

AIR COMMODORE RUTH ELSLEY, CSC

Air Commodore Elsley joined the Air Force in July 1994 as a direct entry officer after having completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Adelaide. She graduated from 117 Basic Air Traffic Control Course in 1995 and has seen operational postings to Naval Air Station Nowra and RAAF Base Amberley for Air Traffic duties. As a junior officer she achieved all of her air traffic control endorsements to training officer and supervisor level and has served as Senior Training Officer and Operations Flight Commander at RAAF Base Amberley. She also completed a tour as Aide de Camp to the Chief of Air Force in 2000.



She was promoted to Squadron Leader in January 2004 and has had several staff positions including the Wing Aviation Safety Officer for 44 Wing (Air Traffic), Staff Officer to Commander Surveillance and Response Group and Flight Commander/Senior Air Traffic Control Officer at RAAF Base Williamtown. During her posting as the Wing Aviation Safety Officer she served on operations as Commander Australian Contingent and Aviation Safety Officer for the United Nations Mission in Khartoum, Sudan in 2005. Upon completion of her Flight Commander duties, Elsley deployed to the Combined Air Operations Centre in Al Udeid, Qatar in 2008/9. She completed Joint Command and Staff College in the United Kingdom in 2010/11, graduating with a Master of Arts in Defence Studies from Kings College London.

On return to Australia in 2011 she was posted as Wing Commander Project Manager 5431 in the Ground Telecommunications and Systems Program Office within the Defence Material Organisation. Subsequently in 2012 she took up the role of Executive Officer at 44 Wing, where she was the administrative commanding officer of the Headquarters. In 2015, Elsley was appointed as the Assistant Air Force Adviser as part of the Australian Defence Staff in London. She returned to Australia in 2018 on promotion to Group Captain to assume the role of Officer Commanding 44 Wing within Surveillance and Response Group. She handed over the Command on 25 Sep 20 and was deployed to the Middle East as Senior Gender Advisor for Resolute Support Mission, Afghanistan until June 2021. She took up the role of Director of Australian Command and Staff Course – Australian War College in Aug 2021 until appointed as the Commandant of the Australian War College in December 2022 on promotion to Air Commodore. Air Commodore Elsley is currently Acting Commander of the Australian Defence College.

Air Commodore Elsley received a Conspicuous Service Cross for her outstanding achievement as the first Commander Australian Contingent for the Australian Defence Force's contribution to the United Nations Mission in Sudan. In 2022, she was awarded a Commendation for Distinguished Service for her achievements in her duties in Afghanistan. She also received a NATO Meritorious Service Medal and US Meritorious Service Medal for her contribution to Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan.

Air Commodore Elsley's interests include keeping fit, sailing, running, yoga, scuba diving and she is a keen traveller and aspires to join the '100 country club'.