

= Ragnar Garrett =

Lieutenant General Sir Alwyn Ragnar Garrett , KBE , CB (12 February 1900 ? 4 November 1977) was a senior commander in the Australian Army . He served as Chief of the General Staff (CGS) from 1958 to 1960 . Born in Western Australia , Garrett graduated from the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in 1921 . He was adjutant and quartermaster in several regiments of the Australian Light Horse before undertaking staff training in England , which he completed just as the Second World War broke out . Garrett joined the Second Australian Imperial Force soon afterwards , and commanded the 2 / 31st Battalion in England before seeing action with Australian brigades in Greece and Crete in 1941 . Promoted to colonel the following year , he held senior staff positions with I Corps in New Guinea and II Corps on Bougainville in 1944 ? 45 . He was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his staff work .

After the war , Garrett served two terms as commandant of the Staff College , Queenscliff , in 1946 ? 47 and 1949 ? 51 . Between these appointments he was posted to Japan with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force . Promoted major general , he became General Officer Commanding (GOC) Western Command in August 1951 , and Deputy Chief of the General Staff in January 1953 . He took over Southern Command as a lieutenant general in October 1954 , and was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in 1957 . As CGS from March 1958 , Garrett focused on rearmament and reorganisation , initiating the Army 's short @-@ lived restructure into a " pentropic " formation . He was knighted in 1959 . After retiring from the military in June 1960 , Garrett became Honorary Colonel of the Royal Australian Regiment , and was principal of the Australian Administrative Staff College until 1964 . He died at Mornington , Victoria , in 1977 .

= = Early life = =

Born on 12 February 1900 at Northam , Western Australia , Alwyn Ragnar Garrett was the son of accountant Alwyn Garrett and his Swedish wife Maria Carolina (née Wohlfahrt) . Ragnar attended Guildford Grammar School before entering the Royal Military College , Duntroon , in 1918 . He graduated in 1921 and was posted to the Australian Light Horse as a lieutenant . In December 1922 , Garrett served as an extra aide @-@ de @-@ camp to the new Governor of South Australia , General Sir Tom Bridges . He was appointed adjutant / quartermaster of the 23rd Light Horse Regiment in November 1922 . In November the following year he was seconded to the British Army , and spent the next twelve months attached to the 2nd Dragoon Guards in Bangalore , India . On his return to Australia in January 1925 , Garrett was reappointed adjutant / quartermaster of the 23rd Light Horse . He married Shirley Lorraine Hunter , a nurse , on 9 September at St Peter 's Anglican Church in the Adelaide suburb of Glenelg ; the couple had a son and a daughter . Garrett became adjutant / quartermaster of the 9th Light Horse Regiment at Jamestown , South Australia , in February 1926 . He was promoted to captain in November 1929 .

In March 1930 , Garrett was posted as adjutant / quartermaster to the 3rd Light Horse Regiment at Mount Gambier , South Australia . As a speaker at Mount Gambier 's Anzac Day commemorations on 25 April 1934 , he was reported as warning of the poor state of Australia 's preparedness for war , admonishing : " We shall not have the time that we had before the last war , and we shall not be fighting for our homes thousands of miles away . We shall be fighting at our own back door . That is what we have to prepare for . " In August that year he was transferred to the 4th Light Horse Regiment at Warrnambool , Victoria , as adjutant / quartermaster . Garrett was posted to the staff of Army Headquarters , Melbourne , in March 1936 , and departed for England in November the following year to attend the Staff College , Camberley . He was promoted to major in July 1938 , and returned to Australia upon the outbreak of the Second World War .

= = Second World War = =

Garrett joined the Second Australian Imperial Force in November 1939 , and was appointed brigade major of the 18th Brigade under Brigadier Leslie Morshead in January 1940 . The brigade departed

for the Middle East in May but , owing to the military situation following the Fall of France , it was diverted to Britain , arriving in June . Garrett was promoted lieutenant colonel on 16 September and took command of the 2 / 31st Battalion the same day ; he handed over the battalion to Selwyn Porter in February 1941 , and departed England for the Middle East . He saw active service with the 19th Brigade and Savage Force in Greece and Crete , under Brigadier Stanley Savage . Returning to Australia , Garrett was promoted to temporary colonel in April 1942 and became senior operations officer in the 1st Armoured Division , which served as a garrison force in case of Japanese invasion . He was posted to Army Headquarters , Melbourne , in October as Director of Armoured Fighting Vehicles .

In September 1943 , Garrett was appointed General Staff Officer Grade 1 (Operations) of I Corps under Lieutenant General Sir Edmund Herring in New Guinea . Three months later he was promoted temporary brigadier and became Brigadier General Staff of I Corps . He continued to serve in that position as I Corps was redesignated II Corps in April 1944 , New Guinea Force the following month , and finally II Corps again in October 1944 for the campaign on Bougainville under Lieutenant General Savage . Garrett was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his " skill , direction , and supervision " in having " prepared and guided all staff work to meet every conceivable requirement in the complete reorganisation of forces in New Guinea " ; the honour was promulgated in The London Gazette on 19 July 1945 . He was responsible for interrogating the first Japanese peace envoy to make contact with the Australians on Bougainville , on 18 August 1945 , and was present when the instrument of surrender was signed on 8 September . In November 1945 , Garrett took command of the 8th Brigade in New Guinea . He oversaw the brigade 's return to Australia prior to its disbandment in March 1946 . His " exceptional service in the field " in the South West Pacific Area earned him another mention in despatches , which was gazetted on 6 March 1947 and backdated to 2 November 1946 .

= = Post @-@ war career = =

Following a three @-@ month course at Staff College , Camberley , Garrett was appointed commandant of the Staff College , Queenscliff , Victoria , in June 1946 . He was posted to Japan in March 1947 , becoming Brigadier @-@ in @-@ Charge of Administration for the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in July . The size and scope of the occupation declined considerably during his tour , which finished in October 1949 . Approximately 2 @,@ 400 Australians , most from the 67th Battalion , remained by late 1948 , compared to 11 @,@ 000 in October 1946 . In December 1949 , Garrett resumed command of the Staff College , Queenscliff . Promoted temporary major general , he was appointed General Officer Commanding (GOC) Western Command , which covered the state of Western Australia , in August 1951 . He became Deputy Chief of the General Staff in February 1953 .

In December 1953 , Garrett succeeded Major General Eric Woodward as Adjutant @-@ General and Second Military Member of the Military Board . He was promoted temporary lieutenant general in October 1954 and appointed GOC Southern Command , which covered Victoria , South Australia , and Tasmania and was , as of April 1953 , the superior headquarters for several major Citizen Military Forces (CMF) formations including the 3rd Infantry Division , the 4th and 6th Infantry Brigades , the 2nd Armoured Brigade , and two artillery groups . His elevation to lieutenant general was made permanent in December 1954 . Garrett was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath in the Queen 's Birthday Honours on 13 June 1957 . He succeeded Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wells as Chief of the General Staff (CGS) on 23 March 1958 . Garrett was raised to Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire in the 1959 New Year Honours .

The Army underwent significant change during Garrett 's term as CGS . In March 1959 , he chaired the first meeting of the Military Board at the new Army Headquarters in Canberra , following its move from Melbourne . That August , he announced to his senior officers a radical reorganisation of the Army that would strengthen the regular forces and reduce reliance on the CMF , which since Federation had formed the backbone of Australia 's military . This plan included the abolition of National Service , to which the Federal government had already agreed , and the introduction of a "

pentropic " divisional structure . Garrett championed the pentropic structure to overcome what he saw as the weakness of the traditional battalion for overseas deployments , and to ensure compatibility with the US Army 's pentomic formations . The Australian Army 's traditional " triangular " divisional structure of three infantry battalions under a brigade headquarters was to be replaced with an organisation consisting of five larger battalions (hence " pentropic ") without a brigade layer between division and battalion headquarters . The plan was opposed by CMF officers as it would result in the disbandment of the citizens ' brigades and many of the old militia battalions . Under the new structure the CMF would not only shrink , its units would lose traditional ties to local communities through the establishment of new multi @-@ battalion state @-@ based regiments , leading to suspicions that the entire process was designed to demolish the CMF .

Garrett was concerned not only with changing the Army 's organisation but with upgrading its equipment ; by the early 1960s the Army would acquire the FN 7.62mm rifle , the M60 machine gun , the M101 105mm howitzer , the M113 armoured personnel carrier , and new mortars and radios . He also advocated strongly for the Army to operate its own helicopters and light aircraft ; the Australian Army Aviation Corps was eventually established in July 1968 . Garrett was scheduled to retire from the Army on his sixtieth birthday in February 1960 but the government extended his term . He retired on 30 June 1960 and was succeeded by Lieutenant General Reg Pollard , whom Garrett had recommended for the post in the face of opposition from the Minister for the Army , John Cramer , who had attempted to appoint Major General Ivan Dougherty , a retired CMF officer . Although Garrett 's proposed reorganisation of the Army along pentropic lines went ahead under Pollard , it proved short @-@ lived . The US Army abandoned the system in June 1961 , and the Australian Army returned to the triangular formation following a review commissioned by Pollard 's successor as CGS , Lieutenant General Sir John Wilton , in October 1964 .

= = Retirement = =

Upon retiring from the military , Garrett became principal of the Australian Administrative Staff College , a private institution delivering courses to senior business and government personnel at Mount Eliza , Victoria . During his four @-@ year tenure , he lobbied for the reintroduction of conscription , and when the Federal government brought in a new selective service scheme in 1965 , he was invited to draw the first ballot of names . Garrett also advocated that the Army should have a division ready for war at all times . He served as honorary colonel of the Royal Australian Regiment and the Royal Western Australia Regiment from 1960 until 1965 , when he was appointed Chairman of the Western Australian Coastal Shipping Commission , a position he held until 1970 . He died on 4 November 1977 at Mornington , Victoria , and was cremated . His wife had died earlier , and he was survived by his two children .