

Have a Great Festive Season  
from the MAAA

Christmas Wishes  
Seasons Greetings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Joy to the World  
Christmas Wishes  
SEASONS GREETINGS  
With Love at Christmas  
Merry Christmas



## The President's Log—by Alan Middleton OAM



Christmas has come around yet again so quickly, finishing the year and I must say I am pleased with progress on A52-600. Brett Redway has joined with many volunteers during the week moving ahead with the internal super-structure providing a firm foundation on which to

rebuild the skin.

Hopefully we will see some more visible works on the fuselage this coming year as the majority of the work has been hidden from many, including the general public.

Once again many thanks to the handful of Mossie members who come along on weekends and tackle metalwork projects.

There has also been many other non MAAA people who have been restoring more hidden equipment such as piping, tanks, cables etc. Their efforts are greatly appreciated keeping the project progressing.

A reminder for those interested, get your New Zealand tickets booked to see the first Mossie fly for over a decade, it can be seen at the Aviation Heritage Centre, Omaka Aerodrome, Blenheim, between 22 and 24 April 2011.

All the best to you and your family for the festive season, hope the New Year brings you joy and happiness.

Alan Middleton OAM  
President.

## Wanted

Information leading to the whereabouts of period photos related to the manufacture of De Havilland Mosquitos. Please contact the Association's Archivist on 03 9885 5373.

## Subscription Renewal—Direct Payments

As reported in the last Bulletin the Treasurer has been receiving deposits into the MAAA bank account with just "NETBANK" as a description. After consultation with the Commonwealth Bank they advised in writing that they have no arrangements with our Credit Union and they could not guarantee correct delivery of payment!!! Funny it works for other banks???

Anyhow, so that this facility can continue from now on please use:

*BSB: 083422 Account No: 179026730*

If you bank with the CBA, have paid your MAAA renewal and receive a reminder your subs are due, please contact the Treasurer stating your name, **the amount and date paid, as you may be one of those "NETBANK" deposits.**

If you take an Oriental person and spin him around several times, does he become disoriented?

# Restoration News

by Restorations Manager Brett Redway (B2) and TRB.

nacelle; oil tanks for both nacelles have been restored, painted and placarded and the LH tank installed on the LH MLG assembly.



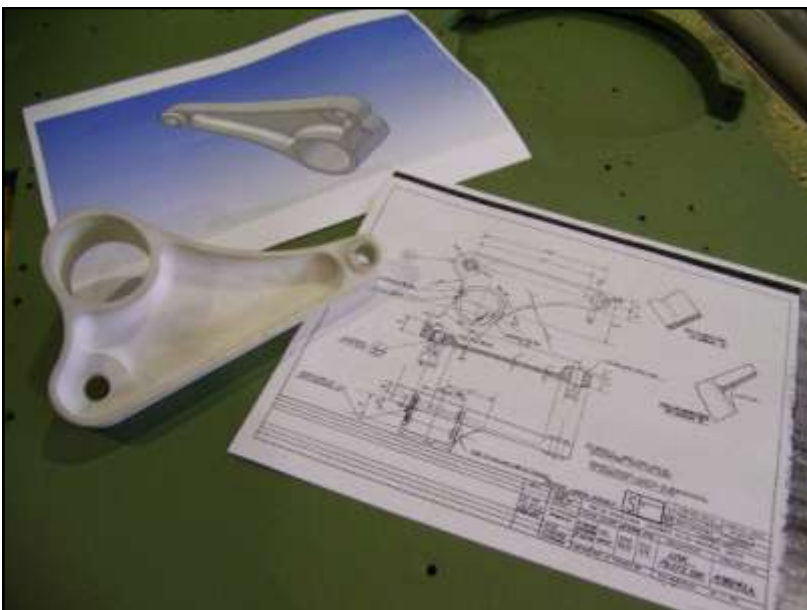
The entire dinghy pack compartment (together with its contents) has been restored and re-painted, and is ready to re-install in the fuselage further down the track. Dozens of small brackets, fittings and fixtures have had the treatment, and the cabin heater module is also ready to go back in. Bulkheads 3 and 4 have been restored with Bulkhead 3 re-installed and Bulkhead 4 being trial fitted at the moment.

Most of the original pilot's seat is missing; Brett has converted original De Havilland drawings into 3-D solid model format



More than 25 volunteers have been involved in ongoing restoration work on the RAAF Museum's ex-87 Squadron Mosquito PR Mk XVI aircraft A52-600 this year. Most come in during the week, working on a part time basis while others spend two Sundays a month on site. Tasks range from manufacturing a set of four bottom straps for the main landing gear (MLG) legs from scratch (to the original drawings) to polishing out scratches in the acrylic panels in the cockpit canopy. Some of the more obvious items completed have been one MLG wheel completely restored and re-assembled (including wheel and tyre), and mounted on the entire MLG assembly complete with hydraulic actuator. On this sub-project, work is continuing on the firewall on the left

on his computer-aided design (CAD) software package, and then 'printed' the components on a 3-D imaging machine to produce a plastic replica of the real thing. For the technically minded, this replica then has draft angles, shrinkage and machining allowances and other factors built in, and the replica becomes the pattern from which the real thing (in this case, the lower side member of the seat base) is cast in aluminium alloy. This is sophisticated, up-to-the-minute technology, just as the Mossie was in its day; it's to B2's credit that he's brought himself up to speed with these techniques and is putting them to work on the project. If you can visit the RAAF Museum, why not have a look at the actual bits?



Despite his extra duties in the OH&S field this year, Brett, his staff and volunteers have made significant progress on the restoration of A52-600, and that includes harnessing new technology to produce old fashioned results.

Thanks Brett and team.

If people from Poland are called Poles, why aren't people from Holland called Holes?

# Coomalie Diary

by **TRB and Richard Luxton**

During a visit to Coomalie in August 2005, the position of an iron dropper and plaque marking A52-605's crash site puzzled me. It's placed off the eastern side of the strip at about 150m down from the threshold of runway 17, while anecdotes had the aircraft well down the strip and at high speed when things went wrong.

Drains along both sides of the strip have recently been cleared and restored thanks to a heritage grant from the N.T. Government, and a new crash site emerged a further 300m or so to the south.

Various objects have since been positively identified as Mosquito parts, and include the melted remains of at least one camera. This may be the actual spot where Squadron Leader Jim Gillespie and Flight Lieutenant Frank Haymes' aircraft came to rest on 3 August 1945; it's a major find, and archaeological work is progressing as this is written.



It's all being achieved with volunteer labour, under the careful direction of Richard Luxton and archaeologist Julie Mastin. More news in our next issue.

RAAF Museum's Restorations Manager Brett (B2) and wife Athalie Redway were recent visitors to Coomalie. During their stay Brett positively identified several artefacts already uncovered, many of them Mossie bits. He's returned to duty much refreshed by the hospitality of all concerned in the Top End. Once again, more news in our next issue.

If a pig loses its voice, is it disgruntled?

## Museum Director's Tour

*by TRB,*  
**Sunday 21 November 2010**

RAAF Museum Director David Gardner OAM led a group of volunteers on this tour, its aim being to introduce potential host officers to the background of various exhibits. We started with a briefing in the Staff room where two information booklets (on the foyer and training displays) were handed out, and were then led through various sections of the collection. DG emphasised that our displays are rare, precious and comprehensive in their own right, and fulfil another important function in providing an insight into real people living through real events behind the images and artefacts. As a former No. 2 Squadron RAAF member, DG's introduction to the "Operation Magpies Return" special display was particularly relevant. He played a hands-on role in the location and recovery of the remains of the final two Australians listed as 'Missing in Action' (MIA) during the Vietnam war, both aircrew in a 2 Squadron Canberra. We concluded the tour with a preview of the Strike hangar displays which are nearing completion.

To be effective communicators in the host officer role seems a bit daunting at first as there's so much information to absorb. The Museum's current Host Officer volunteers weave these background stories together with the artefacts and images to give visitors an insight into the lives of the people involved; the professional standard they've achieved is admirable.



Mary Briggs the Volunteers Coordinator and Allison Bartlett from the Museum shop.



Museum Director David Gardner explaining the development of the new Strike Hangar, yet to be opened to the general public..

Do infants enjoy infancy as much as adults enjoy adultery?

## Vale—P/O Gordon William Nunn DFC

Gordon was born in the family home at Mt Kilcoy on the 5th of Sept 1922, the youngest of 7 children of Charles Reginald and Eliza Nunn and grew up there on the family dairy farm.

As the youngest child he was spoilt by his elder sisters but despite this, he was raised, as most country children of his generation were, to be useful and independent.

He had a happy childhood on the farm with enough free time to enjoy the things country boys do –fishing in the creek, making canoes, exploring, hunting brush turkeys in the scrub and sharing in the ownership of a couple of motorbikes with George.

He had an interest in early electronics and made his own crystal radio set.

At 18, Gordon signed up at a dingy RAAF recruiting office in Creek St, Brisbane and was called up to start basic training at Sandgate early in 1942. After basic training he was fortunate to be assigned to pilot training on Tiger Moths at Narromine.

After this initial air training he was posted to Canada for advanced training on twin engine Ansons. Arriving at Claresholm near Calgary was a shock for the new arrivals, -50 degrees C and them still in summer uniforms. Gordon experienced all four seasons there and enjoyed immensely both Canada and flying training. After receiving his wings he went by rail across Canada to New Brunswick to train on Venturas and then by boat to England where, along with 4 of his friends, he joined 464 Squadron.

Gordon considered himself very fortunate that when they reported for duty at High Erroll the squadron had just been equipped with Mosquitos. These were the Ferraris of the flying world

at that point. Equipped with two enormous Rolls Royce Merlin engines, the Mosquitos were fighter-bombers with a range of 1800kms, 8 guns, a payload of 1000kgs and faster than any other plane in the air.

Gordon, together with his navigator, Lyle Mitchell, started operational flying shortly before D-Day and continued until the end of the war. This work was either very low level flying or night-fighter operations and naturally very stressful. Gordon's training mates were all lost



Gordon and Navigator Lyle Mitchell after they had returned from a trip just after D Day.

during the war and these losses affected him greatly but he also made friends in England that he has retained to this day. He rarely spoke to us about his war service until his later years and when he did it was generally about the good times and the funny things that had happened.

It was typical of the man that when awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross he elected to receive it, not from King George at Buckingham

Why is a person who plays the piano called a pianist but a person who drives a racing car not called a racist?

## Vale—P/O Gordon William Nunn DFC

Palace, but at Parliament House in Brisbane after he returned in order that his parents could be present.

At the end of the war Gordon had accepted an offer to fly for Australian National Airlines. However he received a most crushing blow, in his own words, "one of the great disappointments in my life", when he failed the medical due to a heart condition most probably brought on by the stress of operational flying.

On his return to Australia Gordon used his de-

was continually running or taking part in pasture experiments. When the dairy was well established Gordon and Betty started their "Nabilla" Simmental Stud. Progeny from their stock scored several Champion awards in both show and carcass competitions such as the Brisbane Exhibition and Beef Expo.

Although he successfully channeled his energy into farming, Gordon's first love was always aeroplanes and flying and after his obligations in raising a family were dispensed with he was

able to visit the major air shows around the world that had taken his fancy over the years as well as to visit the areas and airfields he frequented during the war.

Gordon was an avid reader, chiefly nonfiction, ranging from biographies and history to agriculture and the share market and in his 70's surprised us all by putting pen to paper and producing an excellent book of his war reminiscences.

His later years were plagued by ill health that he handled with stoicism, lightened by the knowledge that, alt-

hough he had travelled through many lands, there was nowhere finer than his valley to live.

He was a true gentleman, invariably polite and well mannered. He was modest about his achievements which were many and was a shining example of his generation that gave so much to our country.

*The Editor is transposing Gordon's book and will publish excerpts in this and upcoming Bulletins.*



Gordon and Lyle at Lyle's 100th Birthday 20th June 2010

mobilisation rail pass to visit the Steinhardts, friends of his family at their property on the Atherton Tablelands and made the acquaintance of their pretty young daughter, Betty. They must have got on reasonably well because 6 weeks later they were engaged and were married at St Andrews Church in South Brisbane on the 23rd November, 1946, just 6 months after meeting.

As a farmer Gordon was extremely hard working and very progressive. He was a long time member of the Tropical Grasslands Society and

# Reminiscences—Gordon Nunn DFC

An excerpt from the book by P/O Gordon Nunn DFC entitled -  
Some Reminiscences of a World War II RAAF Pilot  
With the kind permission of his wife Betty Nunn

## Service Flying Training

We did our Service Training flying on Ansons, at Claresholm, situated not far from Calgary in Canada. It was delightful flying around the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, with the towering peaks at Banff a spectacular backdrop.

The Ansons were easy to fly; a most forgiving aircraft, as I was to find out on my last day at the school. We had passed all the necessary exams and on the last day we had a big Wings parade - a most impressive affair, and they pinned on our tunics those much desired wings. That night we had our graduation party, and you might say that it was hardly an appropriate time for me to finish my night flying by taking to the air at 2am for an hour, but this wasn't my choice.

Circuits and bumps at night can be very wearying, and on top of a very exciting day with a party at night was a recipe for disaster - no, I hadn't touched alcohol! All went well until the hour was nearly up. I had just taken off and was climbing away when the port engine coughed and lost power. I knew immediately what I had forgotten to do, and lent over and turned the petrol cocks on to the outer tanks.

The old Jacobs engine gave a few coughs and a loud backfire as though to demonstrate its great dislike of 'sprog' pilots who starved it of petrol. The power picked up, and we climbed away to finish the circuit and land. That was my last flight in an Anson for some two years.

We covered most aspects of multi-engined flying, including formation and navigational exercises, and clocked up 230 hours. A tribute to the Ansons: I can't remember one accident when I was there. It was spring when we first landed there and experienced the Chinook; an odd sort of wind which was spawned in the

high peaks of the Rockies and flowed down the slopes picking up temperature as it progressed, melting the snow on the way. We were able to try our hand at winter sports up at Banff. and I can remember swimming in the hot springs there in a snow storm.

There was a mixture of nationalities at the school, but mainly Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Hussies, and British. Four including myself, were posted to 464 Squadron, but first we had to do an operational training course on Lockheed Venturas which were the aircraft in use by 464 Squadron at that time, so we were given a week's leave and a rail trip across Canada to our new training station in the wilds of New Brunswick.

## Flying the Venturas

Finally our Wings training was finished. We thought this meant we were pilots - probably ace pilots!

We had a couple of weeks' leave to bask in this glory before our ego was well and truly dented, and we realised that all we had achieved was a license to learn. Four of us were posted to the other side of Canada to Penfield Ridge in New Brunswick, where we were to learn the wayward vagaries of the Lockheed Ventura before heading to 464 Squadron in England.

The Ventura was designed as a commercial airliner, and the Americans had put a lot of thought and expense into the interior for the comfort of the crew. A large cockpit, with comfortable armchairs for Captain and second pilot, who incidentally, was deemed superfluous during war years, perhaps because there were no paying passengers to keep happy. The navigator had a compartment down front, the wireless operator an office behind the bulkhead cockpit door, and the gunner had a two gun turret

Why are a wise man and a wise guy opposites?



## Reminiscences—Gordon Nunn DFC

amidships. There was also a gun emplacement in the belly and two .50 guns firing through the nose and operated by the Captain. It had an automatic pilot device that had no maker's name: perhaps they were afraid of legal action. I only used it twice. Once it rolled the aircraft over, and the crew said that if I hankered after aerobatics so much why the hell I didn't fly Spitfires. The second time it put the aircraft into a steep dive and it was some time before I could get the thing disconnected. I hadn't been game to look at the air-speed indicator. The crew all told me that if I tried to reach the speed of sound again they would bale out. There were a mass of instruments and switches and I never quite grasped the purpose of some of these. The engines were marvellous; two air-cooled twin row Pratt and Whitney developing 2000 HP each.

We approached these monsters with awe, and had great respect for the flying instructors who handled them with such panache and were willing to risk their lives to teach us. I was introduced to Boris and we started flying.

He was a very experienced airman, and in three hours had me flying solo. Two years later I met up with Boris again and we were to become firm friends.

All was not well at that school; as we progressed through the flying exercises the accident rate was very high, and at one stage we had no serviceable aircraft.

When the report reached headquarters it stirred up a real hornet's nest among the hierarchy. Half a dozen very senior officers came down to straighten things out, and I was one of the unfortunates they chose to take a flying test. The cockpit had a Wing Commander sitting in the second pilot's seat; two Squadron Leaders standing behind us, and a couple more further back. My instructor said, "I'm coming too to see there's fair play", but he was too far back to see the cockpit happenings. They cut switches,



turned off fuel taps, flicked trimming tabs the wrong way, and in general gave me an exhausting hour's flying. I got mad, lost my nervousness, and have never flown better. Eventually their enthusiasm to wreck me, the aircraft and everyone in it, waned, and I was told to fly home and land. As we walked across to the flight office the Chief Tormentor came up to me and said "You're OK". I took this as high praise and was glad for Boris' sake.

We weren't far from the Bay of Fundy, and this presented problems as sea fogs used to roll in limiting visibility to only 50 yards, and staying

Why do overlook and oversee mean opposite things?

## Reminiscences—Gordon Nunn DFC

with us for two or three days, so at the first hint of fog we had to return to base.

There was lots of wild country up to the North of Pennfield Ridge. To the north-east the Americans built a big airfield at Goose Bay, and it was the jumping off point for bombers and long-range fighters being flown to the U.K. The pilots of Ferry Command did a mighty job: they were men of great experience who knew how troublesome those skies could be and that you couldn't always trust the weather maps, but the newly trained crews didn't fare so well.

The Bay also provided us with shooting targets in the form of floating heaps of seaweed. For the pilots using the two fixed .5 machine guns in the nose, it was quite a feat of strength to line up the lumbering machine so that the ring sight was on the target. One day one of the Canadian pilots did a mock attack on a sailing boat with rather disastrous results for him, as it happened to be the Chief Flying Instructor's launch, and the slipstream from the two 2000 h.p. motors nearly sank it. He was court-martialled, but as we left shortly after the incident I don't know the outcome.

It took us three months to plough through the course. One night I had bombing practice from 10,000 ft. with 11 lb practice bombs. When I called up target to let them know I was coming in a very agitated voice answered, telling me to be sure and properly identify the target - the previous aircraft had dropped his bombs on the lights of the power station. Fortunately he had no direct hits. He was a N.Z. friend of mine, and we did a lot of flying together. Later, in England, he flew B25s (Mitchells) and one night was dropping parachute flares for us to strafe under. The area was swarming with German night fighters and Johnnie was shot down. They stopped the B25s doing this soon afterwards as they were sitting ducks for the enemy fighters who had some good pilots. We then had to drop our own flares.

The flying at Pennfield finished as the maple

forests were changing colour. Dotted with many lakes, it was wild and beautiful country to fly-over. We were given two weeks' leave and then boarded the "Mauritania II" for England.

### England 1944-1945

When we arrived in England we heard that the Venturas were having a rough time. On one raid on Amsterdam, of the eleven Venturas which went out, ten were shot down. It was time to phase them out.

The preferred aircraft was the Mark VI Mosquito fighter-bomber. With powerful Rolls Royce 25 engines driving three-bladed hydromatic fully feathering propellers, this was a day and night fighter/bomber/intruder/long-range fighter with a range of 1800 miles, it was stressed to take four 500 lb bombs, or two bombs and long range tanks. The four 20mm cannon and four .303 machine guns all fired through the nose. This aircraft was unique in that it was constructed of wood, and for two years it was the fastest machine in the air.

There was a Mosquito Operational Training Unit at High Ercall in the Midlands and two of us were posted there to do a course before joining the squadron. We presented our log books to the C.O., but he wasn't impressed. In fact he let us know in most direct words that we should go and do a tour of ops on some inferior aircraft before casting a shadow on his exclusive establishment. We assured him that RAAF Headquarters London had posted us there and the RAAF Mosquito squadron was awaiting replacements. After a stony silence he told us that flying started the next day but the standard there was high - very high. We knew what he meant! Perform or out!

Prior to our appearance at High Ercall Mosquito training was only given to experienced pilots with a tour of ops under their belt, but as greater numbers of aircraft became available they condescended to train all and sundry. The

Seen at an Optometrist's Office: "If you don't see what you're looking for, you've come to the right place."

## Reminiscences—Gordon Nunn DFC

Mosquito was a beautiful aircraft to fly, except for being tricky on take off and landing when it had a great desire to sneak off the runway to port. They said that there were two types of pilots: those who had run off the runway and those who were about to do so. I qualified on my first solo! A voice came over the R. T. saying "Will the pilot of the aircraft just landed please have his undercarriage checked". It had a high stalling speed, so we made final approach at 140 mph and this took a lot of getting used to.

There seemed to be a lot of accidents, and I was beginning to wonder when we were going to see this high standard of flying. Two ATA girl pilots bringing a new Mosquito to the unit crashed on landing and ended up in a smoldering heap. A South African Captain put on quite a display when he tried to make a single engine landing and came in too fast. It took three hedges to stop him. He left a wing here; an engine there, and ended up quite unharmed, sitting in his cockpit with not much else around him. What a terrible position to be in!

The servicing at the school left much to be desired. During my time there the unit lost five aircraft, including one shot down by an enemy night fighter.

Soon came time for night flying, and my first night solo was an experience that I hoped wouldn't be repeated. At 200ft the constant speed unit on the port engine failed, and I had a runaway engine that had to be shut down. To add to my troubles I was unable to feather the propeller, and according to the gauge my port wheel was hanging down. I reported to control that I would be making a single engine landing and this really stiffed things up in at control. The radio ran hot with advice - so much so that I turned it off. they must have been nearly as panic-stricken as I!

I managed to hold the aircraft straight, climb to circuit height, and make a gentle turn to get into position to land. I had been advised to make a

glide approach, but just as well I stood close in before cutting the motor as I found Mozzies glide like a brick, and there is a big attitude change to make. I was lucky that all went well, but I decided the next single engine landing was going to be a powered approach.

The C.O. swallowed his pride; called me in the next day and congratulated me, though he caught me out when he asked why I hadn't called for flood lights. I told him I had been quite confident of making an ordinary flare path landing) wasn't going to tell him that I was so panic-stricken I forgot all about flood lights. He mumbled something about "They're crashing them around here in broad daylight!" I thought I had better hold my peace and not retort "I had noticed that!"

I only had one other traumatic experience The ground crew failed to lock my rear hatch, and when I took off the slipstream threatened to tear the hinges off, in which case my tail would have gone too.

We progressed through the various exercises, such as dive bombing from all heights. I still have my fighter pilot's report; a very depressing one. I'm not sure why I kept it as it has all my scores for Air to Ground shooting and Air to Air shooting at a drogue.

The drogue pilot wasn't very impressed with my shooting as I hung on too long doing a quarter attack, and he swore the bullets were clipping his aircraft. He thought that in future I should only use the camera gun. The only consolation was that the scores did get better with practice.

The course finally ended and we were deemed trained to meet the foe.

*Further excerpts of Gordon's book will be in later Bulletins.*

In the front yard of a Funeral Home: "Drive carefully. We'll wait."

## From the Mailbag

I was pleased to come across your web site recently. I was following up things to do with Pearce Dunn and his Warbirds Aviation Museum at Mildura at the time and recognised the photograph on [www.mossie.org](http://www.mossie.org) of the recovery of A52-600 in August 1967. I was there.

I'm the schoolboy guiding the nose of the aeroplane cropped out of the photograph you have.

Compare the enclosed photograph of the lifting operation with yours. They were both

cropped from the same photo. I've also enclosed a couple of photographs that I took of A52-600 as we found it.

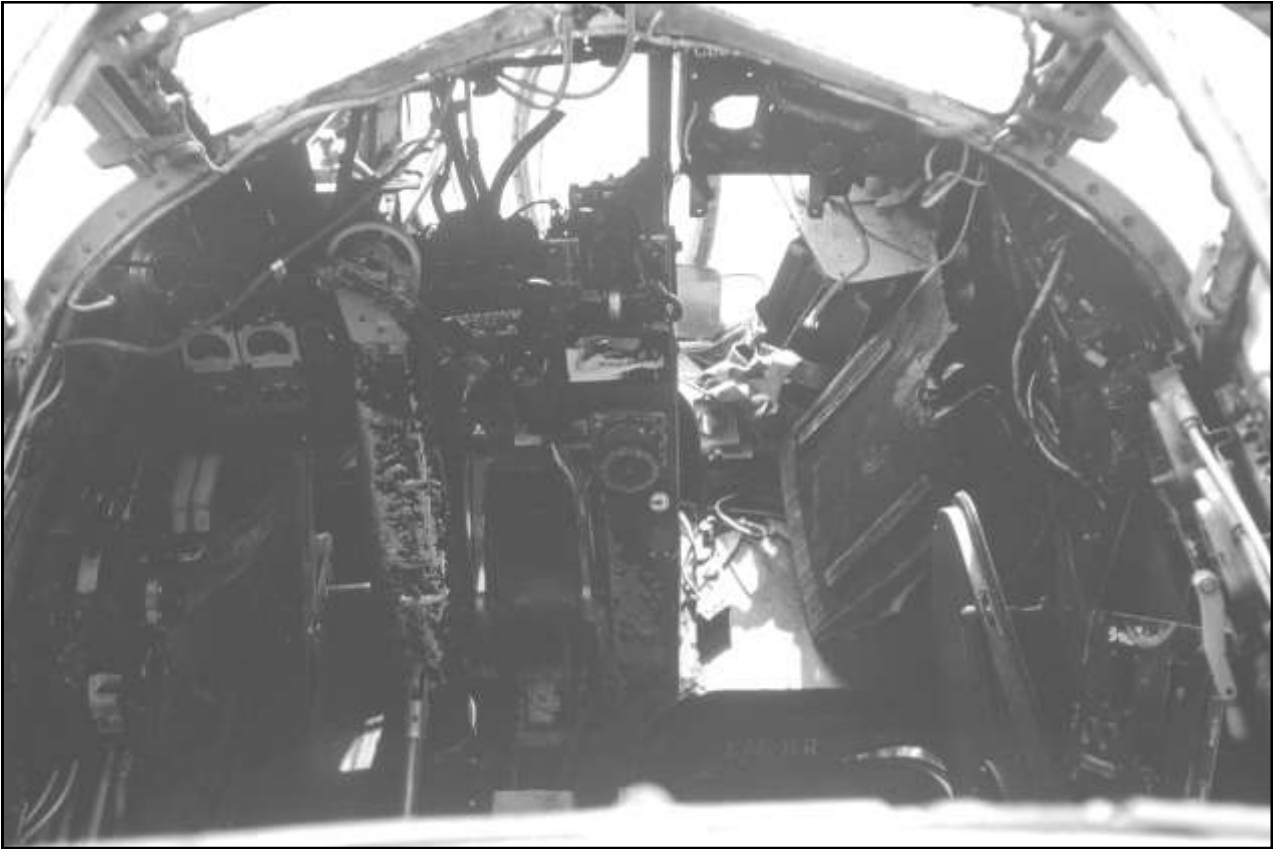
I'm very pleased that A52-600 is in such good hands as it is now, and the progress that is being made with its restoration/conservation. I helped Pearce in the recovery of a number of aircraft at that time and A52-600 was a favourite of mine.

Regards, Guy Hodgson



'I am' is reportedly the shortest sentence in the English language. Could it be that 'I do' is the longest sentence?

## From the Mailbag—contd



Why isn't the number 11 pronounced onety one?

## From the Mailbag—contd

**Re: Mosquito Aircrew and Ground Crew Reunion**

**Provisional Venue: RAF Club London**

**Provisional Date: Saturday 16th April 2011**

**Mosquito “Mossie” Enthusiasts by Invitation only**

Dear MAAA Editor

You may or may not be aware of the recent posting on the [www.mossie.org](http://www.mossie.org) forum by Andy Dawson and David Coeshall regarding a possible Mosquito aircrew and ground crew reunion.

By means of an introduction, both Andy and myself were previously both Associate Members of the Mosquito Aircrew Association (which was a very great honour for us both) and are current members of the de Havilland Aircraft Heritage Centre. We are both “Mossie” enthusiasts.

On the closure of the MAA we were asked by several members that knew us, if we would be prepared to consider arranging an occasional reunion event on behalf of their colleagues. Unfortunately and regrettably due to both work and family commitments we could not at the time do this. Having recently met up and discussed this between us, we realised that if we do not try to do this now, we would not be fulfilling our obligations to the MAA members who had given us so much pleasure, and with the passing of time, we would miss a great opportunity, which we would never achieve again and regret in the future.

Therefore, we would like to see if we could at least try to arrange a reunion on behalf of all the previous and surviving members of the MAA, provisional date Saturday 16th April 2011. We have initially identified the RAF Club in London as a possible venue. We are also considering the RAF Museum Hendon and are currently contacting both to arrange meetings to discuss such an event. Initial contact was very favourable in each case.

**Would you therefore be willing to attend such a reunion? Would you be willing to help us on that day with our guests? This would be a luncheon, occurring provisionally Saturday 16th April 2011.**

If you are willing to attend and would like us to arrange such a reunion would you please complete the attached questionnaire and ensure that you update the details, particularly if the information shown is incorrect and confirm your preferences? A pre-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

One further point is that we would like to open the invitation up to not only ex-members of the MAA, but also to post war aircrew, ground crew, friends and relatives and invited “Mossie” enthusiasts. We are aiming for approximately 100 attendees as this helps with driving the costs down with respect to catering for specific numbers.

**Our intention is definitely a Reunion for the benefit of Mosquito Aircrew, Ground Crew or by any other association, arranged by us.**

There is a cost associated to arranging this which we intend to keep to a minimum, current indications are that for approx. £75 per enthusiast (this cost helps us to offset the cost to the aforementioned guests) inclusive of tea/coffee and biscuits upon arrival, lunch, 2/3 courses to be negotiated (suggested menu steak and kidney pie or salmon, with a vegetarian option; wine will be available, but at an extra cost) and tea/coffee and biscuits again in the afternoon. A bar will also be available, but unfortunately not free! Please see the attached draft agenda for further details.

We would therefore wish to reduce this cost further; one option is to gain sponsorship from various parties, which we are currently investigating. Another option, is that we would try to obtain a limited number of books and prints and ask our guests to “sign” them during the reunion, which we could then auction and sell at this event, to the Enthusiasts present, any remaining funds accrued possibly being donated to the RAF Benevolent Fund and/or split between this and the venue.

**Please note: This is NOT a “signing event”, Enthusiasts will be asked NOT to bring their own items, but to buy items offered within the auction. We are simply trying to reduce costs for all participants. These items will therefore be unique.**

We are also trying to arrange some guest speakers to update us on “Mossie” restorations, authors and artists and or anything else associated to the Mosquito.

I thought about how mothers feed their babies with tiny little spoons and forks  
so I wondered what do Chinese mothers use? Toothpicks?

## From the Mailbag—contd

We should also mention that several “Mossie” Enthusiasts being our friends and colleagues have already offered their services to help with this venture and to help on the day picking anybody up and getting them to the venue and then escorting anybody that requires that extra bit of help throughout the course of the day. If you can help with any donated items, we would be very grateful.

Finally when completing the questionnaire please feel free to contact us with any other suggestions and or advice, we will be only too pleased to hear from you, we are definitely novices at this! Please also consider advising us of any contact details of other Mosquito aircrew or ground crew you know of who may be interested in a reunion. No details will be passed on to anyone else.

Apologies for the length of this letter but hopefully it does explain all, together with assuring you of our intentions.

Kind Regards

David A Coeshall and  
Andy Dawson

Glebe Cottage  
Icknield Road  
Ipsden  
Oxon OX10 6AS

Tel.: +44 1491 871881  
Mob.: +44 7770 601296  
E-mail: djcoeshall@aol.com

## Draft Agenda - Mosquito “Mossie” Reunion

(Aircrew, Ground Crew, Friends/Relatives, Invited Enthusiasts)  
(World War II & Post War Associations)

<b>Provisional Date:</b>	<b>Saturday 16th April 2011</b>
<b>Provisional Venue:</b>	<b>RAF Club London</b>
<b>Arrival, Meet &amp; Greet:</b>	10.30am - 11.30am Tea, Coffee & Biscuits
<b>Welcome:</b>	11.30am
<b>Talk by Guest:</b>	Artist, Author, Other 11.45am - 12.30pm Speaker: TBC
<b>LUNCH:</b>	12.30pm - 2.00pm
<b>Talk by Guest:</b>	Restoration Update 2.00pm - 3.00pm Speaker: TBC

**Thanks**

**Next Reunion!**

**Free Time in Lunch Room/Bar:** 3.00pm Onwards

Why do they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do, write to them?  
Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the postmen can look for them  
while they deliver the mail?

## From the Mailbag—contd

Many thanks for sending me your latest MAAA Bulletin.

Just to let you know that CF-HML ex VR796 is now being completed by Victoria Air Maintenance at Victoria Airport Vancouver Island B.C. Canada.

They are doing a great job, and it should be in the air by 2012. If you go onto there web site, they have a nice 5 min documentary on the progress of the aircraft and it is well worth seeing.

Regards  
Doug Grant

More detail and photos can be found on:

<http://vicair.net/category/projects/mosquito>  
<http://vicair.net/projects/mosquito/may-2010>



OK ... so if the Jacksonville Jaguars are known as the 'Jags' and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers are known as the 'Bucs,' what does that make the Tennessee Titans?



# Something to Remember— The No 1 Squadron Mosquito Story



Last year Air Commodore Mark Lax CSM (Retd) granted our Association access to reproducing his Mosquito story about No 1 Squadron. The first abridged instalment of his story has been included this month along with supporting photos recently donated by the Clark family.

*Thanks to David Devenish (MAAA Archivist) for editing the manifest.*

## INTRODUCTION

Australia's first unit to see action in the Asia-Pacific War was No 1 Squadron. In Malaya since 1940 supporting British Operations in the colony, the Squadron was the first to sight the Japanese invasion fleet of Kota Bharu in the north east on 6 December 1941. Two days later, war had arrived and despite initial successes, the unit was forced to withdraw. Four months later, after a determined defence, the remaining unserviceable aircraft were destroyed and those who could not escape to Australia were made Prisoners of War. 165 went into captivity and the unit ceased to exist. Formal disbandment came on 8 March 1942.

This is the story of the resurrection of that unit and their subsequent move out into the islands as part of the RAAF's First Tactical Air Force. Flying Mosquito aircraft, the new No 1 Squadron flew 114 operational sorties against shipping and Japanese army positions and remained at Labuan until after the end of the war. It is perhaps fitting in the RAAF's 75th year, that the No 1 Squadron Mosquito story is recorded so as not to be forgotten. Surely it is something to remember.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE MOSQUITO

Arguably, one of the best twin engined aircraft of the Second World War was the de Havilland D.H.98 Mosquito. Designed in 1940 as a fast, light bomber, the Mosquito went on to become one of the highest performing piston engined aircraft operated by the RAAF in the Pacific Theatre. It was by all accounts a delight to fly and No 1 Squadron was to be fortunate enough to operate them in the latter phases of the War.

#### Mosquito Genesis

The development and production of high performance twin-engined aircraft was to be a specialty of the de Havilland aircraft company of Hatfield, Hertfordshire, UK, whose racing DH88 Comet won the London to Melbourne Air Race of 1934 in the phenomenal time of just one minute under 71 hours. Considering Australian brothers Ross and Keith Smith won the first London to Australia race in 28 days only 15 years earlier, this was

surely indicative of the pace of aircraft development in the between-the-wars era. The Comet was indeed a portent of things to come. Six years later, the first Mosquito, grey and marked only with its serial number W4050, lifted off from its factory airfield to the cheers of designers, engineers and workers alike.

The Mosquito was born of a British Air Staff Specification, No P.9/38 raised to develop a replacement for the Bristol Blenheim light bomber. With modern German Fighters such as the ME-109 posing a new threat, the Air Ministry wanted a fast, light bomber which would not have to spend time in the target area and would hopefully, successfully evade the opposing defences.

The de Havilland Company responded to the Specification with a spruce, balsa wood and cedar ply aircraft which was glued together and powered by two Rolls-Royce Merlin engines. To keep weight down and to increase speed, the aircraft would also be unarmed. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the new design received little enthusiasm. After all, modern aircraft were made of metal not wood! The initial offer of the Mosquito prototype was rejected.

Two years later, Specification No B.1/40 was released by the Air Ministry, this time for an aircraft suitable for use as a light bomber or photo reconnaissance aircraft. The requirement was for an aircraft with a range of at least 1,500 miles and able to carry a 4,000 lb bomb load. De Havilland resurrected the Mosquito proposal and this time was successful. An initial order for 50 was placed on 1 March 1940, much to the delight of de Havilland and his staff.

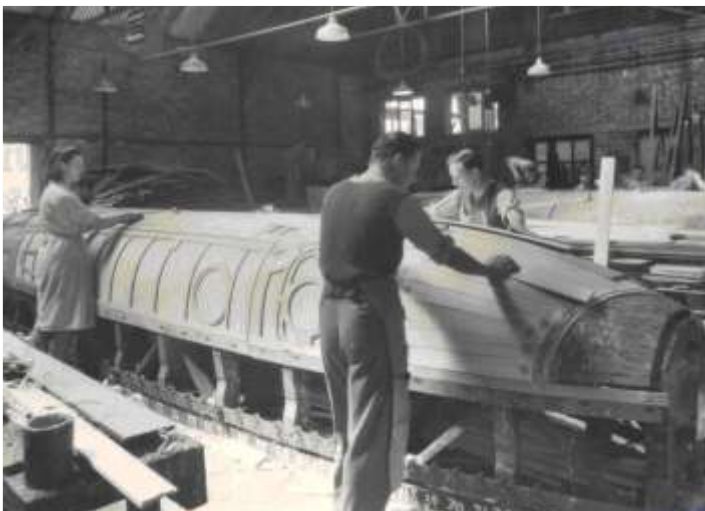
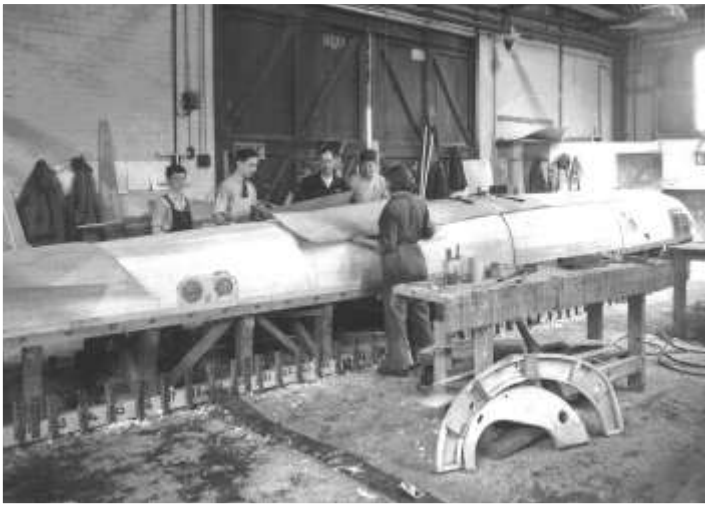
Built in secret at Salisbury Hall, the prototype was completed eleven months after commencement of design work. The aircraft was unique in that it was made entirely of wood. Built in two halves of cedar ply and balsa wood laminations, this allowed prefabrication of the sections before control wires, hydraulics and electrics could be fitted.

A single piece wing contained ten bullet-proofed fuel tanks and all associated engine plumbing. The faint-hearted had to come to terms with the fact that the whole wing structure was attached by only four bolts!

I'sn't making a smoking section in a restaurant like making a peeing section in a swimming pool?

## Something to Remember— The No 1 Squadron Mosquito Story

Clark Family photos: Wrighton Aircraft Ltd, Walthamstow, London, UK.



The above photos show men and women fabricating mosquito fuselage halves. This process involves laying-up 3 layers, the first an inner plywood layer, then a centre layer of balsa wood and finally another layer of plywood. Each of these layers required the application of glue, material then clapping until glue was set. The clamping straps which are made of spring steel, can be clearly seen in the two right hand photos. Across the factory can be seen numbers of left and right handed fuselage jigs used for this work. Once fuselage lay-up is completed, the halves are mounted on moveable trolleys and moved to the fit-out area. Here women can be seen adding numerous fittings which included electrical and hydraulic systems, attachment points etc.



Seen on the back of a Plumber's truck: "Don't sleep with a drip. Call your plumber.."

## Something to Remember— The No 1 Squadron Mosquito Story



This photo shows the fuselage halves being joined together.

1 Squadron's aircraft were FB variants, guns were fitted instead. The cockpit was designed with crew comfort and protection in mind. RAAF Publication No. 309 described the cockpit thus:

*The crew are accommodated side-by-side, the pilot being on the left. The backs of both seats are of armour plate, there is an armour-plate bulkhead in front of the cockpit behind the instrument panel and on bulkhead No 2, while the front windscreen is of bullet proof laminated glass. The cockpit canopy is welded tubular-steel structure, entirely covered with perspex, with the exception of the front windscreen. The canopy incorporates an emergency exit in the roof and affords a good vision over a wide field upwards and forwards, sliding windows give direct vision for approach and landing.*

Once the halves were joined and the wing main spar fitted, the aircraft was essentially complete. A crew door was fitted to the starboard side and this could be jettisoned in case of emergency. The entire aircraft was glued under heat and pressure to ensure a sturdy bonding of all components. The laminated wooden construction proved very robust, possibly due to the absorptive qualities of the wood and the greatly reduced number of rivets and fasteners creating stress points. The airframe was thus particularly resistant to the effects of gunfire - a considerable advantage in combat situations.

The cockpit accommodated two crew, pilot and navigator, in side-by-side configuration which allowed better crew coordination and response. Crew members could cross-check each other and share the numerous cockpit duties. The original design had a bombsight and nose window fitted to allow the navigator to act as bomb aimer or photographer on reconnaissance missions, but as No

The aircraft had extremely good high altitude performance, both in rate of climb and speed, making it difficult to intercept and thus well suited to photo reconnaissance duties. It could out-manoeuvre most single engined fighters and in the hands of a skilled pilot, could perform a rolling climb with one engine feathered!

By mid-1942, the 'Mossie' as it was affectionately known by its operators, had become operational in several RAF fighter and bomber units. Developments and improvements soon followed and the FB VI Fighter-Bomber, which was later to make its appearance in the Pacific, was first produced in February 1943. Some 27 variants were eventually produced including the high flying photo reconnaissance aircraft which were fitted with specially developed Merlin 72 engines and designated PR. Marks.

Below shows the fuselage, fitted out with perspex cockpit canopy and nose cone, ready for transport to the assembly factory. (and possibly shipped to No 1 Squadron later).



Seen on a Proctologist's door: "To expedite your visit please back in."

# SR-71 Blackbird

*by one of the lucky pilots*

In April 1986, following an attack on American soldiers in a Berlin disco; President Reagan ordered the bombing of Muammar Qaddafi's terrorist camps in Libya. My duty was to fly over Libya, and take photographs recording the damage our F-111's had inflicted.

Qaddafi had established a 'line of death,' a territorial marking across the Gulf of Sidra, swearing to shoot down any intruder, that crossed the boundary.

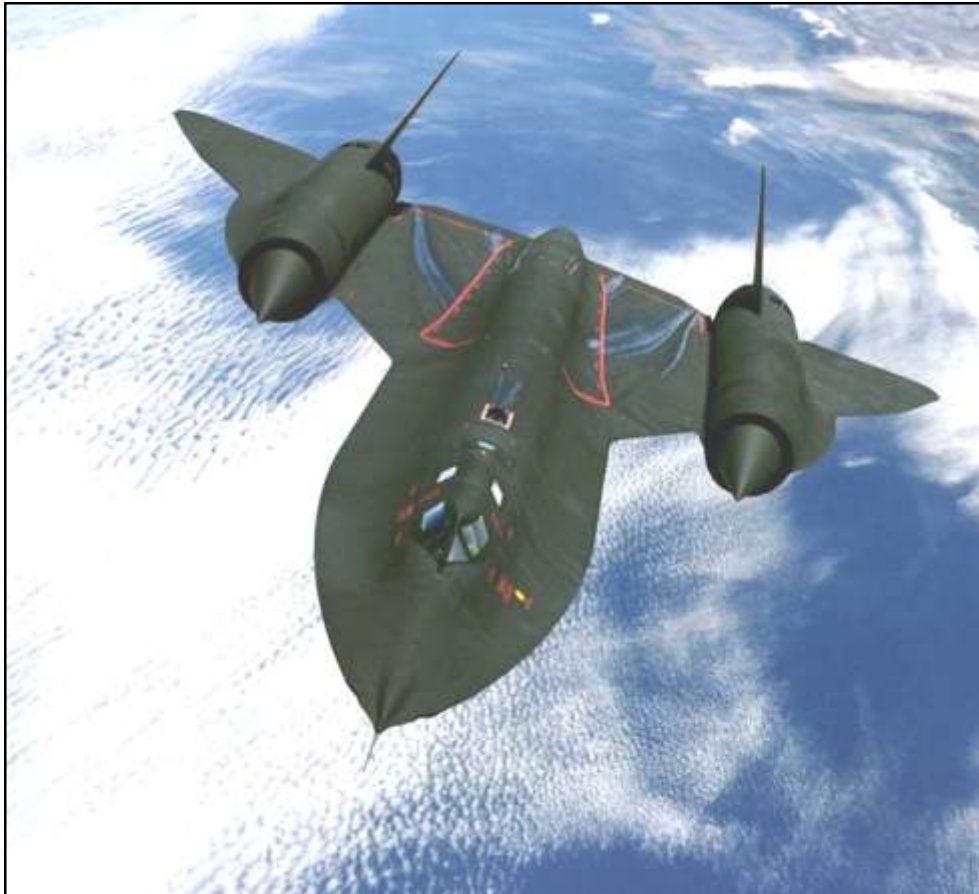
On the morning of April 15, I rocketed past the line at 2,125 mph. I was piloting the SR-71 spy plane, the world's fastest jet, accompanied by a Marine Major (Walt), the aircraft's reconnaissance systems officer (RSO). We had crossed into Libya, and were approaching our final turn over the bleak desert landscape, when Walt informed me, that he was receiving missile launch signals.

I quickly increased our speed, calculating the time it would take for the weapons, most likely SA-2 and SA-4 surface-to-air missiles, capable of Mach 5 - to reach our altitude. I estimated that we could beat the rocket-powered missiles to the turn, and stayed our course, betting our lives on the plane's performance. After several agonizingly long seconds, we made the turn and blasted toward the Mediterranean... 'You might want to pull it back,' Walt suggested. It was then that I noticed I still had the throttles full forward. The plane was flying a mile every 1.6 seconds, well above our Mach 3.2 limit. It was the fastest we would ever fly. I pulled the throttles to idle, just south of Sicily, causing us to overrun the refuelling

tanker, awaiting us over Gibraltar!

The SR-71, also known as the Blackbird, the fastest plane ever, and only 93 Air Force pilots, ever steered the 'sled,' as we called our aircraft. The SR-71 was the brainchild of Kelly Johnson, the famed Lockheed designer, who created the P-38, the F-104 Starfighter and the U-2.

After the Soviets shot down Gary Powers U-2 in 1960, Johnson began to develop an aircraft that would fly three miles higher and five times faster than the spy plane and still be capable of photographing your license plate.



However, flying at 2,000 mph would create intense heat on the aircraft's skin. Lockheed engineers used a titanium alloy, to construct more than 90 percent of the SR-71, creating special tools, and manufacturing procedures to hand-build each of the 40 planes. Special heat-resistant fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluids, that would function at 85,000 feet, and higher, also had to be developed.

In 1962, the first Blackbird successfully flew, and in 1966, the same year I graduated from high school, the Air Force began flying operational SR-71 missions. I came to the program in 1983, with a sterling record and a recommendation from my commander, completing the weeklong interview, and meeting Walt, my partner for the next four years.

He would ride four feet behind me, working all the cameras, radios, and electronic jamming equipment. I joked, that if we were ever captured, he was the spy, and I was just the driver. He told me to keep the pointy end forward.

Ever wonder about those people who spend \$2.00 apiece on those little bottles of Evian water? Try spelling Evian backwards: NAIVE

# SR-71 Blackbird

We trained for a year, flying out of Beale AFB in California, Kadena Airbase in Okinawa, and RAF Mildenhall in England. On a typical training mission, we would take off near Sacramento, refuel over Nevada, accelerate into Montana, obtain a high Mach speed over Colorado, turn right over New Mexico, speed across the Los Angeles Basin, run up the West Coast, turn right at Seattle, then return to Beale. Total flight time: - two hours and forty minutes.

The Blackbird always showed us something new, each aircraft possessing its own unique personality. In time, we realized we were flying a national treasure. When we taxied out of our revetments for take-off, people took notice. Traffic congregated near the airfield fences, because everyone wanted to see, and hear the mighty SR-71.

Slowly, she revealed her secrets to us, as we earned her trust. One moonless night, while flying a routine training mission over the Pacific, I wondered what the sky would look like from 84,000 feet, if the cockpit lighting were dark.

While heading home on a straight course, I slowly turned down all of the lighting, reducing the glare and revealing the night sky. Within seconds, I turned the lights back up, fearful that the jet would know, and somehow punish me. But my desire to see the sky, overruled my caution, I dimmed the lighting again. To my amazement, I saw a bright light outside my window. As my eyes adjusted to the view, I realized that the brilliance was the broad expanse of the Milky Way, now a gleaming stripe across the sky. Where dark spaces in the sky, had usually existed, there were now dense clusters, of sparkling stars.

Shooting Stars, flashed across the canvas every few seconds. It was like a fireworks display with no sound. I knew I had to get my eyes back on the instruments, and reluctantly, I brought my attention back inside. To my surprise, with the cockpit lighting still off, I could see every gauge, lit by starlight.

In the plane's mir-

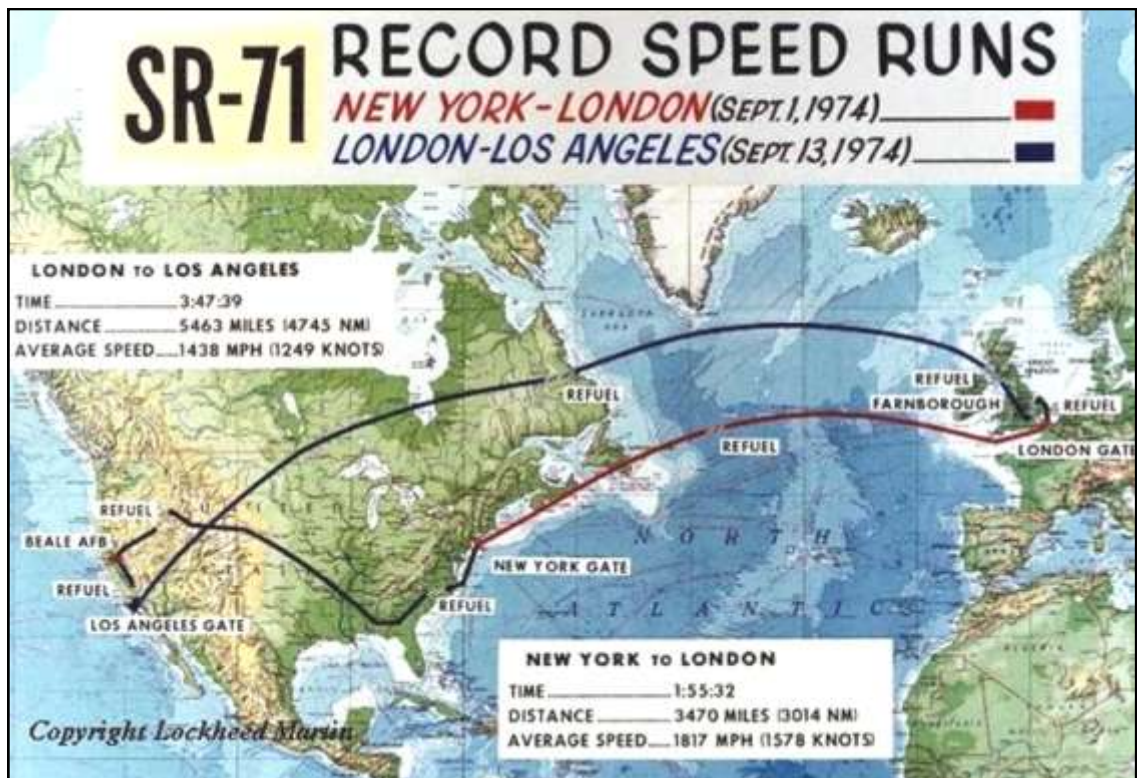
rors, I could see the eerie shine of my gold spacesuit, incandescently illuminated, in a celestial glow. I stole one last glance out the window. Despite our speed, we seemed still before the heavens, humbled in the radiance of a much greater power. For those few moments, I felt a part of something far more significant, than anything we were doing in the plane. The sharp sound of Walt's voice on the radio, brought me back to the tasks at hand, as I prepared for our descent.

The SR-71 was an expensive aircraft to operate. The most significant cost was tanker support, and in 1990, confronted with budget cutbacks, the Air Force retired the SR-71. The SR-71 served six presidents, for over a quarter of a century.

Unbeknown to most of the country, the plane flew over North Vietnam, Red China, North Korea, the Middle East, South Africa, Cuba, Nicaragua, Iran, Libya, and the Falkland Islands. On a weekly basis, the SR-71, kept watch over every Soviet Nuclear Submarine, and Mobile Missile Site, and all of their troop movements.

I flew about 500 hours in this aircraft. I knew her well. She gave way to no plane, proudly dragging her Sonic Boom through enemy backyards, with great impunity.

In the first 100 years of manned flight, no aircraft was more remarkable. The Blackbird had outrun nearly 4,000 missiles, not once taking a scratch from enemy fire. On her final flight, the Blackbird, destined for the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, sped from Los Angeles to Washington in 64 minutes, averaging 2,145



If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked, and dry cleaners depressed?

# Vale

It is with regret that the Association must relay the passing of the following members:

**Nunn, Gordon William** DFC of Mt Kilcoy, Queensland

The Association's condolences are extended to all Gordon's loved ones.

Gordon's story may be found elsewhere in this Bulletin.

## New Members

The Association is pleased to announce and welcome the following people who have joined us since the last Bulletin was published:

**Dragicevic, George**, of Coburg West, Victoria

**Hodgson, Guy**, of Bonnet Bay, New South Wales

Welcome to you both, we hope you have a long, enjoyable association and take an active interest in Mosquitos and in particular the restoration of A52-600.

### The Mosquito Aircraft Association of Australia

<b>Patron:</b>	Air Vice-Marshal J.C. (Sam) Jordan AO (RAAF-Retired)		
<b>President:</b>	Alan Middleton OAM	+61 3 9523 9774	ALMidd@bigpond.com
<b>Vice President:</b>	Terry Burke	+61 3 9598 0116	BurkeTR9@bigpond.net.au
<b>Secretary/Treasurer:</b>	Bob Stevens	+61 3 9800 4364	RSteven1@bigpond.net.au
<b>Bulletin:</b>	Terry Burke	+61 3 9598 0116	BurkeTR9@bigpond.net.au
	Bob Stevens	+61 3 9800 4364	RSteven1@bigpond.net.au
<b>Association Archivist:</b>	David Devenish	+61 3 9885 5373	DDev@bigpond.com
<b>Web Master:</b>	Don Taylor	+61 3 9733 4608	DTaylor55@optusnet.net.au
<b>Restoration Records Management:</b>	Graeme Coates	+61 3 9428 2324	Coatbeam@melbpc.org.au
<b>MAAA Mailing Address:</b>	32 Clarke Crescent, WANTIRNA SOUTH, Victoria, Australia 3152		

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No one ever says, 'It's only a game' when their team is winning.