

Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd, AO

Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd was born on 24 Jan 52 and attended Brisbane State High School. He commenced his RAAF service with the 1971 RAAF Academy intake and graduated in December 1974 with a Bachelor of Science (Physics) degree from Melbourne University. He was posted to RAAF Williamtown for Mirage III conversion, and in 1977 joined No 3 Squadron at Air Base Butterworth, Malaysia, where he flew on fighter operations until the end of 1979.

On return to Australia, Air Marshal Shepherd flew the F-111 at No 1 Squadron, RAAF Amberley, until late 1981 when he undertook flying instructor training at Central Flying School, East Sale. He instructed at No 1 Flying Training School, Point Cook from 1982 to mid 1984, returning then to the F-111 as Training Flight Commander No 6 Squadron until the end of 1987.

Air Marshal Shepherd served as the Assistant Defence Adviser at the Australian High Commission in Singapore from 1988. He was promoted to Wing Commander and returned to Australia in December 1990 on appointment as Commanding Officer No 6 Squadron.

In July 1993 Air Marshal Shepherd undertook staff training at the Joint Services Staff College and followed this with a posting to Headquarters Australian Defence Force Development Division as Deputy Director - Capabilities Analysis (Air).

He was promoted to Group Captain and posted to the position of Officer Commanding No 82 Wing in December 1995. In December 1998 he was promoted to Air Commodore and posted to Headquarters Air Command as Chief of Staff. He then spent two years as the Director General Operations in the Defence Signals Directorate, followed by a year in Strategic Operations Division as Director General Joint Operations and Plans during the planning for and conduct of Australia's involvement in Iraq and the Solomon Islands.

Air Marshal Shepherd was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day 2000 Honours List. He was recognised for his exceptional service to the Royal Australian Air Force and the Strike Reconnaissance Group in the field of operations during his tenure as Officer Commanding No 82 Wing.

Air Marshal Shepherd was promoted to Air Vice-Marshal in December 2003 and appointed Air Commander Australia with effect 15 Dec 03. During his tenure, operational command and control was significantly enhanced with the introduction of the Joint Forces Air Component Commander concept and the development of the Air Operations Centre.

Air Marshal Shepherd's promotion to Air Marshal and appointment as Chief of Air Force, with effect 4 Jul 05, was announced by the Prime Minister on 23 May 05. He has flown around 4500 hours, of which 2500 were on the F-111.

Air Marshal Shepherd was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in the Queen's birthday honours list 2006 for distinguished service to the Australian Defence Force in senior command and staff appointments.

Air Marshal Shepherd is married to Anne and they have two sons, Rohan, born in 1983, and Jarvis, born in 1985. Air Marshal Shepherd's interests include travelling and understanding other cultures, gardening and rugby league football.