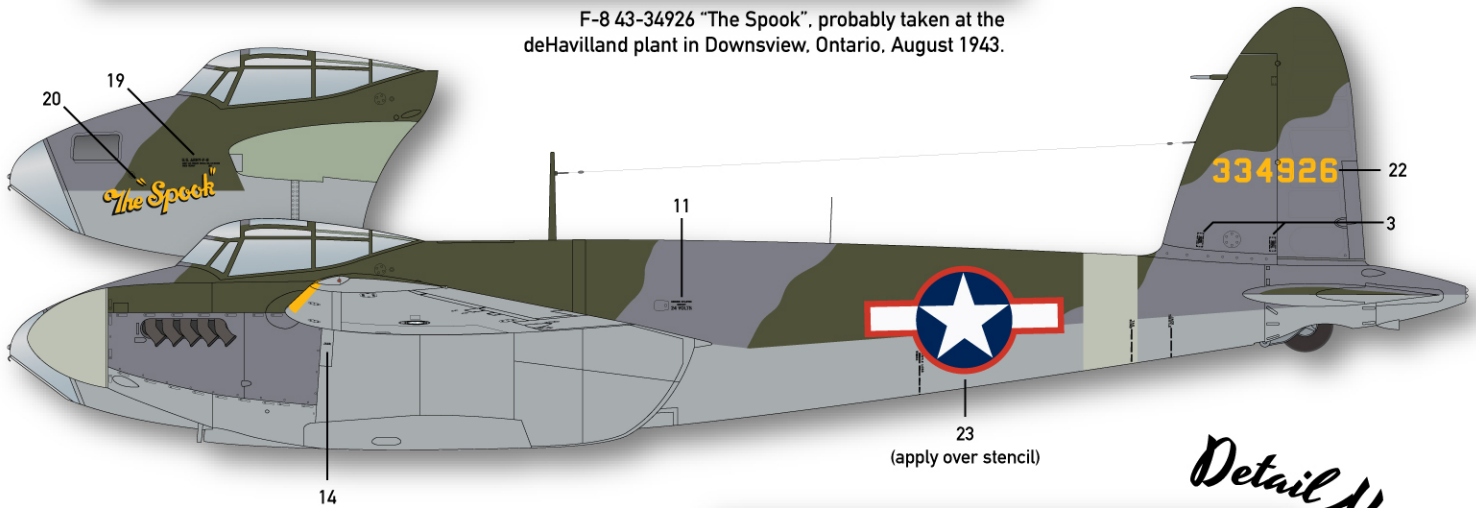


*The "Spook"*

F-8 43-34926 "The Spook", probably taken at the deHavilland plant in Downsview, Ontario, August 1943.



- |   |            |   |                 |
|---|------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Dark Green |  | Sea Grey Medium |
|  | Ocean Grey |  | Signal Yellow   |
|  | Sky        |   |                 |

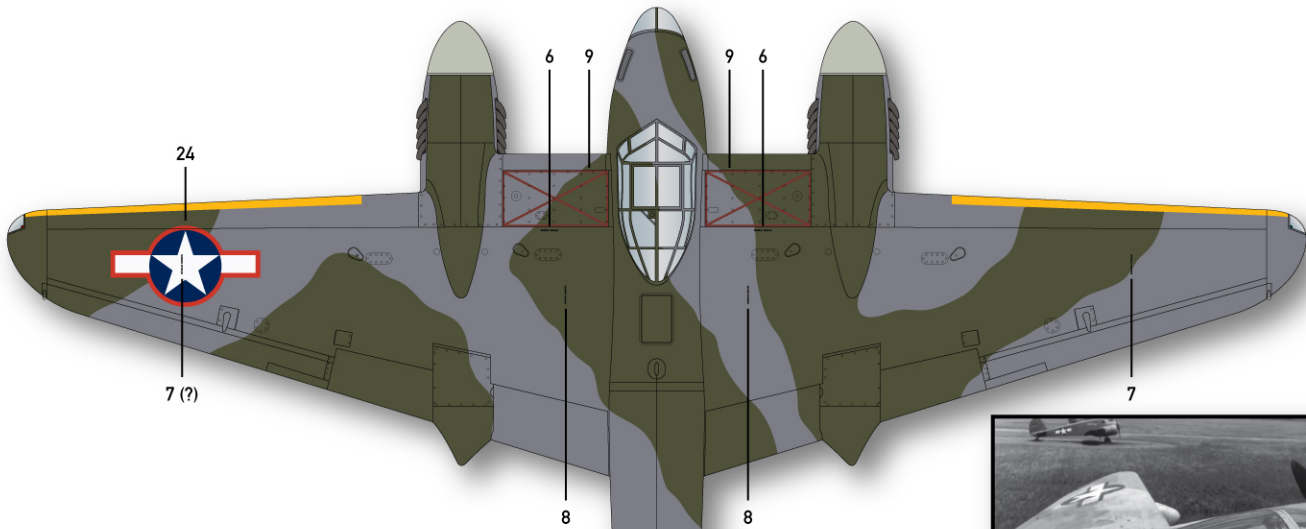
*Detail Note*

"The Spook" was the only Canadian-built Mosquito to serve in combat with the USAAF. Built as a B.Mk.VII at Downsview, Ontario, she was one of XXX Mosquitos diverted to the USAAF as F-8 photoreconnaissance platforms. Our research shows that the aircraft received their USAAF markings while on the production line, and never carried RAF markings nor serials. The colors were the standard RAF day fighter scheme of Dark Green, Ocean Grey, and Sea Grey Medium. She carried Signal Yellow leading edge bands on the wings. Spinners and the 18" aft fuselage band were Sky.

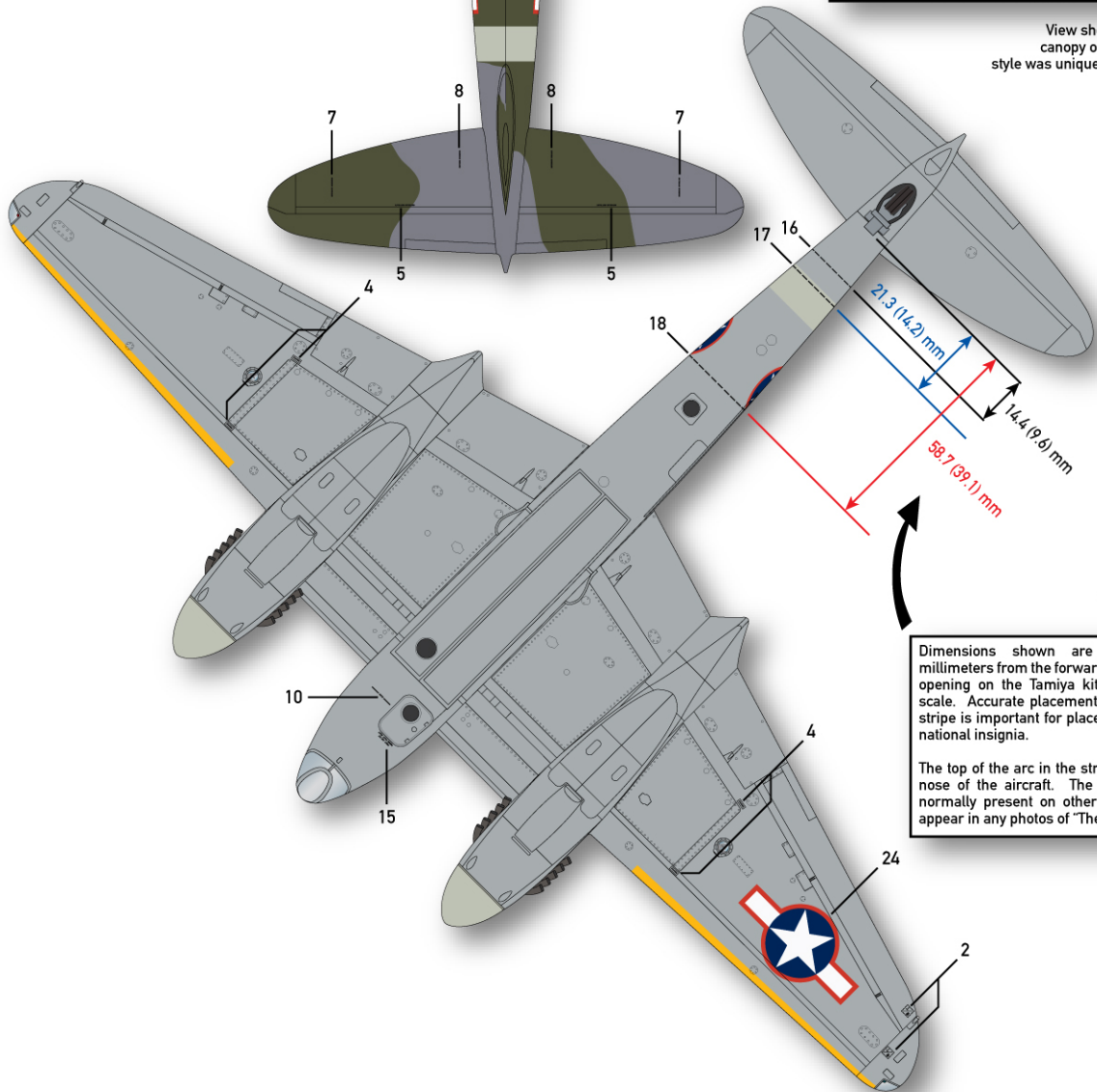
The deHavilland Canada built aircraft had several detail differences from their British cousins. See the following pages for specifics, and how to model them using the Tamiya kits.

*Thank You!*

Special thanks to Bill Setchell (the original Spook), Al Goetz, Geoff Hays, Dana Bell, and Brian Nicklas for their kind assistance on this project.



View showing the flat-sided main canopy on a B.Mk.VII. This canopy style was unique to Canadian built aircraft



### Detail Note

Dimensions shown are the distances in millimeters from the forward end of the tail wheel opening on the Tamiya kits in 1/48 and (1/72) scale. Accurate placement of the forward most stripe is important for placement of the fuselage national insignia.

The top of the arc in the stripes goes toward the nose of the aircraft. The forward most stripe normally present on other Mosquitos does not appear in any photos of "The Spook".



## deHavilland F-8 Mosquito "The Spook"

American use of the deHavilland Mosquito as a photo reconnaissance platform in Europe is relatively well known. But most people associate American Mossies only with the PRU Blue PR.XVIs flown by the 8th and 15th Air Forces from England and Italy. Virtually unknown to history is the batch of Canadian-built Mosquitos supplied to the USAAF in 1943 as F-8s. Of the 40 F-8s supplied to the USAAF, only one actually served in combat. This is her story.

Having seen the effectiveness of the RAF's photographic reconnaissance Mosquitos, Lt. Col. Elliott Roosevelt, son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and commander of the 3rd Photographic Group (Reconnaissance) in North Africa, requested PR-configured Mosquitos to supplement his fleet of Lockheed F-5 Lightnings. Since the RAF was then gobbling up the entire production output of Mosquitos from UK assembly lines, the USAAF negotiated the delivery of 40 Canadian-built aircraft from deHavilland's Downsview, Ontario facility outside Toronto.

The initial Canadian Mosquito, designated B.Mk.VII, made its first flight in late 1942. The B.VII was basically a Canadian built B.Mk.IV fitted with Packard Merlin engines. Photographic evidence indicates that the initial compliment of seven F-8s for the USAAF were modified from B.Mk.VII airframes (including "The Spook"), while the remainder were converted B.Mk.XXs, which had additional changes. There were several notable differences between the Canadian-built Mossies and UK-produced airplanes, as well as differences between the F-8s converted from B.Mk.VIIs and those converted from B.Mk.XXs.

Our subject aircraft was one of the initial seven B.Mk.VIIs delivered to the USAAF in mid-1943. It was allocated RAF serial number KB315, but as far as can be ascertained, never flew with the RAF serial applied. Unlike their later PR.XVI brethren, the F-8s were all were assigned USAAF serial numbers, and probably while still on the assembly line she was re-serialled 43-34926. Factory shots of the later F-8s (the B.XX's) show them on the line with USAAF serials applied, and this aircraft has typically Canadian rounded corner style serial numbers, indicating that the number was also probably applied at the factory.

Since the deHavilland plant was busy churning out pure bombers, it fell to facilities in the United States to transform the aircraft into photo reconnaissance platforms. Apparently '926 went to Peterson Field in Colorado Springs, Colorado for this work. Unique among all Mosquitos, the F-8s carried a single camera port on the centerline of the aft fuselage, a port in forward end of the left hand bomb bay door (and notably not in the right hand door as on other Mossies), and were capable of carrying a forward oblique mount in the nose compartment, shooting through the bomb aimer's center panel. Details of the actual mounts are not known, but it seems that the forward oblique mount was not used frequently.

After the photo reconnaissance modifications were completed at Peterson Field, '926 went to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio for installation of American radio equipment and testing. From Wright Field, it appears that the aircraft was flown back to the deHavilland plant at Downsview, possibly for final updates or correction of some fault.

It was at Downsview that Maj. James F. Setchell was assigned as the pilot of F-8 serial number 43-34926. Jim's wife had given birth to their first child, James, Jr., in early 1943. The elder Jim thought he had had the world's ugliest and scariest looking baby, and immediately nicknamed him "the Spook." Nicknaming was a common practice in the Setchell family at the time, his wife going by "the Hag," and Jim being known (ever so humbly) as "the Hero." It was only natural that Setchell name his shiny new airplane after his first born, and so 43-34926 became "The Spook." The name was painted on both sides of the nose in flamboyant yellow and black letters while at Downsview, and it was from there that "The Spook's" overseas odyssey began.

"The Spook" was to be assigned to Lt. Col. Roosevelt's 3rd Photographic Group (Reconnaissance) based in North Africa. According to the log book kept by Setchell, the route flown took them from Downsview to La Marsa, Tunisia (near Tunis) by way of Goose Bay, Labrador; Bluie West One, Greenland; Meeks Field, Iceland; Prestwick, Scotland; St. Mawgan, Cornwall; and Casablanca, Morocco. Eventually he flew her on to Pamigliano, Italy (near Naples), where our story ends.

## Colors & Markings

"The Spook" was finished in the standard RAF fighter scheme of Dark Green and Ocean Grey over Medium Sea Grey. The upper surfaces had a fine (approximately 2") feathered edge between the camouflage colors, while the lower surface demarcation was hard edged. The pattern was similar, but not identical to British-built Mosquitos, and the upper/lower demarcation was notably different from British aircraft. Also note that both sides of the nacelles had Ocean Grey panels - another difference from standard British practice.

Somewhat unusually, the wings had an Ident Yellow leading edge that extended from the inboard edge of the navigation light cover to approximately 28" outboard of the nacelle. The 18" aft fuselage band and the spinners were Sky. Props were black with 6" Ident Yellow tips and no manufacturer logos or stenciling visible.

Some airframe stenciling was applied, although not in the same locations as on British-built aircraft in all cases, and some of it looked quite different from the British stenciling. Note that when built the aircraft had plain blue disk insignias. When the red border was added, the trestle marking was overpainted slightly.

DeHavilland Canada had a unique style of lettering that was used for the tail numbers. A similar style was also used for the data block on the forward left fuselage. There is no evidence of an RAF style serial number having been applied and then overpainted. Likewise, U.S. national insignias appear to have been applied while the aircraft was still on the assembly line, as there is no evidence of overpainted RAF roundels. Fuselage insignias were 32" nominal diameter, while the wing insignias appear to have been 36" nominal diameter (note that the term "nominal diameter" refers to the diameter of the circle that circumscribes the star, not the entire outer diameter of the circular part of the barred insignia). The fuselage insignias were not exactly aligned with the horizontal datum of the aircraft, but were slightly nose-down. Note the way the bars lay along the camouflage demarcation line.

## Modeling "The Spook"

Modeling the deHavilland Canada F-8 is relatively straightforward. In 1/72 both Tamiya and Hasegawa produce nice B.Mk.IVs. In 1/48 scale the only real choice is the superb Tamiya B/PR.IV kit. In 1/32 your only choice (literally) is the 35+ year-old Revell kit. Since most modellers will probably choose one of the Tamiya kits, we will concentrate on changes required to them.

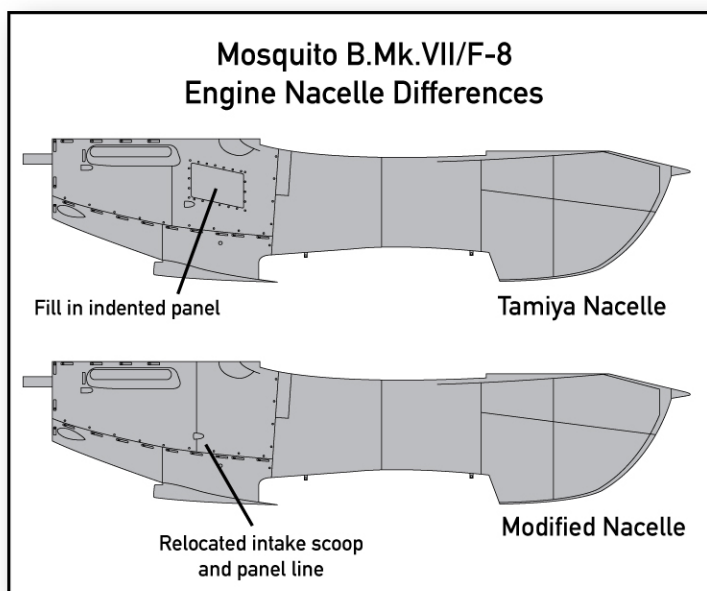
Overall the Tamiya B/PR.IV kits are nearly correct as they come out of the box. However, there are several small detail changes that are required. The Canadian B.Mk.VII had a unique canopy style not found on any other type of Mosquito. The forward part featured the "V" windscreen common to bomber and PR Mossies, but the aft part was like that fitted to the NF.II and FB.VI. It had no teardrop fairings on the side panels, and no subtle bulge as was seen on some other Mossie types. To model this, you need canopies from both the bomber and fighter kits. Simply cut along the panel line just behind the windscreen on both canopies, then mate the front of the bomber to the back end of the fighter canopy. Not the cheapest way to do it, but the most accurate.

There were some noticeable panel differences between the Packard Merlin powered Canadian Mossies and Rolls-Royce powered British Mossies. See the accompanying diagram for the specific changes required.

"The Spook" was unique in having camera ports only in the aft fuselage and the left hand forward bomb bay. Most other PR Mossies had at least two bomb bay ports, and many had oblique ports in the aft fuselage as well. Fill and eliminate the port in the right hand bomb bay door, and use the aft fuselage port as provided by Tamiya.

Other airframe details to note:

1. Solid (late style) main wheel hubs
2. Square tread main tires
3. Radio mast with single wire to vertical fin leading edge
4. Whip antenna on upper spine
5. Narrow chord DH prop blades
6. Five-stack fishtail exhausts (no shrouds on ops)
7. Single (leading edge) nav lights on wing tips (uncommon for a bomber)
8. No protuberance in front of windscreen
9. No trailing wire antenna mast on belly



## "The Spook" - her history in photos



deHavilland Canada F-8 Mosquito 43-34926 before she became "The Spook". Photo taken at Wright Field where she was undergoing testing. Note the exhaust shrouds, which were removed prior to her movement overseas.

Indoor shot at the deHavilland plant at Downsview, Ontario, August 1943. Left to right: Capt. Jerome Alexander, unidentified civilian, Maj. James Setchell, pilot of "The Spook".



"The Spook", probably taken outdoors at the deHavilland plant in Downsview, August 1943.



Setchell & Alexander, Downsview, August 1943.



## “The Spook” - her history in photos



“The Spook” deployed overseas in September 1943. The route included stops at Goose Bay, Labrador; Bluie West One, Greenland; Meeks Field, Iceland; Prestwick, Scotland; RAF St. Mawgan, Cornwall; Casablanca, Morocco; and finally to the 3rd PG’s base at La Marsa, near Tunis, Tunisia.

Photos at left and below were taken at Meeks Field, Keflavik, Iceland.



Above: Taken at St. Mawgan, Cornwall, the caption on the back says “Navigator Mish from Tunis”. Perhaps Lt. “Mish” joined the crew at St. Mawgan to take them the rest of the way to La Marsa.



Above: Setchell and crew arriving at Casablanca, Morocco. Note the Dark Green cowling and Sky spinner.

Right: A concerned looking Setchell admires the muddy mess under the tail of his beautiful airplane at Casablanca.



## “The Spook” - her history in photos

The original “Spook”! Setchell’s son James Jr. (known as Bill) was born in early 1943. The Setchell family used nicknames, and when Setchell saw his new son for the first time, he remarked that he was the scariest looking baby he’d ever seen, so the nickname “Spook” was a natural!



The 3rd Photographic Group (Reconnaissance) to which Setchell and “The Spook” were assigned was commanded by Col. Elliott Roosevelt, son of the President. In early December 1943 FDR stopped at La Marsa on his way home from the Tehran Conference with Churchill and Stalin. While at La Marsa, FDR personally inspected “The Spook” and her crew.



General Dwight D. Eisenhower speaks with his Commander in Chief

A dinner was given for the President at the La Marsa officers mess. Attending were FDR, General Eisenhower, General Spaatz, the President’s advisor Henry Hopkins, and many other notables. Maj. Setchell took these photos of FDR arriving and dining at La Marsa.



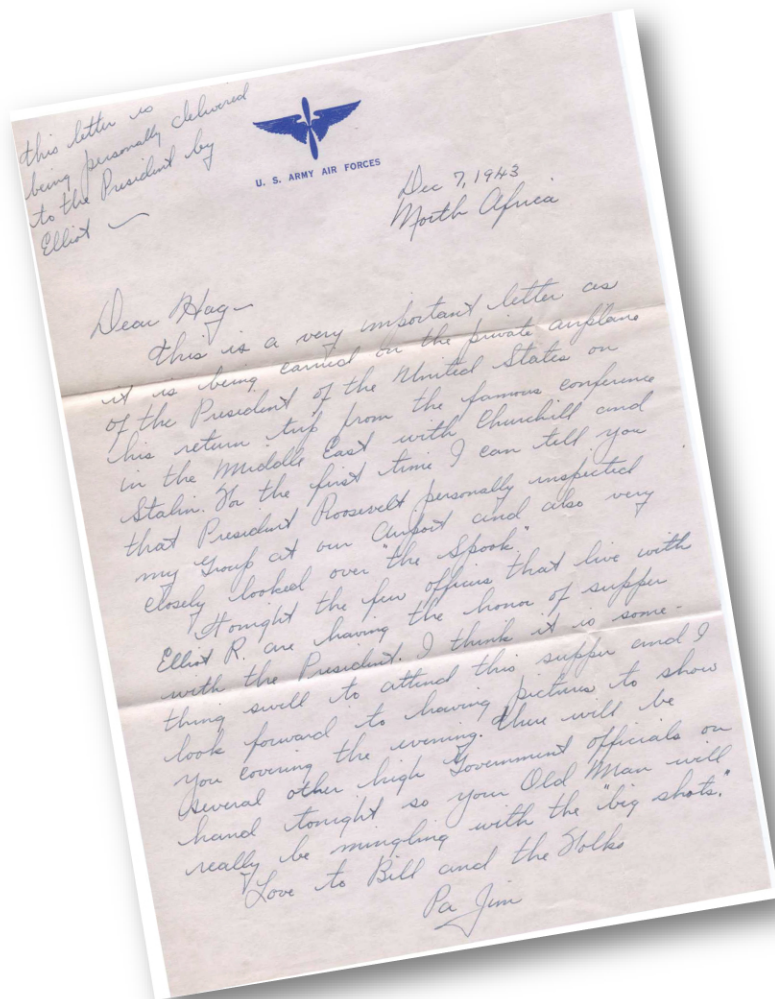
A great deal of brass was arrayed at the table!





## “The Spook” - her history in photos

Letter written by Maj. Setchell to his wife (“The Hag”) informing her of the visit of President Franklin Roosevelt on his way home from Tehran on 7 December 1943.



This letter is  
being personally delivered  
to the President by  
Elliot --

Dec. 7, 1943  
North Africa

Dear Hag -

This is a very important letter as it is being carried on the private airplane of the President of the United States on his return from the famous conference in the Middle East with Churchill and Stalin. For the first time I can tell you that President Roosevelt personally inspected my Group at our airport and was also very closely looked over "The Spook".

Tonight the officers that live with Elliot R. are having the honor of supper with the President. I think it is something swell to attend this supper and I look forward to having pictures to show you covering the evening. There will be several other high Government officials on hand tonight so your Old Man will really be mingling with the "big shots".

Love to Bill and the folks.

Pa Jim

The trail of "The Spook" goes cold after early December 1943. The 3rd PG (R) moved across the Mediterranean to Pamigiano, and later to San Severo, Italy by mid-December. "The Spook" ended her days with a crash landing on 19 August 1944 in Italy. She represented the peak of performance obtained from multi-engine reconnaissance aircraft during WWII, yet she remained a lonely stepchild in the USAAF, the only one of her type to see combat. "The Spook" deserves a special place in the history of the Mosquito and that of USAAF photo reconnaissance operations.

Col. Elliott Roosevelt lobbied for a large scale reequipment of US reconnaissance forces with the Mosquito, with its superior speed, range, and altitude capabilities. Eventually Mosquito PR.XVIs were supplied to the USAAF, but not in the numbers Roosevelt requested.

## “The Spook” - her history in photos



An interesting side note to our story - NACA's Langley Research Center tested one of "The Spook's" sister ships, 43-34928. This photo from a damp January Day in 1945 (nearly five months after "The Spook's" demise in Italy) shows '928 as she was tested by NACA. Of note are subtle differences, including the wing fuel tanks, and a trailing wire antenna mast under the belly. This view shows the typical Canadian style cowling panels clearly. It appears that Fred is in the photo simply for scale!