

HARRIERS “GONE BUSH” by DAVID READ (sent by e-mail)

The attachments may be of interest to your group. Taken by me in 1973... This was 37 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers exercise in Germany for the first Harrier landing in the field in BAOR the first time we (37) had even seen one in Germany. A nice fast learning curve. The first landing caused the landing mat to pull out the anchor pins and float up to meet the Harrier. Only the quick thinking pilot stopped a coming together, he just throttled up and left! The mat came down 22ft from the anchor point. But we learnt. We had a week with the planes and learnt a lot, so the Squadron became Harrier Support Squadron in the field. The Russians were also there in their **SOXMIS** cars trying to get close. Just to explain **SOXMIS** was the Soviet equivalent of BRIXMIS (The British Commanders'-in-Chief Mission to the Soviet Forces in Germany) a military liaison mission which operated behind the Iron Curtain in East Germany during the Cold War. BRIXMIS existed from 1946 – shortly after the end of the Second World War – until the eve of the reunification of Germany in 1990.



VULCAN XH558

At the end of the 2015 XH558 had far exceeded the 250 flying hours promised and consequently her structure and systems were more than ten percent beyond the flying hours of any other Vulcan.

Therefore, although XH558 was as safe as any aircraft flying, knowing where to look for any future possible failure would become increasingly difficult. Collectively the three technical authorities (BAE Systems, Marshall Aerospace and Rolls-Royce) decided to cease their support which, under CAA regulations, meant XH558 could no longer fly. Additionally much of the expertise and knowledge required had been obtained by contracting retired specialists.

ANDRE TURCAT

André Turcat, who died on January 4th, aged 94, was the chief test pilot for the Concorde programme and was at the controls of the supersonic airliner on its first flight from Toulouse on March 2nd 1969. On October 1 Turcat was at the controls of 001 for its first supersonic flight and he was the first to fly it at Mach 2 (twice the speed of sound). Turcat took early retirement in 1975 and entered politics. He became deputy mayor of Toulouse from 1971 to 1977.

Turcat was deeply affected by the loss on July 25 2000, of the Air France Concorde bound for New York, which crashed on take-off from Charles de Gaulle airport, Paris, killing all 113 people on board. He came out of retirement to defend the aircraft and its designers and was depressed at the outcome of the inquiry and the grounding of the fleet, which ended the era of commercial supersonic travel. He was on board the Air France Concorde during its retirement flight on June 27 2003 when it flew to Sud Aviation's airfield at Toulouse.



Concorde 001 & André Turcat (2nd from left).

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