

= George Jones ( RAAF officer ) =

Air Marshal Sir George Jones , KBE , CB , DFC ( 18 October 1896 ? 24 August 1992 ) was a senior commander in the Royal Australian Air Force ( RAAF ) . He rose from private soldier in World War I to air marshal in 1948 , and served as Chief of the Air Staff from 1942 to 1952 , the longest continuous tenure of any RAAF chief . Jones was a surprise appointee to the Air Force ' s top role , and his achievements in the position were coloured by a divisive relationship during World War II with his nominal subordinate , the head of RAAF Command , Air Vice - @ - @ Marshal William Bostock .

During World War I , Jones saw action as an infantryman in the Gallipoli Campaign of 1915 , before transferring to the Australian Flying Corps a year later . Originally a mechanic , he undertook flying training in 1917 and was posted to a fighter squadron in France . He achieved seven victories to become an ace , and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross . After a short spell in civilian life following World War I , he joined the newly formed RAAF in 1921 , and rose steadily through training and personnel commands prior to World War II .

Jones did not actively seek the position of Chief of the Air Staff before being appointed in 1942 , and his conflict with Bostock ? with whom he had been friends for 20 years ? was partly the result of a divided command structure , which neither man had any direct role in shaping . After World War II , Jones had overall responsibility for transforming what was then the world ' s fourth largest air force into a peacetime service that was also able to meet overseas commitments in Malaya and Korea . Following his retirement from the RAAF , he continued to serve in the aircraft industry and later ran unsuccessfully for political office . He was knighted in 1953 .

= = Early life = =

George Jones was born on 18 October 1896 near Rushworth , a rural community in Victoria . The date appearing on his birth certificate was the day of registration , 22 November . His father , a miner , had died in an accident three months before the birth , leaving his family in poverty . The youngest of ten children , Jones was brought up in a strict Methodist household and for his entire life rarely touched alcohol . He attended Rushworth State School , and completed his education at the age of 14 with a Certificate of Merit .

Following his schooling , Jones took an apprenticeship as a carpenter before moving to Melbourne , where he became a motor mechanic . He worked in several garages before commencing a part @ - @ time course in fitting and turning at the Working Men ' s College of Melbourne . His college studies were curtailed by the outbreak of World War I , by which time he had accumulated three years part @ - @ time military service , firstly in cadets and later in a militia unit , the 29th Light Horse Regiment .

= = World War I = =

In May 1915 Jones joined the Australian Imperial Force , embarking for Egypt in August with the 9th Light Horse Regiment . He landed at Gallipoli the following month and served there until the end of the campaign in December . His experiences at Gallipoli , especially witnessing the death by enemy fire of one of his friends , affected him deeply and he suffered from headaches and nightmares for years afterwards . After briefly transferring to the Imperial Camel Corps , Jones applied to join the Australian Flying Corps ( AFC ) in October 1916 , taking a drop in rank from corporal to private to do so .

Jones became an air mechanic in No. 1 Squadron AFC ( known as No. 67 Squadron Royal Flying Corps by the British ) , before being accepted for flying training in England . He gained his wings on 22 November 1917 and was posted to No. 4 Squadron AFC ( also known as No. 71 Squadron RFC ) as a second lieutenant in January the following year . Flying Sopwith Camels and Snipes on the Western Front , Jones finished the war a captain and an ace , with seven aerial victories from 150 patrols . He was badly injured by a bullet wound and petrol burns in combat with a German fighter in

March 1918 , and did not return to his unit for three months . On 29 October 1918 he achieved two kills in one engagement , at Tournai , in what is frequently described as " one of the greatest air battles of the war " . Amid a confrontation involving over 75 Allied and German fighters , Jones led his patrol of three Snipes in a dive on ten Fokkers , destroying a brace of enemy aircraft in the attack . He was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross for displaying " the greatest daring and ability in aerial fighting " ; the award was promulgated in the London Gazette on 5 April 1919 .

= = Inter @-@ war years = =

Jones remained with the Australian Flying Corps until June 1919 , as part of the British Occupation forces in Germany . After returning to Australia he worked as a turner in Melbourne . He married Muriel Cronan , a clerk who also played piano professionally , on 15 November 1919 . They had met prior to the war and kept in touch throughout Jones ' overseas postings . The couple 's first child , Ronald , arrived on 2 October 1920 . A second son , Ian , would be born on 26 June 1934 . Jones was described by family members as being a somewhat distant husband and father , dedicated to his career and rarely given to obvious displays of emotion .

Encouraged by a fellow No. 4 Squadron veteran , Harry Cobby , Jones applied to join the new Australian Air Force on 22 March 1921 ( the prefix " Royal " was added that August ) . His rank was flying officer , one below the equivalent of his AFC rank of captain . Another Australian pilot joining the fledgling Air Force was William ( Bill ) Bostock , a lieutenant in World War I. The pair became firm friends , Bostock acting as something of a mentor to the younger officer . Jones was promoted to flight lieutenant on 1 July 1923 . Nicknamed " Jonah " , he was also known as " Yellow Jones " in his early days with the RAAF , not through any perceived lack of moral fibre but as a result of the lingering effects on his skin of jaundice , contracted while a soldier at Gallipoli .

Posted to RAAF Point Cook , Victoria , Jones was put in charge of the Motor Transport Repair Section and made acting ( later permanent ) Officer Commanding Workshops . He was highly regarded for his technical and administrative ability but rated only " average " in command and dealing with personnel . In 1926 he took up flight instruction and within a year had been graded a 1A Flying Instructor . He was promoted to squadron leader on 31 March 1927 and given command of Flying Squadron at No. 1 Flying Training School ( No. 1 FTS ) . Jones spent two years in Britain from 1928 , attending the Royal Air Force Staff College , Andover , and graduating top of his class at the RAF 's Central Flying School . He later recalled of this posting , " The social life was new to me , as was the etiquette ... I learned as fast as I could , but I have no doubt that I unwittingly committed many a social blunder . " As the RAAF 's senior officer in the UK , Jones had expected to be invited to accompany the airship R101 on its maiden flight to India . Instead another Australian officer was nominated to make the trip , and Jones avoided the disaster which followed .

Returning to Australia in October 1930 , Jones was made Chief Flying Instructor at Point Cook and Officer Commanding No. 1 FTS . He became Director of Training at RAAF Headquarters , Melbourne , in November 1931 . On 2 April 1932 , he was taking off from Mascot , New South Wales , in a de Havilland Moth when he struck the perimeter fence and crashed , resulting in major damage to the aircraft and injuries to himself and his passenger . His performance in the early 1930s was highly regarded by his superiors , regularly being assessed as " above average " or " exceptional " . From late 1934 to early 1935 , he collaborated with the Director of Equipment , George Mackinolty , on an investigation into the state of aircraft production in Australia to highlight shortfalls in local defence in the face of possible future conflict with Japan . Though the report was reviewed enthusiastically by the Air Member for Personnel , Bill Anderson , it apparently went no further in the chain of command and thus was effectively ignored . In January 1936 , Jones was promoted to wing commander and appointed Director of Personnel Services .

= = World War II = =

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

Shortly after the outbreak of World War II , on 1 December 1939 , Jones was raised to temporary group captain . In March 1940 , he returned to the position of Director of Training and assumed responsibility for Australia 's part in the Empire Air Training Scheme ( EATS ) , establishing many schools , acquiring hundreds of aircraft , and overseeing the training of thousands of airman . The RAAF 's Central Flying School was reformed in April 1940 to meet the vital requirement for additional flying instructors , whose numbers would grow from 16 in the first year of the war to 300 by 1945 . His performance in this role led to Jones being promoted to acting air commodore on 21 February 1941 , and appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1942 New Year Honours for " diligence , devotion to duty and perseverance of outstanding merit " .

On 5 May 1942 , Jones was appointed Chief of the Air Staff ( CAS ) , the RAAF 's senior position . He was considered an unlikely choice , a contemporary newspaper describing him as " the darkest of dark horses " . Jones was still only a substantive wing commander and acting air commodore when he succeeded to the role , leapfrogging several more senior officers including his friend Bill Bostock , now an air vice marshal and Deputy Chief of the Air Staff . Bostock , thought to be " among the Air Force 's best brains " at the time , was believed by himself ( and Jones ) to be the leading candidate for the position . The suggestion even arose that Jones ' selection was a mistake , based on the government 's reading of an organisation chart that implied he was the RAAF 's most senior officer after Bostock , when in fact he was ranked six places below .

Other potential appointees had included Air Marshal Richard Williams and Air Vice Marshal Peter Drummond . Williams , however , had been out of favour since his dismissal from the position of CAS in the wake of the Ellington Report criticising RAAF flying safety in 1939 , while Drummond was not released from his position as Deputy Air Officer Commanding in Chief RAF Middle East . Bostock was first choice of the incumbent CAS , Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Burnett , but the latter 's ill concealed contempt for John Curtin 's Federal Labor government helped ensure that his preference was ignored . Although he admitted to being " stunned " by the decision , Jones himself had the ambition and a reasonable expectation of becoming CAS at some point in his career ; it simply happened " much sooner than I anticipated " . Jones had proved his organisational abilities directing EATS , and believed that this was a significant factor in his appointment . His working class origin has also been cited as contributing to his suitability to a Labor government .

= = = Divided command = = =

Passed over as CAS , Bostock subsequently became Air Officer Commanding ( AOC ) RAAF Command , which placed him in charge of Australian air operations in the Pacific . Jones ' role , in contrast , was primarily administrative , that of " raising , training and maintaining " the service . Though the CAS was de jure head of the RAAF , Jones ' new rank of air vice marshal was the same as Bostock 's . In the words of Air Force historian Alan Stephens , " Jones was the head of his service , but he was neither unambiguously its senior officer , nor presiding over a unified command ... The system of divided command ... was not an ideal arrangement , but with men of goodwill it could have worked . Regrettably Bostock and Jones were not of that mind ... "

Friction between the two senior officers over the command structure rapidly deteriorated into a state of " complete obduracy " , and remained so until the end of the war . As a direct report to the USAAF 's Lieutenant General George Kenney , commander of Allied Air Forces in the South West Pacific Area ( SWPA ) , Bostock was able to ignore many directives from Jones , his nominal superior in the RAAF . The CAS nevertheless continued to assert his authority over Bostock 's supplies of manpower and equipment .

In March 1943 Jones proposed that he take over responsibility for air operations in defence of the Australian mainland but General Douglas MacArthur , Supreme Commander SWPA , refused to countenance it . The next month , with the support of the Australian Air Board , Jones tried to remove Bostock from RAAF Command and replace him with Air Commodore Joe Hewitt , AOC No. 9 Operational Group ( No. 9 OG ) . Bostock appealed to Kenney , who advised Jones that he was

opposed to any such change of command and threatened to escalate the matter to the Australian government . MacArthur subsequently told Prime Minister Curtin that Hewitt " was not an adequate replacement " for Bostock , and the matter was dropped . Six months later Jones would sack Hewitt over morale issues in No. 9 OG raised during the offensive on Rabaul ; Kenney called Hewitt ' s removal " bad news " .

Jones himself came under threat of transfer or subordination in April 1943 when the Federal government began moves to unite the Air Force ' s command by creating an overarching Air Officer Commanding RAAF position that would have effectively replaced Jones as CAS and also been senior to Bostock . Air Marshal Drummond was again approached but once more the British Air Ministry refused to release him , having selected him for an Air Council post . Macarthur rejected two other RAF candidates , and the plan was held over . In the King ' s Birthday Honours that June , Jones was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath .

By June 1944 the Jones ? Bostock conflict and the anomalous division of administrative and operational responsibilities again led the Australian government to consider the appointment of a new commander senior to both officers . Air Marshal Sir Keith Park , the New Zealand @-@ born AOC of No. 11 Group RAF during the Battle of Britain , was sought for the position but negotiations were broken off when MacArthur advised that it was too late to make such a change and that the problem had now gone " quiet " . That it was far from over was apparent in a series of cables exchanged between the two air vice @-@ marshals in January 1945 . Jones sent a signal to Bostock complaining of the latter ' s " insubordinate tone " and " repeated attempts to usurp authority of this Headquarters " . Bostock replied that as AOC RAAF Command he was " responsible to Commander , Allied Air Forces , and not , repeat not , subordinate to you " , and that he would " continue to take the strongest exception to your unwarranted and uninformed interference " . Despite such acrimony , the command structure remained unchanged for the rest of the war .

Responsible as CAS for building up Australia ' s air combat assets , in 1943 Jones had given an assurance to the Australian government that he could maintain a force of 73 squadrons , despite Kenney ' s prediction that even the RAAF ' s then @-@ currently approved strength of 45 squadrons was beyond its capacity . In the event , by the end of the war Jones had expanded the RAAF to 70 squadrons in the Pacific and Europe , including several heavy bomber units . One of his most controversial decisions of the war was during the invasion of Tarakan in May 1945 when he grounded Australian B @-@ 24 Liberator squadrons scheduled to take part in the attack , due to their crews having exceeded their monthly quota of flying hours . Bostock was not consulted , and said that he would have thankfully " fallen through a crack in the boards on the deck " as he watched the attacking formations from a U.S. warship , minus the expected RAAF aircraft . Kenney sympathised with him ; he once commented in his diary that " Jones and Bostock ... fight each other harder than the Japs " .

= = = The " Morotai Mutiny " = = =

Towards the end of the war Jones intervened in the so @-@ called " Morotai Mutiny " , when senior pilots in the Australian First Tactical Air Force ( No. 1 TAF ) proffered their resignations rather than carry on attacking what they saw as unimportant targets . Jones personally interviewed all but one of the officers involved , later declaring , " I believed them all to be sincere in what they were stating and what they had attempted to do ... Yes , sincerely held beliefs , no matter how ill @-@ founded , coupled possibly with a rather exaggerated sense of national duty . "

Kenney also insisted on speaking to the pilots himself , overriding Jones ' protestations that it was an internal RAAF matter , and threatened to appear on behalf of the pilots should they be court @-@ martialled . Jones sacked the Air Officer Commanding No. 1 TAF , his former No. 4 Squadron comrade Harry Cobby , along with two of Cobby ' s staff . In what may have been a reaction to Kenney ' s threat , Jones insisted that the subsequent inquiry before Justice John Vincent Barry focus not only on the attempted resignations but on reports of alcohol trafficking on Morotai . While no action was taken against the pilots over the mutiny directly , two of the RAAF ' s best @-@ known

aces , Group Captain Clive Caldwell and Wing Commander Bobby Gibbes , were court @-@ martialled for their involvement in the alcohol racket and reduced in rank . Although Barry did not find it a significant factor , the Jones ? Bostock conflict was also blamed for contributing to the poor morale that precipitated the " mutiny " . One of the other participants , Wing Commander Kenneth Ranger , told the inquiry : " I deplore the fighting and wrangling between them which is common knowledge throughout the Air Force . Every week there are instances of it . "

= = Post @-@ war career = =

= = = The " Interim Air Force " = = =

Along with Bostock , Jones represented the RAAF at the Japanese surrender aboard USS Missouri in September 1945 . With Jones ' concurrence , Bostock and other senior commanders were summarily retired in 1946 , in Bostock 's case for " inability to work in harmony with certain other high ranking RAAF officers " . The CAS oversaw planning for the demobilisation of thousands of RAAF personnel and the creation of a peacetime service , known as the " Interim Air Force " . When he was eventually promoted air marshal in 1948 the RAAF was made up of approximately 8 @,@ 000 staff , compared to 175 @,@ 000 ? the world 's fourth largest air force ? he had commanded in 1945 as air vice @-@ marshal . Believing that wastage was reaching a critical point , Jones proposed recruiting women into a new service to replace the Women 's Auxiliary Australian Air Force that had been disbanded in September 1946 . Blocked initially by the Labor government of the day , it came into being in 1950 as the Women 's Royal Australian Air Force , following the election of Robert Menzies ' Liberal Party in December 1949 .

Concurrently with demobilisation , Jones shaped the RAAF 's " Plan D " , adopted in 1947 . It outlined the service ? s post @-@ war organisation and requirements , which included 16 squadrons flying technologically advanced aircraft . This basic structure remained in place for the next 20 years . In 1949 , Jones visited the UK with a team of advisors and recommended the English Electric Canberra jet to replace the RAAF 's Avro Lincoln piston @-@ engined bombers . Entering service in 1953 , the Canberras ultimately equipped three Squadrons , operating with distinction in the Vietnam War and continuing to fly until 1982 . Other enduring types purchased under Jones ' tenure as CAS included the CAC Sabre , P @-@ 2 Neptune and CAC Winjeel . He still enjoyed flying and made an effort to pilot each new type as it entered service , including the de Havilland Vampire jet , but his irregular turns in the cockpit meant that his skills were generally found wanting .

= = = Overseas commitments and retirement from RAAF = = =

When Australia committed forces to the Malayan Emergency in April 1950 , Jones grouped the requisite RAAF assets under one overarching organisation , No. 90 ( Composite ) Wing , to ensure they would operate with some autonomy rather than be dispersed throughout other Allied services as had been the case in World War II , when Australian units and personnel based in Britain had been absorbed by the RAF . He also proposed that the officer commanding all Commonwealth air force units should be from the RAAF ; this was agreed by the British Air Ministry , and the position later gave valuable experience to two future Chiefs of the Air Staff , Air Vice @-@ Marshals Frederick Scherger and Val Hancock . Jones allocated No. 77 Squadron , then based in Japan as part of British Commonwealth Occupation Force , to the United Nations Command when the Korean War broke out . Prime Minister Menzies rang Jones at home on Saturday , 1 July 1950 , requesting a squadron and the unit went into action the following day .

Almost immediately that Menzies ' Liberal Party replaced the Chifley Labor government at the end of 1949 , it had begun to investigate possible replacements ( largely from the RAF ) for the incumbent CAS , eventually deciding on Air Marshal ( later Air Chief Marshal ) Sir Donald Hardman . Jones was informed of his retirement , which he claimed to have been expecting , in December

1951 . In a farewell speech at the Australia Club in Melbourne , attended by Menzies , Jones said that organising EATS and expanding the Air Force in the South West Pacific had been his greatest achievements . His official exit from RAAF was on 22 February 1952 . The Prime Minister sent him a letter thanking him for his " valuable contribution " , which would " long be remembered " .

= = Later life = =

Following his departure from the Air Force in 1952 , Jones became Director of Coordination with the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation ( CAC ) and member of the board of Ansett Transport Industries . In the 1953 New Year Honours , he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his military service . He retired from the CAC directorship in 1957 but remained on the Ansett board until the early 1970s . Jones pursued a political career in parallel to his aviation industry work , unsuccessfully standing for Liberal Party pre -selection in the seat of Flinders in 1952 . In 1958 , he left the Liberals in favour of the Labor Party , contesting the seat of Henty in 1961 . He switched parties as his views were too leftist for the Liberals , declaring " They got rather nasty with me and wouldn 't give me a fair go , so I resigned and joined the Labor Party " . He pursued an energetic campaign in Henty , but lost to his Liberal opponent by fewer than 3 ,000 primary votes .

Jones also evinced an interest in unidentified flying objects , having first encountered unexplained aerial phenomena at Warrnambool , Victoria , in 1930 . He reported witnessing another UFO in October 1957 , but admitted that he was " loath to talk about it publicly lest people should think I was either an incompetent witness or getting a little screwy in the head " . In the mid -1960s he patronised the Commonwealth Aerial Phenomena Investigation Organisation and joined the Victorian UFO Research Society . Jones published his autobiography , *From Private to Air Marshal* , in 1988 . He was Australia 's last surviving World War I ace when he died in Melbourne on 24 August 1992 , at the age of 95 .

= = Legacy = =

Jones ' ten years as CAS constituted the longest continuous term of any RAAF chief . Despite his longevity in the position , he is still primarily known for two events early in his tenure , the surprise circumstance of his appointment , and his feud with Bill Bostock that lasted until the end of World War II . The conflict between its two senior officers has been labelled " disastrous " for the RAAF , one that " diminished its standing " in the eyes of its Allies . Jones claimed in his autobiography that he had never intrigued for the role of CAS and would have worked loyally for Bostock if the latter had been appointed .

Beyond these controversies , Jones significantly influenced the Air Force 's development during and after the war . He was honoured for his work running the Empire Air Training Scheme in 1940 -42 and has received credit as CAS for building up the RAAF 's strength to 70 squadrons by 1945 . After the war he played a personal part in improving education within the service , including the establishment of RAAF College , along similar lines to Royal Military College , Duntroon , and the Royal Australian Naval College , as well as the RAAF Staff College . One of his last directions as CAS was the formation of RAAF Museum at Point Cook , where it is still based .

Jones encouraged local industry to design and build trainers for the RAAF and produce more sophisticated combat aircraft under licence from overseas manufacturers . This led to the Winjeel basic trainer and Australian industry co -partnership in production of the CAC Sabre and Canberra jets ; such local participation has continued to figure in major RAAF aircraft acquisitions .

He refused to update the command structure of the Air Force from one based on region to one of function , something his successor , Air Marshal Hardman , would accomplish , and has been criticised for a systemic resistance to change . Jones was described in David Horner 's *The Commanders* as " a steady , sincere but colourless leader " , while Alan Stephens found him " a good and decent man , who had overcome considerable personal hardship in his youth to achieve exceptional professional success " but " neither an inspiring leader , nor a notable thinker " .

Nevertheless , his Plan D for the RAAF 's post @-@ war organisation remained the service 's blueprint until the early 1970s .