

# AIR FORCE

## GROUP CAPTAIN ERNIE WALSH

### Director History & Heritage Coordination – Air Force 2021

Group Captain Ernie Walsh was born in Brisbane and grew up in south-east Queensland before joining the Air Force in 1978.

After graduating from the RAAF Academy in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science and a Graduate Diploma in Military Aviation, Group Captain Walsh spent a few months on Pilots course before discovering through his performance on the General Flying Proficiency Test that his future laid elsewhere. Eschewing the traditional path of failed pilots to Navigator course, he applied to join the Engineer Branch as an Aeronautical Engineer.

As a junior officer, GPCAPT Walsh served at Maintenance Squadron East Sale, which was then responsible for supporting HS748, Macchi, and CT/4A aircraft operated by the School of Air Navigation and Central Flying School; the Directorate of Maintenance Policy at Air Force Office in Canberra; and as Resident Engineer Perth, overseeing the maintenance activities of Hawker de Havilland, Lucas Aerospace and Ansett Technologies.

Soon after promotion to Squadron Leader in 1991, Group Captain Walsh was posted to the USAF Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, graduating in December 1992 with a Master of Science in Information Resource Management. On his return to Australia in 1993 he spent three years at Headquarters Logistics Command in Melbourne, first in the Directorate of Aircraft Engineering, then in the Directorate of Project and Life Cycle Support within the newly formed Logistics Systems Agency. He completed RAAF Staff Course at RAAF Fairbairn in 1996, graduating with a Graduate Diploma of Management Studies and the Staff Course Association Camaraderie Prize, and was then posted to No 75 Squadron as the Senior Engineering Officer. He was selected for promotion to Wing Commander in 1997, but he elected to remain at No 75 Squadron until the end of 1998 to make the most of this excellent posting.

On promotion to Wing Commander in 1999, Group Captain Walsh was initially posted to the Directorate of Technical and Logistics Services at Headquarters Air Command, but he was posted into the newly created Director of Operational Support position during the second half of 2000. In 2001 he moved to RAAF Williamstown as Deputy Director Air Combat Group Project, managing the amalgamation of Tactical Fighter Group and Strike Reconnaissance Group. He relocated to London in December 2001 on posting to the Assistant Air Force Adviser and Staff Officer Engineering position in the Australian High Commission, where he was involved in a wide variety of technical and representative duties, including the unexpected honour of leading the ADF contingent at the D-Day 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary ceremony in Normandy. After returning to Australia in August 2005, Group Captain Walsh spent six years in Canberra, firstly leading the Project Vulcan review of the technical workforce, then as Deputy Director Continuing Airworthiness in the Airworthiness Coordination and Policy Agency, and finally as Deputy Director Technical Governance and Policy in Air Force Headquarters Logistics Branch. During the period 2006-2010, he completed a Master of Engineering Science in Aerospace.

In October 2011, Ernie was promoted to Group Captain on posting to Headquarters Air Lift Group as the Director of Logistics Capability, and in January 2016 was posted to Air Force Headquarters as Director Corporate Governance and Information Management. Soon after accruing 40 years of service in January 2018, Ernie transferred to the Reserves, and he started working part time within the Air Force 2021 branch in July 2018.

Ernie has been happily married to Robyn since 1985, and has two adult children.

