



Mirage Enthusiasts Blogs



One Team For Life

Blog 4. Mirage Compressor Stalls.

25 Oct 23. Roger Wilson

Nobby had a Darwin deployment memorable for the wrong reasons.

In Nov/Dec 1967, 3 and 76 deployed to Darwin for an ADEX with RAF Vulcans amongst the targets. One intrepid junior pilot suffering from MMSOBYTAST chased a Vulcan to very high altitude and compressor stalled. Nobby debriefed the pilot and then advised the rest of us that the next person to compressor stall would be grounded and go back to WLM in the C130.

If Nobby had enforced this draconian rule he would not have been at TVL on 6 Dec 1967 with his tail dragging on the tarmac.

RIP Nobby - a good bloke

26 Oct 23. Bruce Wood.

Hi All former Mirage Practitioners,

I have refrained from commenting but have thoroughly enjoyed the stories over the past week. I didn't have anything to say about flight controls because I didn't ever have a problem – HYD 1 systems and undercarriage were my thing. But reading about Vulcans and intercepts at high level reminded me of Nick Ford's attempted intercept of a Vulcan at Willytown (old memory doesn't allow me to put a date on it) which ended up in a compressor stall and a spin which almost became an ejection. The radio calls throughout were quite terrifying.

However, after reading about various decisions by higher level maintenance management and ARDU I thought I would mention an incident regarding the R 550 missile. I was CO 3SQN when we were notified that the Squadron had been chosen to fire the first R550 off an Australian Mirage – big honour. I did the right thing and democratically had all names put in a hat for the honour. Amazingly, I won (the boggies thought it had been rigged of course) – first and last raffle I've ever won.

Day came and off I went with as many of the squadron as possible strung out behind me to watch the show – and what a show it was! Firing at the flare from the Bou I had the tone and clearance to fire (by the way this was a warshot missile) so pressed the button. When the missile left the aircraft I immediately went IMC and the airframe started to shake and vibrate – I checked to find I had a compressor stall and as I was clearing same I emerged from the exhaust cloud left by the R550 to see it detonate right in front of me. All I could see then were lumps of metal which turned out to be the fins and engine of the missile which entailed some violent manoeuvring to avoid – I had apparently flown through the middle of the expanding rod warhead, or so my FCI told me.

Apart from the missile detonating on arming, which is another story, apparently the engineers had decided not to purchase the fuel dip mod for the missile hence the compressor stall when the engine ingested the rocket plume. That aside, I have never had an explanation why an operational squadron was given the first one to fire given the modifications which had to be made to the aircraft. Usually ARDU would take over and we would see it in the squadrons 12 months later.

That's my story of memories of the French Lady.