

EULOGY FOR
SIR JAMES ROWLAND AC KBE DFC AFC

Air Marshal Sir James Anthony Rowland AC KBE DFC AFC, was a true gentleman - a loving family man – thoughtful towards others – strong in his convictions and always ready for a good debate. He had a way about him that attracted attention – he drew people to him – he was gregarious and intelligent.

From his early youth he showed a keen interest in aeroplanes. He would spend hours whittling away at pieces of wood making model aircraft, reading books on the development of aviation and probably seeing himself involved to some extent in the years ahead. This early interest in aviation was to carry on throughout his life.

Sir James attended Cranbrook School here in Sydney, where he was a School and House Prefect. He excelled in both English and French languages – the latter to serve him well during his working life. He left school as a 17 year old, shortly after World War II commenced, and became an engineering student at Sydney University. In 1942 he decided to defer his studies and joined the RAAF as an aircrew trainee. He graduated as a pilot in early 1943 and was commissioned as a Pilot Officer. He served with distinction with the Royal Air Force Bomber Command in both the “Main Force” and “Pathfinder Force” for which he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). In January 1945 as the result of a mid-air collision

over a target in Germany he became a prisoner of war. He was rescued towards the end of the War and returned to Australia in November 1945.

He returned to University and resumed his engineering studies. Having obtained his engineering degree, he rejoined the RAAF and was commissioned into the recently formed Technical Branch. He attended the prestigious Empire Test Pilots School in England in 1949, becoming one of the first RAAF pilots to graduate as a Test Pilot. He became deeply involved in aviation research and development over many years and for his work in this field, he was awarded the Air Force Cross. He was one of a handful of men whose professionalism helped establish the RAAF's international reputation for research and development excellence.

By now, singled out for his Branch's highest post, Jim Rowland filled senior engineering positions at Operational Command and the Department of Air, in addition to completing the Imperial Defence College course in London in 1971. In November 1972, he was appointed Air Member for Technical Services with the rank of Air Vice Marshal. With his unusually diverse administrative, engineering and operational background, coupled with his keen mind and personal popularity, Jim Rowland stood out as a probable Chief of Air Staff. He was appointed to be CAS in 1975 with the rank of Air Marshal. He was energetic, cheerful, co-operative and an accomplished manager and leader. He was knighted in 1977. He remained as CAS until March 1979. All in all he served in the RAAF for 35 years.

Air Marshal Sir James Anthony Rowland became Governor of New South Wales in January 1981. His personal qualities, including his ability to relax with everybody endeared him to the people of New South Wales, Together with Lady Rowland he travelled widely throughout the State and made many friends. His name remains in many areas where he has opened or unveiled various establishments. Sir James was instrumental in opening Government House to the people of New South Wales. He encouraged broadening the guest list to official functions to include almost every group in the community. He mixed easily with everyone and possessed a phenomenal memory for names of people he may have met only once before. He was highly respected by all his staff and others who had responsibilities at Government House. In 1987 during his period as Governor, Sir James was made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

Following a highly successful Bicentenary, Sir James retired. In 1990 he was elected Chancellor of the University of Sydney and for three years he was a member of the Police Board of New South Wales. He had great respect for the Police Force and held them in high regard.

Sir James' love of aviation never waned. After leaving the gubernatorial office, Sir James was invited to be Chairman of the Aerospace Foundation of Australia which was established following the successful Bicentenary Air Show held at Richmond Air Force Base. He remained Chairman for the rest of his life. Once again, his reputation internationally in the aviation industry

helped to make the Air Shows that followed so highly successful. His management and leadership skills were always evident. He ~~is~~^{was} admired and respected by all who were in any way involved with the Air Shows.

In all his efforts he had the immense support of a loving and charming wife and lifelong confidante, Lady Faye. They were a wonderful team. Ladies and gentlemen, we will miss Air Marshal Sir James Anthony Rowland AC KBE DFC AFC, a man's man and outstanding leader.

G G MICHAEL

Air Commodore RAAF (Retd)

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