



## Allan George's Gems

### The True story of Rudolph, the red nosed Reindeer.

A man named Bob May, depressed and broken-hearted, stared out his draughty apartment window into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter Barbara sat on his lap, quietly sobbing. Bob's wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. Barbara looked up into her dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?"

Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life.

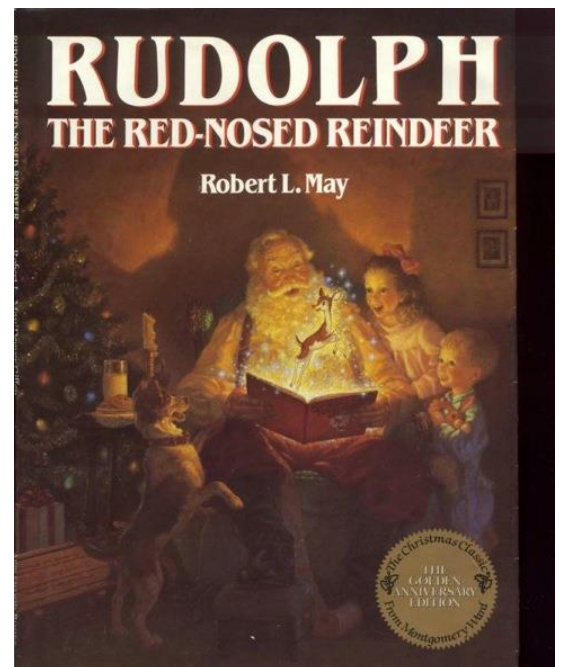
Life always had to be different for Bob. Small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember. From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in. Bob did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl.

But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938. Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one - a storybook!

Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope. Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling.

Who was the character? What was the story all about?

The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose.

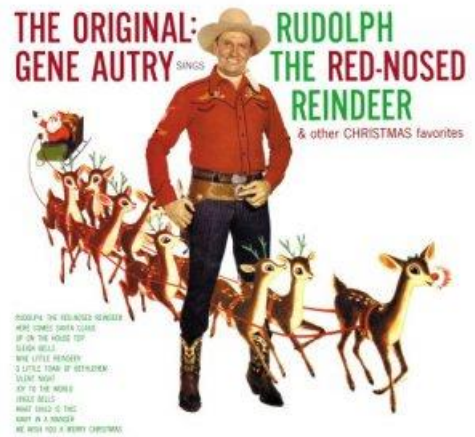


Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there. The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Montgomery Ward went on to print, "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores.

By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Montgomery Ward to print an updated version of the book. In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Montgomery Ward returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller.

Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter.

But the story doesn't end there either. Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas."



The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning back to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing.

## The Aviators.

Flying the airlines in the thirties was a lot more fun (and a bit more dangerous) than it is now. It was more leisurely and had more class. If people had serious money in the 1930s and travelled internationally, they may well have flown on one of these large Handley Page bi-plane aircraft, which were the mainstay of British Imperial Airways at the time. They had a 130 foot wingspan, (a Boeing 737 800 has a wingspan of 112 feet) and carried 26 passengers in first class only, in three different compartments - the first class saloon, the bar and cocktail area, and the smoking section. These machines were ubiquitous, extremely safe (no passenger in a HP-42 was ever killed in 10 years of international and domestic operations from 1930 until 1940),



very comfortable in seating, leg room and service, hot meals were served on bone china with silver cutlery, free liquor flowed and over-nights were in the very best hotels.

There was no rush, no waiting in lines and everyone was well-dressed. Flying along at only a few thousand feet, one could see (down to the quality of the washing on the backyard clothes lines) every interesting feature passing below. At 95 to 100 mph one also had time to look at the passing panorama. It took four days to a week (depending on headwinds and weather) to fly from London to Cape Town, South Africa, by flying only about four hours a day and staying at the best hotels in Europe, Cairo, Khartoum and Victoria Falls. All stops to India also made for an interesting choice of destinations. Old fashioned and good mannered ideas and behaviour, like dressing up to have evening drinks on the balcony and certainly not ever being in a hurry - one can only salivate at how pleasurable that would be.



In a modern jet, one can get from A to B quickly (even with stop-overs), but nowadays there is nothing to be seen on the ground from 35,000 feet, the modern airline food is at best, basic (unless you are in first class) and passengers are so jam-packed in that one tends to feel like an immigrant in steerage as the Clipper Ship (ca 1844) creaks and strains along. We will not get on to the subject of terminals. Older bi-plane aircraft, such as Tiger Moths, can land almost anywhere, wherever there is a stretch of grass. This airliner was a little more speedy than a DH-82 Tiger Moth, but its landing speed would be quite similar. They flew all over the UK and Europe



**The Handley Page HP-42 "Helena" of Imperial Airways, 1932. Slow, safe and very comfortable.**

and down to South Africa on a regular basis. They also conducted regular services to India via many places en-route. There were occasions, flying down to Cape Town, when the strong headwinds from the south reduced the groundspeed to such an extent that the crew turned the machine around and flew back to their point of departure to sit it out in the hotel.

True to its name, Imperial Airways was the flag airline of the inter-war British Empire. Over a route network stretching to almost 25,000 miles (1938), it carried passengers and air freight across and between Britain's far-flung colonies. It was Britain's commercial long range air transport company and operated from 1924 until the outbreak of war in 1939. It formed local partnerships with Qantas and TEAL (Tasman Empire Airways Ltd) in New Zealand. It was



merged into the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) in 1939, which in turn merged with the British European Airways Corporation to form British Airways.

A man had two of the best tickets for the AFL GRAND Final. As he sits down, another man comes along and asks if anyone is sitting in the seat next to him. "No", he says, "the seat is empty." "This is incredible!" said the man, "who in their right mind would book a seat like this for the AFL GRAND Final, the biggest sporting event of the year, and not use it?"

He says, "Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. My wife was supposed to come with me, but she passed away. This is the first AFL GRAND Final we haven't been to together since we got married." "Oh... I'm sorry to hear that. That's terrible. I guess you couldn't find someone else, a friend or relative or even a neighbour to take the seat?" The man shakes his head...

"No...no, they're all at the funeral."

## **Lipstick in a Catholic School in Singapore.**

They say this is true!!! According to a news report, a certain private Catholic school was recently faced with a unique problem. A number of 12-year-old girls were beginning to use lipstick and would put it on in the bathroom. That was fine provided it was of a natural or neutral skin tone, but after they put on their lipstick, they would press their lips to the mirror leaving dozens of little lip prints. Every night the maintenance man would remove them; and the next day the girls would put them back. Finally, the principal, Sister Mary, decided that something had to be done. She called all the girls to the bathroom and met them there with the maintenance man. She explained that all these lip prints were causing a major problem for the custodian, who had to clean the mirrors every night (you can just imagine the yawns from the little princesses!) To demonstrate how difficult it had been to clean the mirrors, Sister Mary asked the maintenance man to show the girls how much effort was required, and how he cleaned off the lipstick marks every night. He took out a long-handled squeegee, dipped it in the toilet bowl, and cleaned the mirror with it.



*Since then, there have been no lip prints on the mirror - There are teachers..... and then there are educators!*

## **Cheap Watches.**

If you were in the market for a watch in 1880, would you know where to get one? You would go to a store, right? Well, of course you could do that, but if you wanted one that was cheaper and a bit better than most of the store watches, you went to the train station! Sound a bit funny? Well, for about 500 towns across the northern United States, that's where the best watches were found.

Why were the best watches found at the train station? The railroad company wasn't selling the watches, not at all. The telegraph operator was. Most of the time the telegraph operator was

located in the railroad station because the telegraph lines followed the rail road tracks from town to town. It was usually the shortest distance and the right-of-ways had already been secured for the rail line.

Most of the station agents were also skilled telegraph operators and that was the primary way that they communicated with the railroad. They would know when trains left the previous station and when they were due at their next station. And it was the telegraph operator who had the watches. As a matter of fact they sold more of them than almost all the stores combined for a period of about 9 years.

This was all arranged by "Richard", who was a telegraph operator himself. He was on duty in the North Redwood, Minnesota train station one day when a load of watches arrived from the East. It was a huge crate of pocket watches. No one ever came to claim them.



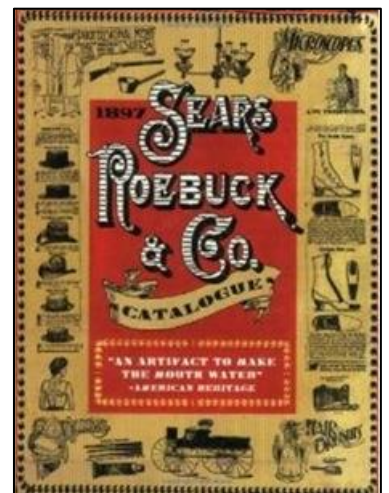
So Richard sent a telegram to the manufacturer and asked them what they wanted to do with the watches. The manufacturer didn't want to pay the freight back, so they wired Richard to see if he could sell them. So Richard did. He sent a wire to every agent in the system asking them if they wanted a cheap, but good, pocket watch. He sold the entire case in less than two days and at a handsome profit.

That started it all. He ordered more watches from the watch company and encouraged the telegraph operators to set up a display case in the station offering high quality watches for a cheap price to all the travellers. It worked! It didn't take long for the word to spread and, before long, people other than travellers came to the train station to buy watches.

Richard became so busy that he had to hire a professional watch maker to help him with the orders. That was Alvah. The business took off and soon expanded to many other lines of dry goods. And the rest is history as they say.

Richard and Alvah left the train station and moved their company to Chicago -- and it's still there.

Yes, it's a little known fact that for a while in the 1880's, the biggest watch retailer in the country was at the train station. It all started with a telegraph operator: Richard Sears and his partner Alvah Roebuck!



Sears Roebuck published their first catalogue in 1888 and by 1894, it had grown to 322 pages. These days, of course, the catalogue is on line and you can see the latest one [HERE](#).

Age doesn't always bring wisdom.  
Sometimes age comes alone.

## Dance with Death.

### 31 B-52's were lost during the Vietnam war.

On 22 November 1972, a B-52D from U-Tapao was hit by a surface-to-air missile (SAM) while on a raid over Vinh. The crew was forced to abandon the damaged aircraft over Thailand. This was the first B-52 to be destroyed by hostile fire in Vietnam. In total, 31 B-52s were lost during the war, which included 10 B-52s shot down over North Vietnam.

The zenith of B-52 attacks in Vietnam was Operation Linebacker II (sometimes referred to as the Christmas Bombing) which consisted of waves of B-52s (mostly D models, but some Gs without jamming equipment and with a smaller bomb load). Over 12 days, B-52s flew 729 sorties and dropped 15,237 tons of bombs on Hanoi, Haiphong, and other targets. Originally 42 B-52s were committed to the war; however, numbers were frequently twice this figure. During Operation Linebacker II, there were 15 B-52s shot down, five B-52s were heavily damaged (1 crashed in Laos), and five B-52s suffered medium damage. A total of 25 crewmen were killed in these losses.



Vietnam claimed 34 B-52s were shot down.

You can see a video on how North Vietnam used the Soviet supplied SAMs to great effect [HERE](#)

## Legerwood tree sculptures.

If you've ever been to Tassie, after doing Port Arthur and it's surrounding areas, you probably toured up the east coast towards Launceston via Orford, Swansea, Bicheno and then most likely went back inland though St Marys, Conara and up to Launceston via the Midlands Highway – which is a shame. Although the road via Conara is much better and much quicker, there's not a lot to see. The trip back to Lonnie via St Helens, while taking quite a bit longer is definitely worth the extra time spent on the road.

When you take the long way you can divert off the highway and visit such places as the [St Columbia Falls](#), Derby with its old tin works and further up the line call into the quiet little township of Legerwood. It's not a big town with only about 250 permanent residents, you won't find a Myer or Big W there, but you will find something quite remarkable. Back in the early 1900's, Legerwood was an important railway stop for trains on the way to Pioneer (way up the



north east) but now that the railway and trains have long gone, there's not a lot happening industry wise.

With the outbreak of WW1, Legerwood sent most of their able bodied young men off to fight and quite a number did not come home. After the war, the people of Legerwood decided to remember their fallen young men by planting an avenue of trees, one for each fallen soldier and one to remember all who had fallen at Gallipoli and one for the Anzacs. They were determined that these brave fathers, husbands, sons and sweethearts were never to be forgotten.



They say "Age shall not weary them....." unfortunately, this does not apply to trees. In 1999 the trees were checked and declared a safety risk and the memorial appeared destined to be lost forever, but, in the spirit in which the trees had been planted so many years before, the tiny but determined community rallied and enlisted the talents of skilled Tasmanian chainsaw carver, Eddie Freeman, to bring the soldiers back to life in sculpture.



Legerwood now has a lasting tribute to their fallen heroes and to remember the importance of the once busy railway, they have also constructed a picnic and bar-b-q area with a small shop in the likeness of a railway station from which to sell souvenirs.

It is definitely worth seeing.



You can click each one of the pics to get a bigger view.



If you're into Golf, [THIS](#) is definitely for you.

Condoms don't guarantee safe sex!

A friend of mine was wearing one when he was shot dead by the woman's husband!

## The Age of the drone.

Recently we, like a lot of you, received an email which contained a link to a video showing a US Navy drone which, according to the email is called the Northrop Grumman X-47. You can see that video [HERE](#). The X-47 was shown flying off the USS George HW Bush which, according to the video, happened in May 2013.

Wikipedia says of the X-47, "The





Northrop Grumman X-47B is a demonstration unmanned combat air vehicle (UCAV) designed for carrier-based operations. Developed by the American defence technology company Northrop Grumman, the X-47 project began as part of DARPA's J-UCAS program, and is now part of the United States Navy's Unmanned Combat Air System Demonstration (UCAS-D) program. The X-47B first flew in 2011, and as of 2013, it is undergoing flight testing, having successfully performed a series of land- and carrier-based demonstrations. Northrop Grumman intends to develop the prototype X-47B into a battlefield-ready aircraft, the Unmanned Carrier-Launched Surveillance and Strike (UCLASS) system, which will enter service by 2019”.

It has a cruise speed of Mach 0.9, a range of 2,100 nm and a ceiling of 40,000ft. It has 2 weapon bays, providing for up to 2,000 kg of ordnance and today has cost \$813 million

**BUT!!!**

We got another email, this time showing what is said to be the first vision of a state-of-the-art drone touted as the future of British warfare. It was shown soaring over what is thought to be Woomera in remote South Australia.

According to the email, the Taranis drone is a joint project between UK defence and BAE Systems and costs \$336.5 million. That's a heap cheaper than the Yankee one.

It is designed to carry a payload of guided bombs and missiles, travel at supersonic speeds, and fly undetected by radar. It's faster than the Yankee one too.



The UK military says the Taranis will be operable via satellite from anywhere in the world. The first test flight is being hailed as a "major landmark for UK aviation". You can see video of it in flight [HERE](#). The vision shows the Taranis, named after the Celtic god of thunder, making a take-off and conducting a number of manoeuvres over red desert during its first test flight. The British Ministry of Defence (MoD) will not confirm where the footage was shot, but revealed in a submission to a UK parliamentary hearing last year that the Taranis Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV) demonstrator had conducted initial test flights - shortly after ABC sources confirmed that the prototype had been shipped to the Woomera test range.

The MoD is hailing the test flight, which it now confirms occurred in August last year, as an overwhelming success. "The demonstrator aircraft made a perfect take-off, rotation, 'climb-out' and landing on its 15-minute first flight," it said in a statement. "A number of flights took place last year, of up to one hour in duration and at a variety of altitudes and speeds. "The findings from the aircraft's flights prove that the UK has developed a significant lead in understanding unmanned aircraft, which can strike with precision over a long range whilst remaining undetected."

Click [HERE](#) to see the number of unmanned aircraft – what's new??

So!! It looks like everyone's got one of these things and we wonder whether Pilots are going to go the same way as Ford, Holden and Toyota.

## Japanese Secret WW2 Weapon Found Off Pearl Harbour.

Only days before the 72nd anniversary of the Pearl Harbour attack, the secret weapon of the Japanese admiral who planned the "Day of Infamy" has been found and positively identified at 2,300 feet in waters off Oahu.

Research teams organized by the University of Hawaii at Manoa made the formal announcement Tuesday that the wreck on the Pacific bottom was the I-400, a submarine aircraft carrier that was the brainchild of Isoroku Yamamoto, the Japanese Marshal Admiral and commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet during World War II.



Yamamoto was the architect of the carrier attack that killed 2,300 and devastated the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbour on the 7<sup>th</sup> Dec. 1941. The attack began 1,351 days of war and triggered major innovations in military technology that included Yamamoto's vision of a fleet of super subs that would hit the Panama Canal and even New York to demoralize Americans and slow or even stop the U.S. advance across the Pacific.

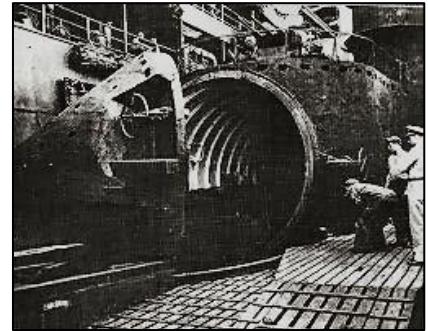


"Had they been able to affect those strikes, it would have been a different war," said James Delgado, director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Maritime Heritage Program.

Yamamoto wanted a fleet of 18 super subs but the I-400 and two sister ships were the only ones ever built. At 400 feet long, the Sen-Toku class 1-400 dwarfed all other submarines of the age and each had four 1,680 kW (2,250 hp) engines and carried enough fuel to go around

the world one-and-a-half times. Its range of 37,500 miles was not matched until nuclear subs were developed in the 1960s.

The I-400 and its sister ship the I-401 each had 150-foot hangars built into the hull to accommodate three folding-wing M6A1 Seiran bombers for hitting the U.S. mainland with a 1,800-pound bomb. The pontoon-equipped Seirans were to be launched by catapult from the sub's deck and then be hauled back aboard by crane. However, the subs were never used as intended and were mainly consigned to hauling fuel to Japanese bases.



Terry Kerby, a veteran underseas explorer who piloted the research sub that found the I-400, said U.S. prize crews were stunned to come across the super subs when Japan surrendered to end the war. "We never knew they existed," said Kerby, operations director of the Hawaii Undersea Research Laboratory (HURL). The I-400 was one of five Japanese subs brought back to Pearl Harbour at the end of World War II to be studied by the Navy, but they were soon caught up in the just-beginning Cold War with the Soviet Union. When the Soviets in 1946 demanded access to the subs under terms of the treaty that ended the war, the U.S. Navy sank the subs off the coast of Oahu and claimed to have no information on their precise location.

Kerby has now found four of the five scuttled subs.

"The I-400 has been on our 'to-find' list for some time," Kerby said. "It was the first of its kind of only three built, so it is a unique and very historic submarine. Finding it where we did was totally unexpected." The announcement of the find was delayed until the NOAA verified the identification with the State Department and the Japanese government.

The I-400 was truly revolutionary. The innovation of air strike capability from long-range submarines represented a tactical change in submarine doctrine. The large I-400, with its extended range and ability to launch three aircraft, was clearly an important step in the evolution of submarine design.

Laugh and the whole world laughs with you, cry ... and you have to blow your nose.

## **Scepticism.**

For too long now Green groups and others with a specific barrel to push have scared the pants off a lot of us with their "we're ruining everything" predictions. It's time to sit back and examine some of these people and in a lot of cases, the garbage they preach. Be sceptical, it's healthy.

See [HERE](#).



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