ; he handed over to Group Captain Charles Eaton the following January . Mentioned in despatches on 9 March 1945 for his " gallant and distinguished service " , McLachlan returned to action in the South @-@ West Pacific as commander of No. 81 Wing , which comprised

Nos. 76 , 77 and 82 Squadrons , operating Kittyhawks . As part of the Australian First Tactical Air Force in the Dutch East Indies , the wing was slated to take part in Operation Oboe One , the Battle of Tarakan , in May but was unable to relocate from Noemfoor to its new base on Morotai in time . It fought in Operation Oboe Six , the invasion of Labuan , from June and was based on the island when the Pacific War ended in August 1945 .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Following the end of hostilities , McLachlan volunteered to serve with the Allied occupation forces in Japan . He married Margaret Helen Chrystal on 5 January 1946 ; they had a son and a daughter . Promoted to acting air commodore on 1 March , he was appointed SASO of the British Commonwealth Air Group (BCAIR) , headquartered in Kure and responsible for No. 81 Wing RAAF , as well as squadrons from the Royal Air Force , Royal New Zealand Air Force , and Indian Air Force . Returning to Australia in 1948 , he served as Air Commodore Operations at RAAF Headquarters , Melbourne , at which time the English Electric Canberra was ordered as Australia 's first jet bomber , partly for its ability to deliver nuclear weapons . He completed his term in September 1951 and took over North @-@ Eastern Area Command , based at Townsville , Queensland . Following his appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1954 New Year 's Honours , McLachlan was posted to Britain for three years , first attending the Imperial Defence College , London , and then serving as RAF Director of Flying Training at the Air Ministry during 1955 ? 56 . Raised to air vice @-@ marshal , he returned to Australia in 1957 to become Air Officer Commanding (AOC) Training Command in Melbourne .

As AOC Training Command , McLachlan undertook two reviews that would have , according to the official history of the post @-@ war RAAF , " a significant effect on the Air Force of the 1960s " . In 1957 , at the instigation of the Air Member for Personnel , Air Vice Marshal Frederick Scherger , McLachlan formed a committee to review the effectiveness of the syllabus at RAAF College for meeting the future needs of the Air Force in an age of guided 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 . The official history of the RAAF considered the result to be only partially successful ; while it turned out highly educated officers , they were educated solely in a rigid scientific discipline suited to an Air Force that never came into existence , one relying on missiles rather than manned aircraft . In 1959 , McLachlan chaired a committee to review the change in the RAAF 's command structure that had taken place in 1953 ? 54 , from a geographically based " area " system to a functional system consisting of Home , Maintenance Command , and Training Commands . Concluding that this had reduced duplication and improved efficiency , he proposed further rationalisation by amalgamating Training and Maintenance Commands to form a new organisation , Support Command . His plan was duly implemented , as was his recommendation that Home Command , responsible for air operations , be renamed Operational Command .

McLachlan was appointed Deputy Chief of the Air Staff in 1959 , before being posted to Washington , DC , as attaché heading up the Australian Joint Services Staff in 1961 . During his term in the US , Australia ordered the General Dynamics F @-@ 111C swing @-@ wing bomber as a replacement for the Canberra . Despite what was touted as a firm timetable and cost schedule for the order , McLachlan confided to a colleague that he had serious concerns about when and if the RAAF would actually get the F @-@ 111 , and what the final cost would be . According to Air Force historian Alan Stephens , " even for such a shrewd and sardonic man as McLachlan , that was to prove a painfully prescient observation " , as the new bomber was delivered six years late and massively over budget . Following his return from Washington , McLachlan became Air Member for Supply and Equipment (AMSE) in February 1964 . As AMSE he sat on the Air Board , the service 's controlling body that consisted of its most senior officers , chaired by the Chief of the Air Staff . In this position he worked to increase the proportion of tertiary educated supply officers , following similar achievements among engineering officers in the RAAF 's Technical Branch . He was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in the 1966 New Year 's Honours , the citation

noting particularly his chairmanship of the two " historic " committees that reorganised RAAF College and the Air Force 's command structure in the late 1950s . The use of electronic data processing became more widespread during McLachlan 's tenure as AMSE , and by 1968 the RAAF 's supply system had been computerised .

= = Later life = =

McLachlan completed his term as Air Member for Supply and Equipment on 23 July 1968 and retired from the RAAF ; he was divorced from his wife the same year . Upon leaving the military , he became an aeronautical consultant to the Northrop Corporation , and chairman of Information Electronics Pty Ltd from 1983 , serving in both positions until 1987 . He was also chairman of Pokolbin Winemakers from 1970 through 1975 . In retirement he continued to exercise his interest in Australia 's defence , joining in 1975 a group of pundits , including former Chief of the Air Staff Sir Alister Murdoch , who promoted the addition of nuclear weapons to the country 's arsenal . A resident of Sydney 's Darling Point , Ian McLachlan died on 14 July 1991 .