



## AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION of RETIRED AIRLINE PILOTS and AVIATION PROFESSIONALS

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## **Issue 42 (March – July)**

### **EDITORIAL**

Those of you who receive the newsletter digitally will be able to open and view a YouTube video telling the story of post WW2 aviation in Australia covering the period just prior to the arrival of turbo-jet powered aircraft. Whilst I found it interesting overall in that BBC-style talk-over documentary, it prompted me to investigate the history of the phonetic alphabet. I started my flying training in 1963 and have only ever used the so-called NATO alphabet. As usual a Google search provided the answers I wanted and we have included it in this newsletter for those of us too *young* to have used any other. We hope you enjoy the story.

Reproduced on Page 15 is an original advertisement for TAA. One wonders whether the statement '*no booked passenger will be "offloaded"*' to give preference to another traveller' is prescient to TAA's incarnation, present-day Qantas?

In the newsletter is a letter received by our secretary, Geoff Noble and we have included it in its entirety. As you can see, it calls for volunteers amongst us to tell our aviation-related life stories which will be reproduced in the Talking Stories website, an example of which is available here <https://www.talkingstories.au/the-blasters>

Remember to keep the 30<sup>th</sup> of November free for the annual Christmas lunch and just a gentle reminder that annual subscriptions were due on 1 July.

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The move to the Italian Club for this year's AGM was a big success, there were over 50 members, partners and friends attending. The venue provided us with a quiet room for the Meeting and our own section for the lunch.

The feedback on both the food and the venue has been very good, I am sure we will return next year.

Your current committee was voted back in at the AGM and will represent members for another year. Congratulations to my fellow committee members for their work throughout the year and I look forward to working with a great team once again.

Soon requests for attendance to the Christmas luncheon on Thursday the 30<sup>th</sup> November will go out on Mailchimp. As always, we ask you reply sooner rather than later to help us with the organization.

Enjoy the remainder of Winter.

Phil James  
Chairman.

## **WELFARE & RECRUITMENT REPORT**

Bob Allan for the Team

Another year has passed since the last AGM and surprise-surprise we're not getting any younger. In fact, due to modern medicine, we are living a lot longer. However, by living longer, it can be argued that some of our colleagues are experiencing health problems of a more severe nature which affect their quality of life on a day-to-day basis.

As a large majority of us are entering their 80's and 90's, we find it more difficult to attend functions and get-togethers with fellow colleagues and therefore miss out on much enjoyed verbal aviation intercourse which can be so essential to one's sense of wellbeing.

With the above in mind your Welfare and Membership committee would like to remind you all to give a thought to a colleague you were once very close to and haven't heard of for quite a while. Pick up the phone and touch base with him/her and hopefully bring a little extra cheer into a friend's life.

Membership in the past year has been a bit slower than we would like it to be. One reason could be that where the vast majority of AARAP members are survivors of the '89 dispute and therefore have a common interest with the enjoyment of each other's company, whereas the younger group of aviation retirees may not feel our sense of camaraderie.

So, if you know of a fellow aviator or airline professional that would enjoy the company of like-minded retirees, then please bring them along to our monthly breakfast where they can meet fellow aviation tragics and hopefully we can sign them up.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

### **TALKING STORIES**

Dear Captain Geoff Noble,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Sam Regi, and I am reaching out to you on behalf of [Talking Stories](#), an innovative personal interview and portrait service that aims to capture and share powerful life stories. I recently came across your esteemed organization - AARAP, and I

believe there is a wonderful opportunity for collaboration with the Brisbane, Sunshine Coast or Gold Coast division.

Allow me to introduce myself. I am an independent multimedia journalist and an academic at the University of Queensland and the Queensland University of Technology. In the past, I have had the pleasure of working on news stories where I researched your organization, and I am impressed by the rich experiences and captivating stories on your website. In fact, I recently saw the photos of your Sunshine Coast division's meet-up on the AARAP website, and it further piqued my interest in featuring your members in our pilot program.

Talking Stories is currently conducting a pilot program where we invite exceptional individuals and groups to share their life journeys, personal insights, and legacies. I am excited to extend an offer to three members of the AARAP Sunshine Coast, Brisbane or Gold Coast divisions to participate in this program. We would like to offer up to three story sessions at no cost, allowing us to capture and showcase the remarkable experiences and wisdom of your members. The session is an opportunity for members to have their life stories documented in a two-hour story session including an interview and stunning portraits. I will guide and support them throughout the session to ensure a comfortable and engaging experience. The captured stories will be professionally edited and presented as high-quality audio recordings and visual portraits, creating a timeless keepsake for participants and their families. Additionally, we will create a shareable link with a shorter version of the stories on our website. Please view the following story for an idea of what it may look like: <https://www.talkingstories.au/the-blasters>

The pilot program offering is at no cost because we are seeking feedback on our service from our sitters and hoping to use the content for our launch campaign.

If the AARAP is pleased with the results of the pilot program, we would be delighted to continue collaborating and conducting more sessions in the future, once Talking Stories is officially launched.

To proceed with this pilot collaboration, I kindly request your assistance in providing me with the contact details for the local South East Queensland division of the AARAP. This will allow me to reach out directly to the division and discuss the pilot program in more detail with them.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and support. I truly believe that the stories of retired airline pilots hold immense value and deserve to be shared. I look forward to the possibility of featuring the members of the AARAP SEQ Division in the Talking Stories pilot program.

Best regards,

Sam Regi (Sam)  
Founder  
Talking Stories  
0401314410

**According to Federal Aviation Administration, airlines need to provide more extensive pilot training** to avoid potential accidents when pilots are forced to take manual control during emergencies or become confused due to erroneous flight data provided by automated systems. The regulator issued an advisory circular on its website with comprehensive new training guidelines for airlines and other commercial aviation operators in the US.

The new cockpit curriculum was partly stimulated by the 2013 crash of an Asiana Airlines aircraft in San Francisco after pilots were confused about automated controls, which caused the plane to hit a sea wall, killing three people. After the accident, the NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) recommended the FAA establish a panel of experts to improve pilot training to increase their ability to fly the plane manually when automated flight control systems are not reliable. "Multiple crashes have shown a need for pilots, who might switch on autopilot soon after takeoff, to sharpen their abilities to fly without automation in case they have to take over during an emergency," the FAA said in the advisory

## NEW JOINERS

**Perry Matthews** ex ATCO & Air Traffic Management: - RAAF; DCA PNG; AVTEL P/L Australia; Airways Corp NZ; CAA NZ; Pacific Aviation Safety Office.

**Steve Shirley Capt.** ex RAAF; AN; CX

**Brian Henderson Mr** ex AFAP Industrial Officer Sydney & Brisbane

**John Glen Capt.** ex AN; Transwede; Sultan Airlines; CX

**Peter MacMillan Capt.** ex AN; Condor; SilkAir; CASA

## RIP

**Captain Alan Reid** (no details available at the time of publication)

## VALE

### Captain John Joseph Gooch (1932 – 7 November 2022)

Joseph Gooch was born in Mackay on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September 1932 and was schooled at St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace, finishing Junior in 1948. He found work with New Zealand Loan, a company involved in the wool industry, working around the wool stores in Teneriffe and was later transferred to St. George.

In 1952 John started initial flight training at Royal Queensland Aero Club, receiving his pilot's licence in December 1954. To earn money to pay for this Commercial Licence (reportedly £500), he and two friends travelled south to seek employment as part of the Snowy River hydro-electric project. After 12 months they went to Cairns and completed their training.



John became a crop-duster pilot, operating around Southern Queensland and Northern NSW, flying Tiger Moths. As a stepping stone to joining the airlines, John then worked for Avis, and later as ground staff with TAA at Brisbane Airport.

John joined Ansett in 1961 and moved to Melbourne, where he found out the company had recruited too many new pilots and his employment was rescinded. There was then a change in decision, and he was re-employed.

He was based in Brisbane for his entire career with Ansett, commencing as a first officer on DC3s, followed by the Viscount, DC4 and Carvair, and DC9. He then received his 1<sup>st</sup> Class ATPL in 1969 and his 1<sup>st</sup> command on the DC4/Carvair, followed by the F27, Electra, DC9, Boeing 727 and finally the Boeing 767.

He retired in January 1988 at the age of 55 after 27 years with the company, and holding a pilot's licence for around 34 years.

John had a long and enjoyable retirement. He dabbled with boats, travelled extensively, kept up his love of the Australian countryside, and was a member of many associations and clubs. John passed away on 7 November 2022 after suffering a decline in health. He was 90 years old.



## **Captain Robin Heath (31 July 1941 – 16 March 2023)**

Sandy Walker on Robin Heath's career. He writes:



On finishing high school, Robin began a draughtsman course. Around the same time, he went to Moorabbin and learned to fly. He then signed on with the Royal Victorian Aero Club as an instructor.

Robin joined Ansett in June of 1964, on the same intake as myself, Don Hutchinson, Ted Walters, Noel Jerome, Bob Riley, Reg Flannigan, and Chris Denaro. All of that course completed around 150 hours on the DC3 before starting a DC4 school. (It is bit off-thread but those Ansett DC3s had one VHF com, one VHF NAV, one ADF, one DME and a marker beacon. 36 passengers. De-ice to the propellers only, alcohol to a slinger ring and boy did it wake you up when the ice started coming off. One hydraulic system with a hand pump back-up.)

The DC4 was a remarkable airplane. I am not sure you can beat it even now. Lifts a ten-ton payload off any five-thousand-foot grass strip. 4000 gallons at 200gph at 180 knots, which gives 3,600nm. Genuine transatlantic capability. They sent two of them, I think, to UK to get made into Carvairs. Same performance but a terrible airplane. With all that frontal area it could really pick up a load of ice, which led to Stu Davis and me, one night, finishing up south west of Canberra, among those 5000-foot spot heights, METO power, 117 knots, and 3,500 feet.

Getting back to Robin. He transferred to Brisbane, still on the DC4, and eventually after four years did an Electra school. He was on it for a only year or so and then the 727. We went to Miami, Florida, for the aircraft endorsement. Eastern Airways. No simulators in those days. Which was interesting. The Eastern guys were very relaxed and we enjoyed many happy hours cruising up and down the Florida coast. It was all good fun and a cultural eye-opener.

And then, after about five years in Brisbane on the 727 flying with that most wonderful group of pilots; the ex-WW2 captains who constituted the Brisbane 727 roster at that time. Next move for Robin was captain on the F27. Then the DC9 and then the 737. (Off-thread again. For a short period, we were operating the 737 against TAA's DC9s, and it was instantly obvious to all that the DC9 was far the superior airframe.)

Robin stayed on the 737, until just before the dispute, when he bid FO on the 707. The dispute happened as he was qualified on the 707, which at that point was at the end of its life. It must have been one of the last. Certainly, within two years the type had vanished from the skies.

Robin did a year in Malaysia after the dispute and then went to Lauda on the 767 based in Vienna and for six months or so, in Kathmandu. The rest of the time with Lauda was to the Far East, Bangkok, and to the U.S. West Coast. He ended his career aged 65 or close to it and retired to Bribie Island.

## **Captain Paul Lomas aka "Slom"**

Stuart Lomas writes:

Paul passed away in Cairns on 14 July 2023.

He first joined Ansett in 1964, obtaining a DC-3 endorsement on 16FEB64 and a Bristol B170-31 the following month. Paul joined Ansett MAL as a First Officer, based in Madang, PNG from April 1964.

In December 1966, he transferred to Ansett ANA on the DC-3 based in Cairns. In 1968, Paul relocated to Essendon, Melbourne to fly the Carvair, DC-3 and DC-4.

Paul obtained his endorsement as a First Officer on the Fokker F-27 Friendship (VH-FNA) on 27JUN70. He relocated back to Cairns later that year.

In December 1977, he commenced Command training on the F-27, completing it on 27MAR78. He then moved back to Cairns on the Fokker enjoying the aircraft, base and many and varied ports it serviced. Paul became a Training Captain on the F-27 Friendship in April 1980, where he trained many initial-intake First Officers to Ansett. He would also train pilots for Bush Pilots Airways "Bushies" on their F-27. On 27 October 1980 he conducted the inaugural flight for BPA's F-27, Cairns to Groote Eylandt.



Paul left the Cairns base in 1982 to fly jets. He was based in Perth for several years as an FO on the F-28 and then returned to Brisbane on the B727. However, the love of the Fokker Friendship called him back and in 1987 he returned for his Command and Training Captain position on the F-27 based in Brisbane.

Highlights of his career included a ferry flight of an F-27-200 from Melbourne to Norwich. He also flew the last flight of VH-FNO (Cairns to Melbourne), the last passenger service of a Fokker F-27 (VH-FNQ) from Mackay to Cairns on 26JUL89. The following day was the last flight of VH-FNQ (Cairns - Brisbane). He left Ansett after 25 years' service with 14,000 hours.

Paul went on to fly in Papua New Guinea with Airlines of PNG (Formerly MBA) on the Twin Otter and Dash-8 until his retirement. He had a wonderful flying career with many great memories. He particularly loved Cairns, training, Bushies Bar/Aero Club and the Fokker F-27 Friendship.

## FLIGHT SAFETY



**On the afternoon of 28 September 2022, a Boeing 787-9**, operated by British Airways, took off from Sydney's runway 16R for a scheduled passenger service to Singapore.

Approximately three minutes later, an Airbus A330-200, operated by Qantas, departed the same runway for a scheduled passenger service to Cairns.

Both aircraft were directed to follow the same standard instrument departure (SID) routing, the DEENA 7 SID, for their respective climbs to 28,000 ft. This SID required the aircraft to meet two separate conditions after take-off before turning to the north-west: they had to pass the DEENA waypoint, and they had to climb to at least 6,000 ft.

“

Because aircraft have to satisfy two separate conditions prior to turning, there is no way to ensure aircraft will turn at the same location when conducting the DEENA 7 SID,” ATSB Director Transport Safety Stuart Macleod explained.

In the September incident, the trailing A330 was being used on a domestic flight, with a correspondingly lower fuel load and higher climb performance than it would have had for an international flight.

“The departure controller did not expect this, and instead expected the A330 to have a similar climb performance to the 787 it was following, thus remain behind it and turn at about the same location,” Mr Macleod said. Instead, the A330 reached 6,000 ft as it passed DEENA, and began its turn about 20 km from the airport. Meanwhile, the heavier 787 reached 6,000 ft sometime after passing DEENA, and began its own turn about 25 km from the airport. This meant the trailing A330 was turning inside the path of the 787, as they both climbed to the same flight level.

During the event, separation between the aircraft reduced to 2.4 NM laterally, and 600 ft vertically – below the required separation standards of either 4 NM laterally (for ‘heavy’ aircraft) or 1,000 ft vertically – before the controller advised the aircraft and separation was re-established. The British Airways flight crew later advised they had received a traffic collision avoidance system (TCAS) traffic advisory during the event, and the first officer had subsequently visually identified the A330.

“Maintaining separation in high traffic terminal areas, such as Sydney, requires that both controllers and flight crews remain vigilant, maintain open communications, and use the available systems and tools to minimise the risk of errors,” Mr Macleod said. “When sequencing departures, controllers should consider a number of factors, including how the flight duration (and the associated fuel load) will likely affect aircraft climb performance.”

The ATSB final report notes that, in the last decade in Australia, there have been eight loss of separation occurrences involving aircraft cleared on a SID, where a following aircraft has climbed faster than the preceding aircraft. Of these, six were at Sydney, and five involved the DEENA 7 SID.

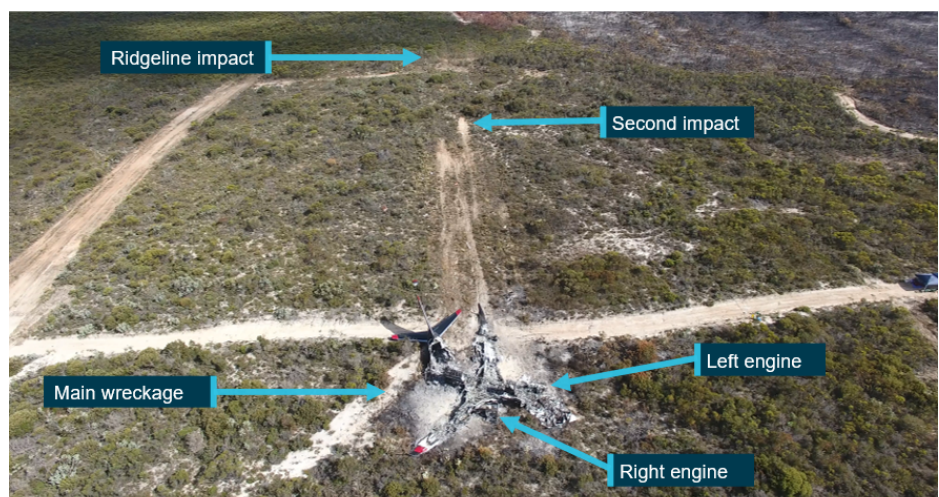
“Airservices Australia has advised the DEENA 7 SID has been redesigned to remove the two conditional requirements of the procedure,” Mr Macleod said. “The changes are planned to be part of the first implementation package for Western Sydney International Airport, but as the timeframe for this implementation is unknown, the ATSB will continue to actively monitor this open safety issue,” Mr Macleod concluded.

## **An ATSB preliminary report details the sequence of events leading to a Boeing 737 large air tanker’s impact with a ridgeline** in Western Australia’s Fitzgerald River National Park while conducting an aerial fire-fighting task on 6 February 2023.

The preliminary report outlines factual information collected in the on-going investigation’s early evidence collection phase, and details that the modified Coulson Aviation-operated 737 air tanker, callsign ‘Bomber 139’, with two pilots on board, had departed from Busselton Airport to assist fire control efforts near Hopetoun, about 600 km south-east of Perth.

“Arriving at the fire ground, the 737 crew was briefed by a bird-dog aircraft that the tasking was to tag and extend an existing retardant line,” said ATSB Chief Commissioner Angus Mitchell. “The retardant line was to extend downslope, with the bird-dog briefing the 737 crew that their target altitude (above sea level) was 500 feet descending to 400 feet.”

Flight recorder data shows that Bomber 139 descended to about 400





ft and completed a partial drop of three-quarters of their tank before the captain, who was pilot flying, stopped the drop because their retardant line was entering a burnt area. Bomber 139 then repositioned to commence another drop to use the remaining retardant to further extend the retardant line.

During the second drop, Bomber 139 descended through 400 ft altitude – or 80 ft above ground height – at an airspeed of 110 kt with the engines at high idle as the retardant line was extended downslope.

“Flight recorder data shows the throttles were advanced and the engines had accelerated just before the aircraft struck a ridgeline with the stick shaker activating. The aircraft then cleared a small line of foliage, before impacting the ground a second time and sliding to rest,” said Mr Mitchell.

“Fortunately, and remarkably, both pilots were able to exit the aircraft through a cockpit window, and suffered only minor injuries.” <https://youtu.be/571YrqQBtFg>

## HISTORY

**Bill Moroney** writes: -



Mary LeFuevre and I were coming out of Essendon for Townsville in a newly refurbished Shrike Commander on a proving flight to test the new-fangled VLF-Omega nav equipment.

I had planned a direct flight IFR, much to the chagrin of DCA who insisted that we must give position reports as a bearing from a known place instead of a position report in Lat and Long. I agreed to give half hourly positions

but omitted to tell them that we would give a bearing and distance from Albany WA or the Tenant Creek NDB or anywhere a long way away so the FSU people would have WAC charts spread all over the joint.

As we went through about 50ft on takeoff with the gear just retracted a large bird hit the top of the RH side windscreen slid up and took the HF antenna wire off the forward mast. The wire then wrapped itself around the fin and rudder, so I did a quick circuit, sans any rudder control, and landed.

DCA sent some minion to interview us since they had just introduced some long-winded scheme in at Essendon about bird strikes. The interview went along the lines of “Where were you when you hit the bird?” and my reply of “In the LH seat.” didn’t go down too well, so I added “We were also in the air.” Then the bloke asked “Where did you hit the bird?” So, I replied, “On the beak.” -- and then he asked how high we were. So, I replied with – “Gear just up. So, I suppose about fifty feet but I was a bit busy. And then he asked about what sort of bird it was and I replied – “Big bastard, I think it was an Emu?” He replied with “Emu’s can’t fly.” So, I replied with: “This bastard could!” And he went away muttering.

In about five years I was with surveillance we did a total of about 22,000 flying hours each year, much of it on low level passes for ID and photography (100’-day 200’-night minimum altitude wings level). We didn’t have one operational bird strike for I insisted that the troops turn the nav and landing lights on to augment the strobes for any flight below 500’ and never ever try to dodge a bird for they know more about flying than we do. Sometimes it was scary for Frigate birds darken the sky around some islets etc. but they always avoided us.

After going Essendon Townsville direct, we were about five hundred yards to the East of the runway threshold on arrival which was an excellent result and proved that bonding everything to everything else, worked. Strangely enough FSU dropped the requirement after we gave distances and bearings on position reports for a few flights.

**THE NATO PHONETIC ALPHABET BECAME EFFECTIVE IN 1956** and just a few years later became the established universal phonetic alphabet. However, it took several adaptations before the version used today came into effect.

In the 1920s, the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** produced the first phonetic alphabet to be recognized internationally. It featured names of cities across the globe.

*Amsterdam, Baltimore, Casablanca, Denmark, Edison, Florida, Gallipoli, Havana, Italia, Jerusalem, Kilogram, Liverpool, Madagascar, New York, Oslo, Paris, Quebec, Roma, Santiago, Tripoli, Uppsala, Valencia, Washington, Xanthippe, Yokohama, Zurich.*

On the military side, the United States adopted a Joint Army/Navy Phonetic Alphabet, called the **Able Baker alphabet** after the first two code words, across all of its military branches in 1941. Two years later, the British Royal Air Force decided to use the Able Baker alphabet as well.

*Able, Baker, Charlie, Dog, Easy, Fox, George, How, Item, Jig, King, Love, Mike, Nan, Oboe, Peter, Queen, Roger, Sugar, Tare, Uncle, Victor, William, X-ray, Yoke, Zebra*

A common criticism of these alphabets was that they were rather English in composition. A new version incorporating sounds common to English, French, and Spanish was proposed by the International **Air Transport Association (IATA)** and came into effect on 1 November 1951 for civil aviation only. It is similar to the one used today.

*Alfa, Bravo, Coca, Delta, Echo, Foxtrot, Gold, Hotel, India, Juliett, Kilo, Lima, Metro, Nectar, Oscar, Papa, Quebec, Romeo, Sierra, Tango, Union, Victor, Whiskey, eXtra, Yankee, Zulu*

As militaries and NATO continued to follow the Able Baker phonetic alphabet, it was clear the need for a universal phonetic alphabet still remained. A review of the Able Baker alphabet, spearheaded by NATO Allies US and UK, was conducted. A proposal changing the words for the letters C, M, N, U, and X only was submitted to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) although debate continued over the code word for the letter N (Nectar versus November). On 8 April 1955, the North Atlantic Military Committee Standing Group advised that whether or not the proposal was approved by the ICAO, the alphabet would “be adopted and made effective for NATO use on 1 January 1956”

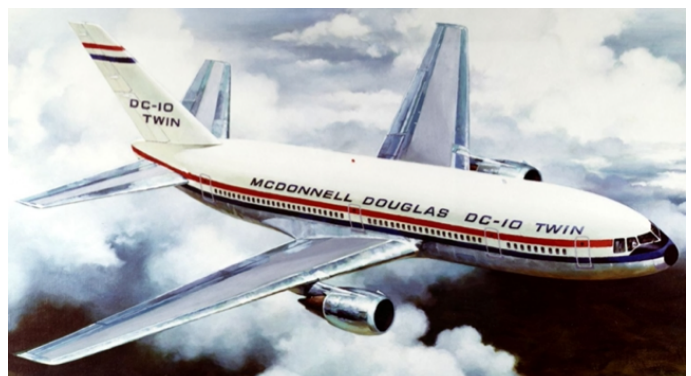
Allies hesitated to adopt the alphabet for national use until ICAO ruled on the proposal thus creating a rather odd situation in which NATO Military Commands would be the sole users of the proposed phonetic alphabet. Luckily this situation did not last for long as ICAO approved the alphabet, with November as the code word for the letter N.

On 21 February 1956, Member States were advised “that the new Phonetic Alphabet is to be made effective in NATO 1 March 1956”

The ITU formally adopted it a few years later making it the established universal phonetic alphabet governing all military, civilian and amateur radio communications. As it was NATO Allies who had spearheaded the final revision, it became known from that point on as the NATO Alphabet.

## **HOW MCDONNELL DOUGLAS MISSED THE BIG TWIN AND DISAPPEARED**

Never in the history of commercial aircraft manufacturing has a company squandered so many opportunities to launch a compelling design that the airlines wanted as McDonnell Douglas did over the concept of a wide-body twin-engine aircraft. There is little doubt if it had launched such an aircraft, back in 1973, it would still be in business today and be a dominant force.



Over a period of just over 30 years Douglas, and then McDonnell Douglas, studied and rejected an incredible 33 designs and sub designs for a market that has since been filled by 8,501 A300, A310, A330, A350, 767, 777, and 787 aircraft either delivered or on order. The sorry tale starts as far back as 1966 with studies to meet American Airlines' requirement to fly 250 passengers from La Guardia to Chicago. That study morphed into the model D-967, which became the DC-10 in 1967.

According to John Brizendine, who was President of Douglas from 1973 through 1982, Mr. James McDonnell, Chairman of McDonnell Douglas (Mr. Mac) approached Airbus with a proposal that Airbus and Douglas combine on a 50/50 basis to produce a big twin based on the DC-10 cross-section.

Spurned by France on October 4, 1971, MDC announced its DC-10 Twin jet development of the DC-10 which would be head-to-head with the A300. This aircraft was to have 89 percent commonality with the DC-10-30 which had been widely sold in Europe and 93 percent with the DC-10-10. At that time, Douglas executives predicted the advent of dual rating for pilots on the two types. It would carry between 239 and 300 passengers and be powered by either the 51,000lbs GE CG6-50C or 52,000lb JT9D-57 engine. It would have a 6ft wider span than the DC-10 but be 14ft shorter than the DC-10. The company went to considerable trouble to launch the DC-10 Twin as Lockheed was struggling with the L-1011 and the Boeing was having huge problems with the 747. MDC arranged a huge review for airlines at Long Beach of the DC-10 Twin even hiring "twins" to show off the cutaway model.



Jackson McGowan, President of Douglas from 1968 to 1972, said in a 2004 interview that he was bullish on the DC-10 Twin but claimed that Mr. Mac's son, John McDonnell, who at the time was VP Finance & Development, was wary on expenditure and the head-to-head competition with Airbus.

After a spectacular career with Douglas, Mr. McGowan resigned in 1973 at the age of just 55. "I knew damn well that with the McDonnell's influence, Douglas was not going anywhere."

In July 30, 1973, the McDonnell-dominated board balked at a go-ahead for the DC-10 Twin. Mr. McGowan maintained that "the orders were there from European airlines such as Swissair and SAS" but Mr. Mac insisted on a US carrier. The project was later scrapped and the die was cast, closing the window of opportunity for domination of both the widebody tri-jet and big twin markets.

In 1975, a new jumbo twin was announced by MDC. Called the DC-X-200, it was designed for 230 mixed class passengers, which was significantly smaller than the DC-10 Twin which was to accommodate 239 to 300. It was to be 30ft shorter than the DC-10 with an all-new advanced technology wing and powered by two CF6-45, 45,000lb thrust engines.

Sandy McDonnell also announced that MDC was active in discussions to cooperate with Airbus in a way that would benefit both the DC-10 and the A300B. At the time, most major European airlines were operating the DC-10-30 and a number had ordered a few A300s. But within months the deal was unravelling, at least publicly, as France had asked MDC to drop the larger DC-X-200.

But for MDC, the reality was fast catching up with its dream of globalization and its goal and passion of risk minimization for the building of a DC-10 Twin or any new commercial design. Boeing announced the 767 on July 14, 1978, with an order for 38 from United Airlines. MDC also played around with D-969N-11 for American Airlines, D-969-12 for United Airlines, and even the DC-X which was to marry the A300B with the DC-X-200 wing. Airbus also gained a "head of steam" and was able to launch its A310 on 7 July 1978 with an order from Lufthansa for 25. In all, Airbus sold 69 A300s and A310s in 1978.

In 1981, MDC lost its number two spot to Airbus and Lockheed announced the closing of its Tristar production line. For Douglas, the prospects were gloomy with no DC-10s to be delivered beyond 1982 and only 45 Super 80s to be built.



In late 1986, MDC launched a modest improvement of the DC-10 – dubbed the MD-11 – with various commitments for 92 aircraft from 12 airlines. But it was a compromised design because of the decision by the MDC board not to sanction funding for an all-new wing – a fact that would come back to haunt the company. Australia's Qantas concurred with the opinions of other airlines when it stated that it would not consider the MD11 because the wing had no growth potential. In 1993 MDC touted the MD-11 Twin in several versions but to no avail as the MD-11 itself was in strife not meeting performance guarantees.

However, studies were resurrected in 1995 with two families (A & B) and two fuselage lengths ranging from a 275-seater with a range of 4000nm up to 7500nm and a stretch that would carry 350 passengers between 4000nm to 6000nm.

The final study big twin was in 1996 with the MD-20-200 and -300. That study was based around a 767 styled fuselage with the MD-11 wing and cockpit. Four fuselage diameters were examined. Some suggest that this study was part of the play to get Boeing to buy McDonnell Douglas but whatever the reason, like all the big twin designs before it, it stayed well and truly grounded.

After the merger with Boeing, significant effort was put into seeing if MDC studies for an MD-11 Twin could be married to a new Boeing wing. A presentation was made in August 1997 which pitched the MD-11 with a new Boeing wing to fit between the 767 and 777 much as the 787 finally did in the next decade.



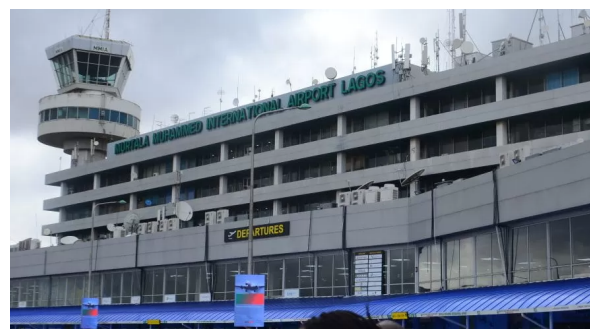
It seems incomprehensible that the aircraft company that perfected the twin-engine aircraft with the DC-3 and then sold almost 2000 twin-engine DC-9 series did not jump into the 250-300 passenger big twin jumbo. There was evidence by the 747-freighter load that this was the way to go but MDC's St Louis board, by their own admission, never understood the airline market and how it worked.

It is incredible to think between 1968 and its merger with Boeing in 1997 MDC only launched ONE new aircraft – the DC-10. And in the same time frame, it only won TWO new military contracts with its own designs – the F-15 Eagle and the C-17.

A chronic lack of R&D, the resignations of top executives because of interference from Mr. Mac and a lack of trust (in Douglas), and lack of understanding of the airline market by the very top management killed off the premier commercial aircraft builder in Douglas and the number one military aircraft manufacturer in McDonnell.

## THIEVES HAVE STOLEN THE LIGHTING SYSTEM

for one of the runways at Nigeria's busiest airport just months after it was installed. An investigation has now been launched to "arrest the criminals [and] recover what's missing". It is not clear when the system was taken from Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos. But local media reported that airport workers were involved in the theft.



The ground lights were installed in November, ending years of after-dusk restrictions on landing on that wing of the airport. Domestic carriers were forced to divert to the international section and taxi about 4km back to the right terminal, which caused flight disruptions. Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria said it will "block all loopholes to prevent [a] future occurrence".

The criminals took advantage of the fact that the runway had been closed for months for maintenance. The source blamed a "syndicate" of workers at the airport along with "accomplices from outside" for a series of thefts.



## "WHAT WAS THE SLOWEST YOU EVER FLEW THE BLACKBIRD?"

Brian Shul, Retired SR-71 Pilot, via Plane and Pilot Magazine

As a former SR-71 pilot, and a professional keynote speaker, the question I'm most often asked is "How fast would that SR-71 fly?" I can be assured of hearing that question several times at any event I attend. It's an interesting question, given the aircraft's proclivity for speed, but there really isn't one number to give, as the jet would always give you a little more speed if you wanted it to. It was common to see 35 miles a minute. Because we flew a programmed Mach number on most missions, and never wanted to harm the plane in any way, we never let it run out to any limits of temperature or speed. Thus, each SR-71 pilot had his own individual high speed that he saw at some point on some mission. I saw mine over Libya when Khadafy fired two missiles my way, and max power was in order. Let's just say that the plane truly loved speed, and effortlessly took us to Mach numbers we hadn't previously seen.

So it was with great surprise, when, at the end of one of my presentations, someone asked: What was the slowest you ever flew the Blackbird? This was a first. After giving it some thought, I was reminded of a story I had never shared before, and relayed the following:

I was flying the SR-71 out of RAF Mildenhall, England, with my back-seater, Walt Watson; we were returning from a mission over Europe and the Iron Curtain, when we received a radio transmission from home base. As we scooted across Denmark in three minutes, we learned that a small RAF base in the English countryside had requested an SR-71 fly-past. The air cadet commander there was a former Blackbird pilot, and thought it would be a motivating moment for the young lads to see the mighty SR-71 perform a low approach. No problem; we were happy to do it. After a quick aerial refuelling over the North Sea, we proceeded to find the small airfield.

Walter had a myriad of sophisticated navigation equipment in the back seat, and began to vector me toward the field. Descending to subsonic speeds, we found ourselves over a densely wooded area in a slight haze. Like most former WWII British airfields, the one we were looking for had a small tower and little surrounding infrastructure. Walter told me we were close, and that I should be able to see the field, but I saw nothing. Nothing but trees as far as I could see in the haze. We got a little lower, and I pulled the throttles back from the 325 knots we were at. With the gear up, anything under 275 was just uncomfortable. Walt said we were practically over the field, yet there was nothing in my windscreen. I banked the jet and started a gentle circling manoeuvre in hopes of picking up anything that looked like a field. Meanwhile, below, the cadet commander had taken the cadets up on the catwalk of the tower, in order to get a prime view of the fly-past. It was a quiet, still day, with no wind and partial grey overcast. Walter continued to give me indications that the field should be below us, but, in the overcast and haze, I couldn't see it. The longer we continued to peer out the window and circle, the slower we got. With our power back, the awaiting cadets heard nothing. I must have had good instructors in my flying career, as something told me I better cross-check the gauges.

As I noticed the airspeed indicator slide below 160 knots, my heart stopped, and my adrenalin-filled left hand pushed two throttles full forward. At this point, we weren't really flying, but were falling in a slight bank. Just at the moment, both afterburners lit with a thunderous roar of flame (and what a joyous feeling that was), and the aircraft fell into full view of the shocked observers on the tower. Shattering the still quiet of that morning, they now had 107 feet of fire-breathing titanium in their face, as the plane levelled and accelerated, in full burner, on the tower side of the infield, closer than expected, maintaining what could only be described as some sort of ultimate knife-edge pass.

Quickly reaching the field boundary, we proceeded back to Mildenhall without incident. We didn't say a word for those next 14 minutes. After landing, our commander greeted us, and we were both certain he was reaching for our wings. Instead, he heartily shook our hands and said the commander had told him it was the greatest SR-71 fly-past he had ever seen, especially how we had surprised them with such a precise manoeuvre that could only be described as breathtaking. He said that some of the cadets' hats were blown off, and the sight of the plan form of the plane in full afterburner, dropping right in front of them, was unbelievable. Walt and I both understood the concept of breathtaking very well, that morning, and sheepishly replied that they were just excited to see our low approach.

As we retired to the equipment room to change from space suits to flight suits, we just sat there: We hadn't spoken a word since the pass. Finally, Walter looked at me and said, "One hundred fifty-six knots. What did you see?" Trying to find my voice, I stammered, "One hundred fifty-two." We sat in silence for a moment. Then Walt said, "Don't ever do that to me again!" And I never did.

A year later, Walter and I were having lunch in the Mildenhall Officers' club, and overheard an officer talking to some cadets about an SR-71 fly-past that he had seen, one day. Of course, by now the story included kids falling off the tower, and screaming as the heat of the jet singed their eyebrows. Noticing our Habu patches, as we stood there with lunch trays in our hands, he asked us to verify to the cadets that such a thing had occurred. Walt just shook his head and said, "It was probably just a routine low approach; they're pretty impressive in that plane". Impressive indeed.

Little did I realize, after relaying this experience to my audience that day, that it would become one of the most popular and most requested stories. It's ironic that people are interested in how slow the world's fastest jet can fly. Regardless of your speed, however, it's always a good idea to keep that cross-check up -- and keep your Mach up, too.

## **THE SITE OF A 1942 QANTAS PLANE CRASH THAT KILLED NINE PEOPLE HAS BEEN REDISCOVERED IN BRISBANE BUSHLAND**

Robyn Ironside Aviation Writer

The site of a 1942 Qantas plane crash that killed all nine people on board, has been rediscovered in Brisbane bushland after being "lost" for 60 years.

The de Havilland (DH86) Express named "Sydney" went down less than 10 minutes after takeoff from Archerfield Airport on a flight to Darwin via Mount Isa on February 20, 1942. Along with the two pilots, an Australian Royal Air Force officer, an American soldier and five civilians were killed in the crash on Brisbane's southside when the tailfins fell off in bad weather.



It was one of about 14 fatal crashes involving Qantas aircraft between 1927 and 1951. Since the jet age began in 1959, Qantas has recorded no fatalities.

Due to the war, urban development and the passage of time, the crash site in what is now koala habitat was eventually forgotten. Aviation Historical Society of Australia state secretary Peter Dunn said he along with many others had spent years trying to rediscover the site, but local Fred Wimmer beat them to it.

"The crash site was known about straight away because they recovered the nine bodies the same day and the wreckage went back to Archerfield," Mr Dunn said. "But a generation later, 20 years or so, the exact location of the crash site was no longer known and it hasn't been known for about 60 years."

Mr Wimmer said locating the site had been something he'd contemplated for some time, and after comparing historical records with contemporary maps, he pinpointed the spot. Using a metal detector and shovel, Mr Wimmer was then able to locate various items that confirmed his research was accurate.

"I found the engine tag off a battery generator that had QEA for Qantas Empire Airlines' stamped on it, a pilot's button, a penny and a few other bits and pieces," he said. The key discovery however was a metal plate bearing the name of the flight's co-pilot L.S. Marshall, a second cousin of aviation legend Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. "That put a shiver up my spine when that came out of the ground," Mr Wimmer said. "It was then beyond doubt that I'd found the site."

No plane wreckage remained in the area, due to the fact military officials removed the debris immediately after the crash, took it back to Archerfield and burnt it. Mr Wimmer said it was a source of some mystery why they did that, denying aviation authority investigators the chance to examine the wreckage. "Why would you destroy the whole plane?" he asked. "The aviation authority got out there and it was just scorched earth. I'm locating all the bits and pieces that are still in the ground." He hoped his discoveries would be displayed in the Qantas Founders Museum at Longreach, and the name plate of First Officer Marshall returned to his family.

Qantas historian Tom Harwood said the 1942 crash was significant insofar as it was the last time a DH86 was operated by the airline. "They were not good aircraft," said Mr Harwood. "On the delivery flight, the first DH86 Qantas ordered crashed on the final leg. They were structurally unsound and legend has it the British test pilots refused to fly them."

Mr Wimmer and Mr Dunn were keen to see a memorial plaque erected at the crash site, about 20m from a walking track through Brisbane City Council koala bushland. "Nine people tragically lost their lives there, so it does seem fitting a plaque is installed," Mr Dunn said.



Respected aviation accident investigator Macarthur Job later wrote in his book Air Crash Vol.2:

*"Taking place little more than 24 hours after the highly destructive first Japanese air raid on Darwin, news of this DH.86 crash was overwhelmed by the nation's almost total preoccupation with the first air raid on Australian soil. As a result, what in other circumstances would have been regarded as a major disaster, hardly rated a mention in the national press.*

*The intended DCA investigation fared little better, the wreckage having been deliberately burnt by the time Senior Aeronautical Engineer J. L. Watkins arrived from DCA Central Office in Melbourne to examine it. The nine victims had died in vain; no cause could be established and no lesson learnt from it that might have rendered operations safer in the future.*

*Only the aircraft's fin - found almost a mile from the main wreckage - bore any witness to what had befallen the aircraft and its occupants, clearly attesting to the fact that the machine had somehow broken up in flight. But beyond adding further uneasiness to the already dubious reputation of the DH.86 as a type, the accident contributed nothing to the progress of Australia's airways safety."*

## WEB SITES

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-65188013>

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20230324-how-x-planes-may-solve-the-sonic-boom-problem>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UCFAwJ7Ts8>

[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified\\_136216.htm#:~:text=In%20the%201920s%2C%20the%20International,alphabet%20to%20be%20recognized%20internationally.](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_136216.htm#:~:text=In%20the%201920s%2C%20the%20International,alphabet%20to%20be%20recognized%20internationally.)

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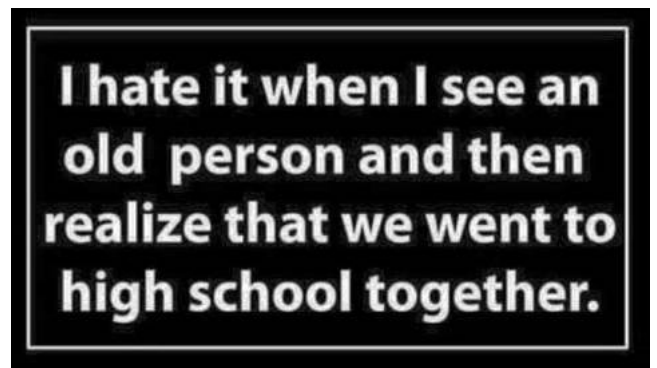


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