



THE CHINA LAKER

Vol. 20, No. 41

Newsletter of the China Lake Museum Foundation

Winter 2014

SR-71 Blackbird Story As told by Brian Shul, Major, USAF (Ret.)

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 too. 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 refueling 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 maneuver 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 gray 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 leveled 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 maneuver 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.

So You Want to be a Rocket Scientist?



Thank you, Boeing, for your generous donation of \$1,500 to The China Lake Museum Foundation's education program, "So you want to be a Rocket Scientist?"



President's Message by Bob Campbell

Along with our ongoing building and plaza planning, I feel it is very important to continue our growth of exhibits to capture the China Lake history. The Walleye exhibit is an excellent example of what can be done with a minimum of funding and solid support from volunteers. Bob Smith is working diligently with the exhibit committee to define the next steps and is in the process of prioritizing what the next exhibits should be. Included in the list is an exhibit on the Ranges, some avionics elements, addition and return of relevant weapons (AMRAAM, JSOW, JDAM, APAM, HARPOON) into the Museum, to name a few. John Freeman is working on an exhibit highlighting the Grand Experiment in Inyokern to succinctly capture the roots of our heritage as well as the link with Cal Tech. I will be working on the community exhibit to capture the China Lake Community as it was in the early years and the role it played as part of the culture.

We are looking for volunteers who are interested in sharing and helping to improve our overall exhibit suite so that we can capture the role of the people, the technologies, and the importance of what was accomplished at China Lake to help preserve peace throughout the world. If you have some stories to share, and/or are interested in helping develop an exhibit, please contact me, or Bob Smith. Volunteer teams will be assembled in each of the areas so we can move forward.

While we are dependent on volunteer support to capture the stories and complete the new exhibits, it is also clear we need to increase our funding allocation to support exhibits. On that end, we welcome any donations. Donations can be expressly targeted for the general exhibit fund or for a specific exhibit of your choosing. If you want to provide a donation, please give Bruce Auld a call (760) 939-3530 and he can assist with the mechanics that best suit your means and intentions.



Robert Campbell



CHINA LAKE MUSEUM FOUNDATION

Saturday May 31 at 5:00pm
Kerr McGee Center

14TH ANNUAL DINNER & AUCTION

WANTED

THE FOUNDATION IS SEEKING
AUCTION DONATIONS FOR ALL
CATEGORIES:

LIVE, SILENT, AND RAFFLE.
CONTACT THE MUSEUM OFFICE
(760) 939-3530

REWARD

\$30 PER TICKET

\$50 PER COUPLE

\$250 RESERVED SEATING FOR 2

\$1,000 FAMILY TABLE FOR 8

\$1,500 CORPORATE TABLE FOR 8

RECOGNITION IN PROGRAM

\$500 FULL PAGE

\$250 1/2 PAGE

\$150 1/4 PAGE

\$50 BUSINESS CARD

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS AT THE GIFT SHOP (760) 939-3530
OR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

WESTERN THEME

LIVE AND SILENT AUCTION

RAFFLES (WINNERS MUST BE PRESENT)

CASH BAR

DINNER: FARRIS' CATERING



WHO WAS THE FIRST PRESIDENT?

I'm sure that George Washington was your best guess. After all, no one else comes to mind. But think back to your history books - The United States Declared its independence in 1776, yet Washington did not take Office until April 30, 1789.



So who was running the country during these initial years of this young country? It was the first eight U. S. Presidents. In fact, the first President of the United States was one John Hanson. I can hear you now— John who? John Hanson, the first President of the United States. Don't go checking the encyclopedia for this guy's name - he is one of those great men that are lost to history. If you're extremely lucky, you may actually find a brief mention of his name.

The new country was actually formed on March 1, 1781 with the adoption of The Articles of Confederation. This document was actually proposed on June 11, 1776, but not agreed upon by Congress until November 15, 1777. Maryland refused to sign this document until Virginia and New York ceded their western lands (Maryland was afraid that these states would gain too much power in the new government from such large amounts of land). Once the signing took place in 1781, a President was needed to run the country. John Hanson was chosen unanimously by Congress (which included George Washington). In fact, all the other potential candidates refused to run against him, as he was a major player in the revolution and an extremely influential member of Congress.

As the first President, Hanson had quite the shoes to fill. No one had ever been President and the role was poorly defined. His actions in office would set precedent for all future Presidents. He took office just as the Revolutionary War ended. Almost immediately, the troops demanded to be paid. As would be expected after any long war, there were no funds to meet the salaries. As a result, the soldiers threatened to overthrow the new government and put Washington on the throne as a monarch.



All the members of Congress ran for their lives, leaving Hanson as the only guy left running the government. He somehow managed to calm the troops down and hold the country together. If he had failed, the government would have fallen almost immediately and everyone would have been bowing to King Washington.

Hanson, as President, ordered all foreign troops off American soil, as well as the removal of all foreign flags. This was quite the feat, considering the fact that so many European countries had a stake in the United States since the days following Columbus. Hanson established the Great Seal of the United States, which all Presidents have since been required to use on all official documents. President Hanson also established the first Treasury Department, the first Secretary of War, and the first Foreign Affairs Department. Lastly, he declared that the fourth Thursday of every November was to be Thanksgiving Day, which is still true today.

The Articles of Confederation only allowed a President to serve a one-year term during any three year period, so Hanson actually accomplished quite a bit in such little time.

Seven other presidents were elected after him:

1. Elias Boudinot (1782-83),
2. Thomas Mifflin (1783-84),
3. Richard Henry Lee (1784-85),
4. John Hancock (1785-86),
5. Nathan Gorman (1786-87),
6. Arthur St. Clair (1787-88), and
7. Cyrus Griffin (1788-89),

..all prior to Washington taking office.



So what happened? Why don't we hear about the first eight presidents?

It's quite simple - The Articles of Confederation didn't work well. The individual states had too much power and nothing could be agreed upon. A new doctrine needed to be written - something we know as the Constitution. And that leads us to the end of our story. George Washington was definitely not the first President of the United States. He was the first President of the United States under the Constitution we follow today. And the first eight



Volunteers!

Front Desk Greeters
Docents
Gift Shop Assistants
Exhibit Maintenance
Exhibit Development
Grant Writing
Light Cleaning
(Dusting & Vacuuming)



The Museum is open Monday through Saturday 10am–4pm. We are looking for help in all areas.

Front Desk Greeters: Welcome visitors at the lobby and assist them in getting started – sign in, help with getting videos running, answer questions, direct visitors to the Gift Shop if necessary, and make sure artifacts don't walk off or get damaged.

Gift Shop: If you have ever wanted to work in retail, this is a great opportunity. Provide friendly help to customers, run the cash register, keep the shelves stocked, help with barcoding merchandise, and come up with creative marketing and display ideas.

YOU
CAN
HELP



Many hands make light work!

Alice Campbell
VP of Operations
(760) 377-7074
alicerbob@verizon.net

Teri Raley
Office Manager
(760) 939-3530 (Museum)
chinalakemuseum@mediacombb.net

Gift Shop Excitement!

New T-shirts are in! Children, women, and men



Looking for a good sale? Come check out our 40% off shelves



Hey you,
Come check out
the museum!

China Lake Museum Foundation

P.O. Box 217 Ridgecrest, CA 93556-0217

General Office– 760-939-3530

chinalakemuseum@mediacombb.net

760-939-0564 fax

Board of Directors

*Bob Campbell
President*

*Jack Latimer
Secretary*

*Craig Porter
Treasurer*

*Alice Campbell
VP of Operations*

*Pat Connell
VP of Development*

*Wayne Doucette
VP of Building Committee*

*Bob Peoples
VP of Public Relations*

*Robert Smith
Exhibits Director*

Bob Aslanian

Mike Benton

Kelly Curtis

Peggy Breeden

Rick Ferris

John Freeman

Dave Maxwell

Chuck Roulund

Christopher Toftner

Kathy Vejtasa

Charles White

Directors Emeriti

Milton Burford

John Di Pol

Burrell Hays

Paul Homer

Bill Porter

Jack Russell

Trustees

Dr. Jim Colvard, NAVMAT (Ret.)

MajGen Jon Gallinetti, USMC (Ret.)

RADM Bill Harris, USN (Ret.)

Dr. Karen Higgins, ED (Ret.)

RADM Bert Johnston, USN (Ret.)

Franklin H. Knemeyer, ATD (Ret.)

RADM Mike Mathis, USN (Ret.)

CAPT Glenn Tierney, USN (Ret.)

CDR Stu Witt, Test Pilot USN (Ret.)

Staff

*Bruce Auld
CEO & Chief Development Officer*

*Teri Raley
Office Manager*

We could save a lot of money by sending you your newsletter electronically...and you'd get it in **color**! If you would like to receive your newsletter electronically please send an email, from the email address to which you would like your newsletter sent, to chinalakemuseum@mediacombb.net.

Please put in the subject line "Electronic Newsletter."

Wildflower Festival



*Extended Weekend for the
Wildflower Festival.*

*We will be open Friday April 11th
thru Sunday
April 13th from
10am to 4pm.*



A Ridgecrest Septic Service
 Alta One FCU
 Ashley Furniture Home Store
 The Boeing Company
 C. Martin Company
 Carriage Inn
 Coldwell Banker Best Realty
 Cosner-Neipp Corporation
 Daily Independent
 Desert Valleys Federal Credit Union
 Edward Jones Investment
 Electric Motor Works Inc.
 IWW Insurance Agency
 Jacobs Naval Systems Group
 Kernville Chamber of Commerce
 Daniel T. Kus, DDS

Business Members

Lone Star Aerospace
 McDonald's
 McKee Electric Co.
 Neely Accountancy Corp.
 Northrop Grumman Corp.
 Raytheon Company
 Ridgecrest Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
 Ridgecrest Automotive, LLC
 Southern Sierra General Engineering, Inc.
 SpringHill Suites and Hampton Inn
 The Swap Sheet
 Tax Time Services Inc.
 Tejon Ranch Company
 Toss & Service Master
 Vincent Avalos, Edward Jones Investments
 Warren's Automotive

You help put the pieces together!

December 1, 2013- February 4, 2014

Thank

Donations

Robert and Sharon Aslanian
 Pat Brown-Berry
 James and Joy Colvard
 Wayne and Pat Doucette
 Gary and Carol Hewer
 Kristin Highberg Berry
 Dell Hledik
 BJ Holden
 Linda Miller
 Raena Phillips

Museum Campaign Contributors

Dr. Bob and Julie Smith
 Bob and Rhodean Glen

New Memberships

Raena Phillips
 Chris and Jeanie Kaufman

New Year's Eve Extravaganza

A huge Thank You to Spring Hill Suites/ Hampton Inn



From the CEO

On a daily basis, CEO Bruce Auld, continues in his efforts to acquire major donors to fund both the memorial plaza (corner of China Lake Boulevard and Las Flores Avenue) and the main museum building. The primary marketing vehicles are *Arming the Fleet* by Wallace Martin and *Magnificent Mavericks* by Liz Babcock. We know that both books have been reviewed in very high places. The Museum meets regularly with its architects/planners, Houston and Tyner. The current focus of discussion is the memorial plaza, for which actual construction drawings are being developed. The necessary preliminary studies and reports are underway.

The first exterior exhibit is anticipated to be the A6E, currently located in front of the museum. Planning is underway to have the aircraft prepped for display.



WORK DAY



Thank you!

Work Day at the Museum was great!



**Bruce Auld
 Mike Benton
 Bob Campbell
 Wayne Doucette
 Calvin Gifford
 Scott Millett**

**Corben Raley
 Teri Raley
 Rex Randolph
 Dr. Bob Smith
 Chris Toftner
 Charlie White**



China Lake Museum Foundation
From the Desert to the Fleet
 Preserving the Legacy of Naval Armament and Technology

YES! I want to help build a new Museum in Ridgecrest!

Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law for a 501(C)(3) organization.

Please make checks payable to:

**CLMF
 P.O. Box 217
 Ridgecrest, CA 93556**

Please accept my payment of:

- \$100 \$200 \$500
 \$1,000 \$5,000 _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Enclosed is my Check Visa MasterCard Other _____

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVC: _____

Signature: _____

CHINA LAKE MUSEUM FOUNDATION
P.O. BOX 217, RIDGECREST, CA 93556-0217



NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RIDGECREST, CA
PERMIT NO. 48



Member Agency #13086



Combined Federal Campaign