



## Flying Officer A.G. Grant OBE

[1904 – 1983]



### Wing Commander Grant was President of the Club in 1939

Alan Gordon Grant was born in Rockhampton, on 11 August 1904, to James and Eleanor Grant. He completed the Queensland Civil Service examination in 1919, the Junior Public Examination in 1920, and the Scottish University Matriculation examination. He then studied pharmacy and, in 1925, graduated with a Diploma. He also commenced medical studies during this period.

Following graduation, Alan gained employment as a pharmacy manager and he later set up a business in Wickham Terrace, Brisbane where he dispensed prescriptions but sold neither patent medicines nor cosmetics.

Alan married Louisa Beryl (née Irwin) in Brisbane on 11 February 1933 and on 11 May 1937, Louisa gave birth to a son, Alastair Roderick.

On 11 June 1928, Alan enlisted in the RAAF as Cadet Aircrew. He was posted to 1 Flying Training School and completed the Flying Training Course, after which he was entitled to wear the Pilots Flying Badge. On 5 April 1929, he received a Short Service Commission as a pilot officer on probation.

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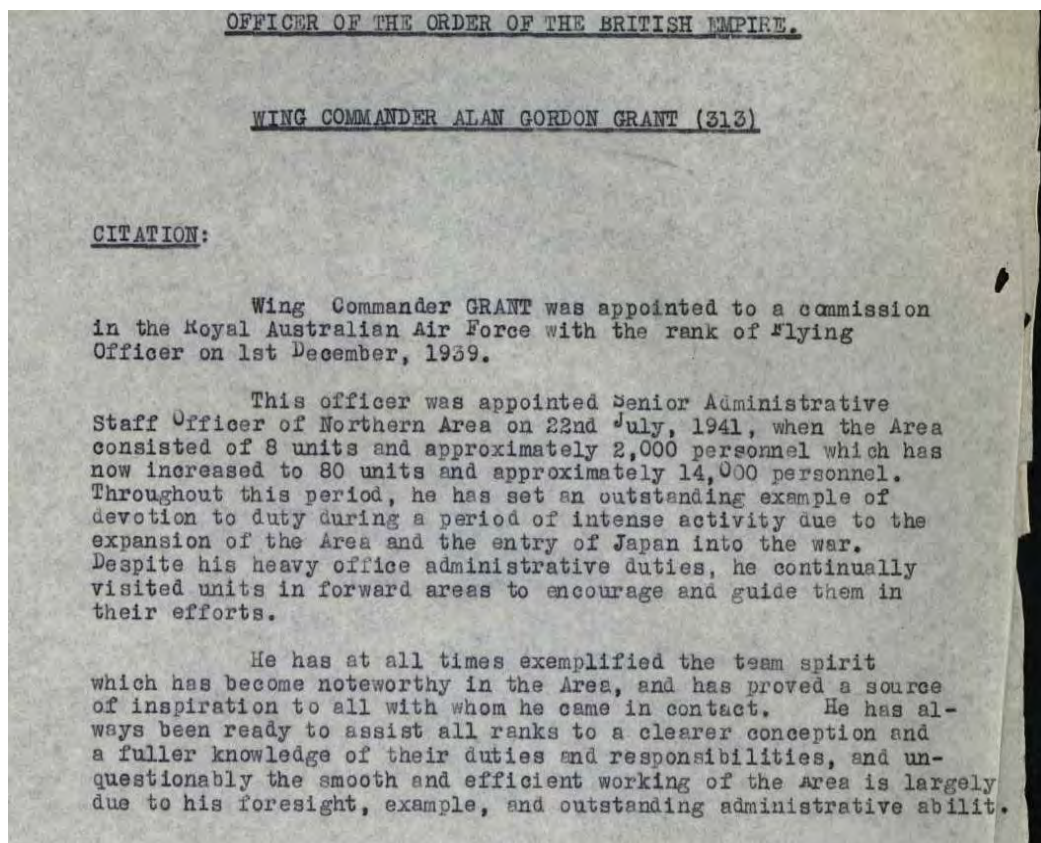
From 9 to 26 April, Pilot Officer Grant undertook training at RAAF Laverton and qualified as an Assistant Squadron Photographic Officer. From May to September 1929, he undertook further training in a Seaplane and Naval Co-Operation Course with the Seaplane Squadron. He also gained qualifications as a pilot of Moth, Avro 504, DH9, DH9A, Fairey and the Seagull MK1 aircraft. On 5 October 1929, he was posted to 101 Flight. On 11 December 1929, his probationary appointment as Pilot Officer was confirmed and he was promoted to a Provisional Flying Officer.

On 19 March 1930, Flying Officer Grant was admitted to Hobart General Hospital and then to Caulfield Repatriation Hospital as a result of a seaplane accident. He had been piloting a Walrus aircraft from HMAS Albatross, observing gunnery, when the aircraft spun into the water. He was discharged from hospital on 31 May 1930 but, because of his injuries, his RAAF appointment was terminated on 18 March 1931. He had served for two years, 267 days.

He resumed his pharmacy profession, and, on 7 December 1935, he was appointed to the Queensland Pharmacy Board. On 5 September 1939, he is recorded as being the President of the Pharmaceutical Society of Queensland and he served in that capacity until 6 September 1949. In recognition of his service to the community, he was granted a Coronation Medal on 12 May 1937.

On 1 December 1939, Alan was called up for WW2 service and was commissioned as a Flying Officer in the Citizen Air Force. On 2 January 1940, he was posted to 23 Squadron as Adjutant. On 31 May 1940, he was transferred to ASD Branch (Special Duties Administrative) and on 1 June, he was promoted to Temporary Flight Lieutenant. On 17 June 1940, he was posted to Headquarters RAAF Laverton as Administrative Officer. On 1 January 1941, he was promoted to Temporary Squadron Leader and on 21 April of that year, he was appointed Commanding Officer of the School of Administration. On 17 July 1941, he was posted to Headquarters North Eastern Area, as a Staff Officer Administration. On 1 January 1942, he was promoted to Acting Wing Commander.

On 18 January 1943, A/Wing Commander Grant was posted to RAAF Staff, Allied Advance HQ, as a Senior Administrative Officer and on 29 April 1943 he was made an Officer the Order of the British Empire (OBE). On 1 June 1943, he was promoted to Temporary Group Captain.



From 29 June to 11 July 1944 Group Captain Grant was attached to RAAF 10 Operations Group and from 14 March to 15 September 1945 he was posted to the advanced headquarters at Morotai. During this period, it was noted that he endeavoured to visit and assist the forward RAAF units as often as possible.

Australian War Memorial records describe an action that occurred when a Japanese machine gun was captured- *'This gun was captured on the morning of 2 July 1945, by 270313 Group Captain Gordon (sic) Grant, OBE who was of the Staff of the RAAF Technical Air Intelligence Unit. Grant, with other RAAF personnel, were asked by an A.I.F patrol to help clear a Japanese strong point during a critical stage in the battle for Balikpapan. The RAAF party went forward then came under rifle, mortar and machine-gun fire. The Japanese machine gunner was stalked and killed by Grant who souvenired the gun'*

On 14 March 1945 he reverted to the rank of T/Wing Commander and on 1 October 1945, he was transferred to 3 Personnel Depot RAAF Sandgate QLD.

Wing Commander Grant was awarded the OBE, 1939-45 Star and the Pacific Star. He was demobilised on 12 November 1945. He then completed his medical studies and subsequently practised medicine in Australia House, London and in Brisbane.

In November 1945 Alan organised the formation of the St Andrew's Pipe Band. This band was previously the RAAF Pipe Band and was comprised mainly of ex-servicemen. The band was very successful and, on 26 December 1950 won their 11<sup>th</sup> successive championship, at the Annual Highland gathering, in Brisbane. In 1951, Alan was appointed a "Chieftain for life".

Flying Officer Alan Gordon Grant served on the Club Committee from 1934 to 1939. He was elected President in 1939 and he proposed that a committee position of Immediate Past President should be established. This proposal was accepted at a special general meeting that was held after the 1939 annual general meeting. Six weeks later, on being called up for RAAF duties, Flying Officer Grant was obliged to resign as President.

Wing Commander Alan Gordon Grant OBE, M.B., B.S., Ph.C. died in Brisbane on 24 April 1983.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents
- <https://www.awm.gov.au/collections/p10129767>